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CITY OF WATERTOWN
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

FEBRUARY 19, 2020

ORIGINAL

1 ZONING BOARD:

2 SAMUEL S. THOMAS, Chairman
3 PATRICK HICKEY
4 ALLISON CROSSMAN

5 ALSO PRESENT:
6 GEOFFREY URDA, PLANNER
7 JENNIFER VOSS, SENIOR PLANNER
8 MICHAEL LUMBIS, DEPARTMENT CHAIR

9 CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen I'd like
10 to call the Zoning Board of Appeals to order.
11 We shall begin with roll call. Allison Carlos
12 Crossman?

13 MS. CROSSMAN: Present.

14 CHAIRMAN: Patrick Hickey?

15 MR. HICKEY: Present.

16 CHAIRMAN: I, Samuel Thomas, chairperson
17 is present and let the record show that Geoff
18 Urda, city planning department is here along
19 with Mike Lumbis, department chairperson and
20 Jennifer Voss Senior planner.

21 Christina Stone, city attorney, is unable
22 to be at this evening's meeting and we also
23 have Christin and Benjamin who are observing
tonight, perhaps in anticipation of joining the
board.

1 I'd also like to state that Scott Osborn
2 who served on the Zoning Board of Appeals since
3 2012, for seven and a half years, had to resign
4 at the end of 2019 due to work responsibilities
5 and we are thankful to Scott for his dictated
6 service. I've known Scott for several years
7 and when a new case was presented, he was often
8 out in the field examining it more than once to
9 make sure he was going to make a decision that
10 would be in the best interest of all parties.
11 So we will miss Scott and that leaves our board
12 with three.

13 So we have a quorum. So we can continue
14 with our meeting this evening.

15 I would to take a moment to read the
16 notice of public hearing request for variance
17 of the zoning ordinance of the City of
18 Watertown.

19 "Notice is hereby given that the Zoning
20 Board of Appeals of the city of Watertown, New
21 York will meet on Wednesday February 19th,
22 2020, at 7:00 PM in the city council chambers
23 on the third floor of city hall for the purpose

1 of hearing a variance request. Variance
2 Request No. 556 is for the property located at
3 221 Park Drive East being, Parcel No.
4 12-16-303.000 submitted by Patty L. Scordo to
5 vary regulations of Section 310-16 of the
6 zoning board ordinance pertaining to rear
7 setback requirements." This is dated
8 February 7th, 2020, Geoffrey T. Urda,
9 Planner.

10 This is our only item on this evening's
11 agenda, so if you would like to approach the
12 microphone and explain your case. Please state
13 your name and address for the record.

14 MS. SCORDO: Please bear with me, I've
15 never done this before, only in a classroom of
16 25 students so. My name is Patty Scordo. I'm
17 the owner of the property, 221 Park Drive East.
18 This is my contractor Dave Bach. He is the one
19 that's going to be doing the work, fingers
20 crossed. I have -- do you want me to explain
21 what it is?

22 CHAIRMAN: If you would explain the
23 application. And then how we would proceed is

1 ask questions and Mr. Urda will present any
2 contacts that he may have received by
3 neighbors. I would probably anticipate at the
4 close of the hearing we would be able to vote
5 this evening.

6 MS. SCORDO: Right. Okay. Thank you.
7 What I'm undertaking is I have a kitchen
8 remodel and along with a kitchen remodel there
9 will be an addition, a permanent addition put
10 on the back of the house where there's
11 currently already a deck. I have a covered
12 deck and then an extended deck beyond that. So
13 the addition will take up less space than the
14 current covered deck that's there. I don't
15 know the actual dimensions of the deck. It
16 runs all the way along the back of the house
17 but the addition is only going to be 14 by 14,
18 which is not as far out as the deck goes right
19 now and not as wide as the deck is right now.
20 The purpose for the addition is I would like to
21 have a full bathroom on the first floor with
22 the intent of staying in the house as long as I
23 can and having first floor living. So that

1 right now it's a two-story house so if I needed
2 to ever have to live on the first floor that
3 would be will possible with a full bathroom and
4 washer and dryer on the first floor. I
5 currently now have a half bathroom on the first
6 floor, very small. The kitchen is in need of a
7 total remodel. It's outdated and I want to
8 update it and bring up to standards as far as
9 that goes. And the bathroom and the laundry
10 are going to be in the addition, sorry. So
11 that where the kitchen is now, there will be
12 more space for the kitchen. So the laundry and
13 the bathroom will be in the addition.

14 The reason, I don't have any other place
15 in the downstairs living to put any thing.
16 There is no other space in the first floor to
17 accommodate a bathroom -- a full bathroom,
18 laundry, washer and dryer. So that's the
19 reason for the addition.

