

CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Public Hearing Minutes

March 15, 2021

Call to Order

The public hearing held by the Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order by Chairman Tom Stuchly at 7:04pm on March 15, 2021.

Roll Call

The following board members were present: Chairman Thomas Stuchly, John Hanley, Shannon Harvey, Jim Hughes, and Tom Gregory. Also present were Community Development Coordinator Ken Busse, Recording Secretary Liz Gutierrez, and the petitioners. Chairman Stuchly swore all members in.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Hanley made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2021 meeting as presented, seconded by Commissioner Hughes. All in favor and motion carried.

DOCKET 2021-03: a petition filed by Craig and Jennifer Jensen to allow for a variance for a corner residential lot to allow a Front Yard Fence to extend twenty-nine (29) feet beyond the front building line facing 119th Street (IL Rte 83) for the single-family home located at 11900 S. Richard Avenue (PIN: 23-25-202-033-0000).

The petitioner, Jennifer Jensen approached the podium and stated they are requesting to extend their fence into their side yard to accommodate sensory equipment for their son who has autism and is non-verbal. Not only would this enclosed space allow their son to work on many therapies, but would also provide safety for him from College Drive, which is very busy with cars and trucks (ADT = 18,200 vehicles). There would still be 30 feet between the front face of the new fence and the paved edge of College Drive. The fence would extend the same distance toward College Drive as the fences enclosing the front yards facing College Drive at 11901 Richard Avenue (immediately east), and 11905 S 76th Avenue.

Chairman Stuchly asked about the new fence material and fence height. He is concerned about a possible visual obstruction caused by the fence for cars north-bound on Richard Ave turning westbound onto College Drive.

Commissioner Hanley stated he too was concerned about the possible visual obstruction. However, he reported that a large Blue Spruce pine tree on City right-of-way near the fire hydrant is a bigger concern than the proposed fence that would be positioned farther back from the right-of-way. Ken Busse confirmed that the tree and fire hydrant were within the City right-of-way. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Harvey reiterated that one of the main responsibilities of the ZBA is to make sure there are no visual obstructions when requests for fence variances are presented. Her observations is that there will not be a visual obstruction caused by the fence.

Commissioner Hughes stated that he was more concerned about the speed of cars and trucks traveling along College Drive. His observation too is that the fence would not cause a visual obstruction for vehicles entering or exiting Richard Avenue.

Motion

Commissioner Harvey moved to recommend approval of Docket 2021-03: to allow a Front Yard Fence to extend twenty-nine (29) feet beyond the front building line facing 119th Street (IL Rte 83) on the property containing a single-family home located at 11900 S Richard Avenue, seconded by Commissioner Hughes.

On roll call, the vote was: Ayes: 4 - Hanley, Harvey, Hughes, Gregory; Nays: 1 - Stuchly
There being a 4-1 vote, motion carried.

Ken Busse, advised Mr. & Mrs. Jenson that they should plan to attend the next Planning and Zoning meeting on March 23, 2021 at Palos Heights City Hall. He will follow up with them regarding the next Council meeting will, given the upcoming Election Day.

Finding of Facts

- Commissioner Hughes understands the concern about traffic, however with the fence being 30 feet back from College Drive and there being a stop sign, he is not as concerned. He noted that there is a hardship for the family as well.
- Chairman Stuchly is concerned about the traffic and a possible obstruction. He is concerned about the attractiveness of the fence.
- Commissioner Hanley stated he understands the unique situations that corner lots have and does not feel an obstruction will be an issue.
- Commissioner Gregory stated that he does not feel the fence will hinder drivers who are driving properly and believes the esthetic will be fine.
- Commissioner Harvey stated that the white fence will look pretty. She thinks because the fence is sitting 30 feet away from College Drive that it should be sufficient and not cause an obstructing views. She feels corner lot rules should be looked at/changed in order to attract more families. She feels above all, we are a city of families and we should do everything we can to help our families.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Commissioner Hanley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Hughes. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20pm

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Gutierrez
Recording Secretary