

The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of January 7, 2020 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 6:30 p.m., at the Municipal Services Building, 800 Field Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Chairman Jim Diamond and Board members, Joanne Bluhm, John Looby, Fred Moyer, James Sykora and Richard Walther

Building Review Board members absent: Chris Bires

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development
Jennifer Baehr, Assistant Planner

**1. Introduction of Board members and staff, overview of meeting procedures –
Chairman Diamond**

Chairman Diamond reviewed the role of the Building Review Board and the meeting procedures followed by the Board. He asked the members of the Board and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the December 4, 2019 meeting of the Building Review Board.

The minutes of the December 4, 2019 meeting were approved as submitted.

**3. Consideration of a request for approval of a building scale variance to allow the addition of a pergola in the rear yard at 170 Savanna Court.
Property Owners: Daniel and Emily Houlihan
Representative: Marco Romani, Landscape Architect**

Chairman Diamond asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Romani introduced the project on behalf of the property owners. He presented a site plan and described the location of the house in relation to the adjacent properties noting the preserved open land to the west. He explained that the existing house is over the allowable square footage for the property. He noted that the residence is 6,605 square feet. He stated that with the proposed pergola, the house exceeds the allowable square footage. He explained that the pergola is cedar with a bead board ceiling and aluminum trim to protect the structure from the rain and snow. He stated that the design of the pergola is consistent with the City's design standards. He gave an overview of the criteria for a building scale variance, adding that the pergola meets the criteria. He stated that the Conservation Easement on the south side of the property is intended to provide

dense screening along the south property line in perpetuity. He added that the north side of the site is lined with Norway Spruces.

Ms. Baehr stated that this petition is before the Board because of the building scale variance that is required to allow construction of the pergola. She explained that the existing house, in its current condition, is over the maximum allowable square footage by seven percent. She stated that only a portion of the pergola can be counted as a design element due to the amount of existing design elements on the house. She added that the remaining square footage of the pergola, the square footage that, in combination with existing design elements on the house exceeds the design element allowance, contributes to the existing overage. She stated that with the existing residence and proposed pergola, the total overage totals 686 square feet, or ten percent over the allowable square footage. She explained that the criteria for a building scale variance are detailed in the staff report and address the siting, design and visibility of the pergola.

Board member Moyer stated that the pergola is well designed and consistent with the character of the house. He expressed concern that the approval of the building scale variance for a pergola could become a precedent for future petitions.

In response to questions from Board member Sykora, Ms. Baehr explained that a pergola is considered a design element because it is an open structure that does not add a significant appearance of mass. She explained that because this house already has square footage that contributes toward the design elements allowance, only a portion of the pergola can be exempt.

In response to questions from Board member Sykora, Mr. Romani stated that the pergola roof is aluminum.

Board member Looby complemented the design of the pergola but encouraged the petitioners to consider the potential for snow and ice forming on the roof.

In response to Board member Looby, Ms. Baehr stated that currently, the home has a large screen porch which uses much of the design element allowance.

Board member Looby stated that because the pergola is an open structure and there is significant screening, the criteria for a variance appears to be met.

Ms. Czerniak commented that there is a unique condition with this site because it is adjacent to preserved open space both to the south and the west.

Board member Bluhm stated support for the variance due to the unique conditions of the site. She noted that a portion of the basement is exposed, contributing to the square footage of the home. She stated that similar structures and hardscaping can be found throughout the neighborhood.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Ms. Czerniak stated that when the

residence was built, it complied with the building scale regulations that were in effect at that time. She explained that since the house was constructed, the building scale provisions in the Code were amended resulting in the overage now proposed. She explained that the lot is adjacent to preserved open space on the east and south sides, one of the criteria that can be used to support a variance. She added that the additional mass resulting from the pergola is located out of view from the streetscape.

Board member Walther suggested that because the pergola is an open structure that does not add to the appearance of mass on the property a condition should be included in the Board's recommendation that the pergola must remain open.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Ms. Czerniak explained that if the Board recommends approval of the petition, the recommendation is then forwarded to City Council for approval. She stated that the City Council approves the project by Ordinance. She noted that the plans as approved by the Board and City Council are attached as exhibits to the Ordinance. She added that Board approval would be required if enclosure of the pergola is proposed in the future.

In response to questions from Board Looby, Ms. Czerniak clarified that a condition prohibiting the future enclosure of the pergola would only apply to a type of enclosure that would require a permit, not to temporary shades. She noted that any changes requiring a building permit would require Board approval and would be considered in the context of any pre-existing conditions of approval.

Board member Walther noted that the beams of the pergola appear thin, and suggested consideration of a thicker beam.

Board member Moyer expressed support for the thin framing of the pergola.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, Ms. Czerniak reviewed the criteria for a building scale variance emphasizing variances are not prohibited by the Code, but must be considered through a process and evaluated based on the applicable criteria in the Code. She clarified that the role of staff and the Board is to review the criteria and determine whether this particular request meets the criteria.

Chairman Diamond agreed that a condition limiting future enclosure of the pergola should be part of the Board's recommendation. Hearing no further questions or comments from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited public comments. Hearing none, Chairman Diamond invited a motion.

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of a building scale variance to allow construction of a pergola based on the findings in the staff report, the testimony presented by the petitioner, and incorporating the Board's deliberations as additional findings. He noted that the approval is subject to the following conditions.

1. The pergola shall remain open in nature to minimize the appearance of mass.

2. If any modifications are made to the plans that were presented to the Board, either in response to Board direction, or as the result of final design development, the modifications shall be clearly called out on the plan and a copy of the plan originally provided to the Board shall be attached for comparison purposes. Staff is directed to review any changes, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to determine whether the modifications are in conformance with the Board's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.
3. Details of all exterior lighting shall be provided with the plans submitted for permit. All fixtures shall direct light downward and the source of the light shall be fully shielded from view by the fixture or by sight obscuring glass. All exterior lights shall be on timers set to turn off no later than 11 p.m. except for motion detection security lights.
4. A plan for construction parking and materials' staging shall be submitted for review and will be subject to approval by the City's Certified Arborist, City Engineer and Director of Community Development.

The motion was seconded by Board member Looby and approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

OTHER ITEMS

4. Opportunity for the public to address the Building Review Board on non-agenda items.

There was no additional public testimony presented to the Board.

5. Additional information from staff.

No additional information was presented by staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Assistant Planner