20 The lot of my house is a little bit
21 different than other all the houses on Park
22 Drive East. If you look at the tax map, you
23 will see that my property kind of juts in where

1 all of the other houses along Park Drive East
2 go out further to the -- we have a private
3 drive that we all share so I have a lot less
4 space in my backyard as far as my other
5 neighbors.

6 MR. URDA: I can do you one better than
7 the tax map, I'll give you the satellite while
8 she speaks.

9 MS. SCORDO: Thank you. I have spoken to
10 my neighbors on both sides of me. Jean Dolcie
11 [ph] and Travis who lives next door. Travis
12 Hartman [ph]. As far as what I'm doing and
13 what I'm planning and they were very agreeable
14 and had no questions for me or no concerns as
15 far as -- I use to have a pool in my backyard
16 so that was way closer to my neighbor's fence
17 than the addition going is to be there now too
18 so.

19 CHAIRMAN: The enclosed deck is 12 by 12.

20 MS. SCORDO: It's actually just under a
21 roof. It's not enclosed. The undercover part
22 is 12 by 12. I do have a part that's steps up.
23 It used to go out to the pool that was there.

1 We will be using a couple of that -- a couple
2 of feet of that, but it extends further than
3 that.

4 CHAIRMAN: So that deck piece will be
5 removed.

6 MS. SCORDO: Yes, the deck piece will be
7 removed.

8 CHAIRMAN: So that goes beyond that --
9 the deck.

10 MR. BACH: The existing deck has a roof
11 over which, the deck is 12 by 12. The roof is
12 a foot -- well, it will be 14 feet the roof
13 part overhangs come out 13. And then the new
14 addition will be 14 by 14 with a one-foot
15 overhang all the way around.

16 MS. SCORDO: But the deck itself goes
17 beyond 14 feet. It's 16 feet.

18 MR. BACH: It shows in one of the
19 pictures.

20 MS. SCORDO: There are four pictures that
21 we sent along with it. There should be a
22 picture of what it looks like from the back of
23 it.

1 MR. BACH: Kind of a back angle.

2 MR. HICKEY: Oh, I see, okay.

3 MR. URDA: Picture four.

4 MS. SCORDO: Yes, if I look, picture one
5 and then picture -- picture one shows a little
6 bit of it. Kind of where -- picture four, that
7 part that's kind of raised up is not part of
8 the addition; correct?

9 MR. BACH: Right. That's --

10 MS. SCORDO: That will not -- that will
11 just be gone.

12 CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's going to be
13 demolished.

14 MR. BACH: So the covered part is pretty
15 much the same dimension as what we are going to
16 be --

17 CHAIRMAN: The covered part is the
18 12-by-12-foot piece that you referred to.

19 MR. BACH: Yes.

20 CHAIRMAN: The pictures are very helpful
21 by the way.

22 MS. SCORDO: That was Geoff's idea. My
23 contractor and I just took them.

1 CHAIRMAN: It's a great instructional
2 aid.

3 MS. SCORDO: Yes, it is.

4 CHAIRMAN: Questions?

5 MR. HICKEY: No.

6 MS. CROSSMAN: No.

7 CHAIRMAN: I have no further questions.
8 Mr. Urda, did you receive any communications
9 from neighbors that are provided notification
10 of the area variance request?

11 MR. URDA: No communications were
12 received from any neighbors. Neighbors within
13 a 100 feet in either direction got
14 notification.

15 CHAIRMAN: Very good. If there are no
16 further questions, do board members feel
17 comfortable voting this evening?

18 MR. HICKEY: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN: May I have a motion to close
20 the public hearing.

21 MR. HICKEY: Motion made to close the
22 public hearing.

23 MS. CROSSMAN: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN: All in favor?

2 (All signaled aye)

3 CHAIRMAN: We will begin with

4 Ms. Crossman.

5 MS. CROSSMAN: In regard to file no. 556
6 the petition for an area variance at 221 Park
7 Drive East, I vote yes to provide the area
8 variance to reduce the minimum of the 25-foot
9 rear yard setback to -- let me see here --
10 16 feet further reduction, so it's
11 approximately a 9-foot reduction from the rear
12 yard setback. I vote yes.

