

CITY OF WALKER

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Thursday, January 28, 2010

7:00 p.m.

The meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order by Robert Marz, Chairman at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W., Walker, Michigan.

Members present: Robert Marz, Chairman; Roger Crabtree; Charles Deschaine; Brian Boelens; Sandra Howland; Beth Rogers and James Hickey. Also present: Jeff Nelson, Building Official; and Sarah Bydalek, Recording Secretary.

DECISION AND ORDER

Legal Description

Property located at 1401 Ferndale, SW also known on the tax rolls as 41-17-06-126-017. Hearing requested by The Society for Protestant Reformed Secondary Ed.

The applicant's request is to erect an addition to Covenant Christian's High School with a 29' rear yard to the west, instead of the 50' required.

Finding of Facts

Robert Marz, Chairman reviewed the application and site plan submitted.

No other citizens appeared on behalf of this variance.

Neil Bauman, President, Design Forum; 59 Ionia SW, Grand Rapids, appeared on behalf of this request. Neal stated Covenant Christian High School would like to erect an addition, with this said, they are asking for a 29' rear yard setback to the west instead of the 50' required. The plan is to expand the building south, then have the building turn and go east. Neal stated this addition will create a corridor around the building.

Robert Marz, Chairman, asked if they have spoken with the City Engineer and Planner regarding closing of the circle drive. They have not spoken with them; they only received a letter from Scott Connors, Engineer, in the mail.

Beth Rogers, asked Neil if he had considered contacting the Engineering department, regarding a site plan review before bringing this to the Zoning Board of Appeals?

Mr. Bauman stated there was no request from the City of Walker to have a site plan review meeting prior to bringing it to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

James Hickey asked if Neil is familiar with the parking problems at the end of the cul-de-sac on Ferndale? Mr. Bauman said he was not personally aware of any possible problems or issues.

Mr. Hickey recommended going to Site Plan Review, then to the Planning Commission, before coming back to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Hickey also suggested stretching out the addition farther North, rather than hindering the access, and causing issues with traffic in this cul-de-sac area.

Mr. Bauman, stated Frank Wash, Planner told them to bring this to the Zoning Board of Appeals first before going to site plan review. He would like to see an approval of the variance, and then proceed with this to the Site Plan Review and Planning Commission.

Commission Deschaine asked if this variance can be approved with a condition of approval from the Planning Commission and Site Plan Review. The consensus was no.

Commissioner Deschaine stated it is important to review this with the Planning Commission and Site Plan Review, so we have collaboration with everyone.

Beth Rogers stated she had multiple concerns with the impact on the area and community.

Jim Van Overloop, 1954 Pine Grove, Jenison, member of Planning Committee for the Society for Protestant Reformed for Secondary Education, stated it seems the main concerns are the parking issues and traffic on Ferndale, and the expansion of five classrooms that you have mentioned, which we are actually asking to build eight additional classrooms. Jim feels these issues are site plan issues, not variance issues.

Mr. Marz stated the importance is to get emergency vehicles and snowplow equipment into this cul-de-sac with ease of turning around.

Mr. Bauman stated this is a site plan issue, not a building issue. We are asking for 29' rear yard in the west, instead of the 50' required. They cannot move forward without this zoning variance, because it doesn't meet zoning ordinance. We need to have the variance granted before we can go forward for site plan approval.

Jeff Nelson, Building Official, stated the 29' setback variance could be granted, but they would still have to go to Site Plan Review for further details to be worked out. Currently the setback is where the round-about is located. You could grant approval of the setback, but not approval of the building.

Commissioner Deschaine asked if this Public Hearing can be expedited in moving thru Site Plan Review and Planning Commission, or are we in a time frame constraint?

Mr. Marz asked if this was a side yard variance for a house with unknown plans, would this be approved? Mr. Marz said he cannot approve this variance without knowing how the site plan review will be handled.

Motion by Charles Deschaine, seconded by Beth Rogers, to table the applicant's request to erect an addition to Covenant Christian's High School with a 29' rear yard to the west, instead of the 50' required. Motion carried 6-1, with Roger Crabtree opposed.

Motion by Sandra Howland, seconded by James Hickey, to approve the Zoning Board of Appeals minutes of January 14, 2010. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Discussion: The board discussed changing their meeting schedule to the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, instead of Thursdays. The board agreed with this, and it will be brought to the City Commission for final approval on February 8, 2010.

Motion by Roger Crabtree, seconded by James Hickey to adjourn the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting at 8:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Roger G. Crabtree
Zoning Board of Appeals Secretary

Sarah Bydalek
Recording Secretary