

September 10th, 2019
City of Erie, Pennsylvania
ZONING HEARING BOARD
1:00 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Zoning Hearing Board was held Tuesday, September 10, 2019 at 1:00 P.M. in City Council Chambers, City of Erie Municipal Building, 626 State Street, Erie, PA.

-- MINUTES --

THE FOLLOWING APPEAL WAS HEARD:

Appeal No. 12,206 by Paula & Blair Umlah (6152-111) concerning property located at 3604 Allegheny Road, in an R-1 zoning district. The appellant is seeking a dimensional variance to place a shed in the front yard portion of her property. Per Section 205.18 of the Erie City Zoning Ordinance, accessory structures are to be placed in the side or rear yard.

Findings of Fact

1. The appellant Paula Umlah appeared to represent herself, and told the Board that she is proposing to build a large shed on her Allegheny Road residential property. The house, she said, sits on a corner lot, and as such technically does not have a back yard. As a result, her proposal violates the City Zoning Ordinance with respect to detached accessory structures in an R-1 zoning district.
2. Referring to several site plans, photographs and other supporting documents that were included with the appellant's application, Mrs. Umlah showed that with the house sitting on a corner lot as it does, both the front door and front yard face Allegheny Road (address 3604 Allegheny Rd.). There is shrubbery, she said, that faces West 36th Street in the rear of the house; it will remain as it is, behind the proposed shed.
3. The size of the proposed shed will be 12' x 28'. The relatively large size is because of the needs of the appellant. Mrs. Umlah explained that she suffers from a chronic auto-immune disease, that can flair to such a point where she is wheelchair ridden. The large shed will allow her to store the various devices (e.g. walkers, canes, power and manual wheelchairs, etc...) that are related to her illness, while providing enough space to have three separate doors installed, allowing alternative entry in case of bad weather or other impediments.
4. The proposed structure would be movable. Even though the appellants have lived at this residence for more than fifty years, and have no plans to move, the mobile shed could be moved, or even removed, if desired in the future.

5. The fact that the shed would not be a permanent structure prompted questions from the Board about the foundation of the shed. The appellant answered the Board's questions by indicating that the proposal could be amended to have a cement base, but the current proposal is for the structure to be constructed on what she referred to as "impacted gravel."
6. The Board received letters from three neighbors, indicating that they have no objections to the appellant's proposed shed. Mrs. Unlah reiterated that the shed would enable her to be more mobile and independent, and would not require the use of a "L.I.F.T.", or other special transportation needs.

Conclusions

1. The appellant proposes building a 12' x 28' shed in the rear of her corner, residential property.
2. Since the house is on a corner lot, technically there is no backyard. The appellant's front door faces Allegheny Road, and the rear of their house face West 36th Street.
3. According to Section 205.18 of the Erie City Zoning Ordinance, accessory structures are to be placed in the side or rear yard
4. There is a shrubbery that runs along the appellant's rear property line, and that shrubbery will remain in place if the proposed shed is built.

Decision

By a unanimous decision, the Board voted to approve the appellant's request for a variance to put up a shed. Board members Mike Hornyak, Selena King, Edward Dawson and John Reitingger all voted to approve the variance request.

It is So Ordered.