13 CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hickey.

14 MR. HICKEY: Thank you. This is in
15 regard to area variance no. 556 for 221 Park
16 Avenue East which is requesting a reduction
17 from the 25-foot rear setback. Currently the
18 property already has as 12-by-12 undercover
19 deck to remove to add 14-by-14-foot addition,
20 which is a bathroom and a mud room. Basic
21 requirements for an area variance is you got to
22 consider whether the dimensional alteration
23 being proposed will result in a structural or

1 configuration that will seriously be out of
2 place in the neighborhood. I don't feel it has
3 any variance in the rear of the property and
4 it's not out of place in the neighborhood.
5 There really isn't an alternative. They're
6 actually taking away from a deck that is
7 currently on the property and going to be
8 removed, so that satisfies that requirement.
9 The conformity -- our normal set conformity for
10 an area variance is 15 percent and that is -- I
11 consider this just an additional 2 feet beyond
12 what is already existing, which to me doesn't
13 have any impact. There's not going to be any
14 potential impacts as far as drainage, traffic,
15 dust, noise, odor or an impact for emergency
16 services. I don't consider this to be a
17 self-created difficulty, so I vote yes for area
18 variance 556.

19 CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

20 I have considered the following
21 stipulations for area variance request at 221
22 Park Drive East. The property owner wishes to
23 demolish a 12 by 12 enclosed roof deck and to

1 construct 14-by-14 addition that will be used
2 to replace laundry and bathroom area, which are
3 presently located in the kitchen. In order for
4 the applicant to obtain the desired benefits,
5 it will be necessary to increase the footprint
6 of the addition beyond the square footage of
7 the enclosed deck. Since the property line
8 extending from the house to the back of the
9 yard is 30 linear feet, it remains 16 feet of
10 space to the rear yard setback. Although a
11 setback of 25 feet is required. I do not feel
12 the variance of nine feet, or 36 percent,
13 reduction is substantial as a rear property
14 line consist of a stockade fence and there is
15 ample space between the property line and other
16 structure. This will not produce an
17 undesirable change in the neighborhood or a
18 detriment to near by properties, but will
19 enhance the value the applicant's home.

20 Furthermore, there will be no adverse
21 impacts on the physical and/or environmental
22 conditions in the neighborhood or district. I
23 do not feel this is a self-created difficulty.

1 The applicant desires to improve the property
2 in just a way that it does not negatively
3 impact her neighbors. Moreover, these homes
4 were constructed prior to the enactment of our
5 present code regulations who were built on
6 landlocked parcels.

7 I vote yes to the area variance request
8 that will permit the property owner at 221 Park
9 Drive East to have a 16-foot setback from the
10 proposed addition to the rear of her home.

11 You have three yes votes so
12 congratulations, your variance is granted.

13 MS. SCORDO: Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRMAN: And Mr. Urda will assist with
15 that permit process.

16 MS. SCORDO: Thank you very much.

17 MR. URDA: If you want to stick around
18 for a few minutes after the ZBA signs this I
19 can make you a copy.

20 CHAIRMAN: Your application was very well
21 prepared and it was easy to understand.

22 MS. SCORDO: Geoff was very helpful.

23 CHAIRMAN: That's good to know. Any

1 other business that needs to come before the
2 Zoning Board of Appeals? Mr. Urda, Mr. Lumbis
3 or Ms. Voss?

4 MR. URDA: Mr. Lumbis do you -- you have
5 a brief introduction, but if you want to say
6 anything else?

7 MR. LUMBIS: You know we are looking for
8 potential ZBA candidates. Mr. Thomas, Ms. Voss
9 and myself, along with the city manager who
10 appoints them met with both Benjamin Grass and
11 Christin Filippelli yesterday. We invited them
12 to come to the meeting to get the little -- we
13 told them about it but to actually experience a
14 meeting to see what they thought. So keep you
15 posted and see if they're, after tonight,
16 willing to serve and we'll let you know how
17 that works out.

18 CHAIRMAN: Thank you for coming tonight.
19 It's very much appreciated.

20 MR. GRASS: Thank you for having me.

21 CHAIRMAN: And for your interest in
22 considering a position on the board. If there
23 is no further business tonight, may I have

1 motion to adjourn the meeting?

2 MR. HICKEY: Motion made to adjourn the
3 meeting.

4 MS. CROSSMAN: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN: All in favor?

6 (All signaled aye.)

7 CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

8 (The meeting concluded at 7:18 PM)

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1 STATE OF NEW YORK)

2 COUNTY OF ST. LAWRENCE)

3 I, Mary Elizabeth Burnham, a court reporter in the
4 state of New York, do hereby certify that the foregoing
5 meeting was taken before me, in the cause, at the time
6 and place, as stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1
7 hereof; that the foregoing typewritten transcription of
8 the meeting, consisting of pages number 2 to 16,
9 inclusive, was produced to the best of my ability of
10 said.

11 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my
12 name, this the 26th day of February 2020.

13 Mary E. Burnham
14 Mary E. Burnham, Court Reporter

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