

# MEETING MINUTES



Village of Homewood  
Planning and Zoning Commission  
Thursday, August 27, 2020  
7:30 p.m.

Village Hall Board Room  
and audio conferencing  
2020 Chestnut Road  
Homewood, IL 60430

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Sierzega called the meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:31 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Members attended remotely via zoom: Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Planera, and Chairman Sierzega; Present from the Village was Economic and Community Development Director Angela Mesaros and Building Department Secretary Darlene Leonard linked remotely. Members Alfonso and Johnson were absent.

**NOTE:** Due to the Governor's emergency order because of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing recommendations, and the Chairman finding that, pursuant to Public Act 101-0640, an in-person meeting was not prudent, conducted the meeting via video/audio. This meeting was open to the public. All Commissioners and the public were able to hear one another as well as all discussion.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of August 13, 2020. Member O'Brien stated that he had stated the comment about 15.9% and that it was 28% not 26%. A motion was made by Member O'Brien to approve the minutes of August 13 2020 as corrected; seconded by Member Cap.

**AYES:** Members Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Planera, and Chairman Sierzega.

**NAYS:** None

**ABSTENTIONS:** None

**ABSENT:** Members Alfonso and Johnson

**Case No. 20-13 – Variance from Section 22.95 to permit a fence in the front yard at 19055 Center Avenue:**

Chairman Sierzega asked Staff to explain the application and asked if any calls had been received. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that two calls had been received in support of the fence.

Chairman Sierzega introduced the petitioner, Calvin Harden, who presented the application.

Mr. Harden apologized for not getting the process right regarding the fence. Mr. Harden stated that the property burned down several years ago, including the fence. Mr. Harden stated that he has been fighting with the insurance company to replace the fence. Mr. Harden was unaware that he needed a permit to re-erect the fence.

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Mr. Harden stated that the fence is in this location to hide his wife's vegetable garden. Mr. Harden stated the garden is unsightly because it is vegetables and not flowers. Mr. Harden stated that he was unaware that a corner lot is considered to have two front yards.

Mr. Harden stated that prior to installing the fence he spoke with the neighbor next door and the neighbor across the street and both residents were okay with the 5 foot fence being installed.

Chairman Sierzega asked how long has the fence been up. Mr. Harden stated the fence has been up for two months.

Member Planera stated he had a question for Staff and asked for clarification on how far the fence extends past the front of the house, and it appears from the survey to be 20 feet. Mr. Harden stated that the distance is 31 feet from the house to the lot line, and that from the garage it is approximately 20 feet. Mr. Harden stated that from north to south is 31 feet and from the garage from west to east it is 21 feet.

Member Planera asked how far the distance from the garage to 191<sup>st</sup> Street is. Mr. Harden stated the distance is 3-4 feet from the South wall to the fence.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that the plat may have been read wrong as 26 feet from house to 191<sup>st</sup> Street, but that it actually should be 36 feet.

Member Planera asked if the fence was 3-4 feet from the garage wall to 191<sup>st</sup> Street. Mr. Harden stated yes.

Member Planera stated he did recall the fire and asked if the tree was still there. Mr. Harden stated that the evergreen tree is outside the fence.

Member Planera stated as Mr. Harden found out, corner lots are peculiar as they have two front yards, and asked Mr. Harden if the fence is 5 feet in height. Mr. Harden stated that is correct.

Mr. Harden stated that he had driven around and he has seen other houses with similar situations.

Member Planera asked if the fence was there prior to the fire. Mr. Harden stated yes. Mr. Harden stated that he had been fighting with the insurance company to pay for the fence and the landscaping, because both were destroyed by the fire and the trucks. Mr. Harden stated that the insurance company finally agreed to pay for it and now it is better than it was.

Member Planera stated that he is encouraged that it is a five foot fence and not a six foot fence. Member Planera stated that he has no issue with it. Member Planera stated that he does not think the fence exceeded the limits and Mr. Harden's responses to the standards were appropriate and he has no issue with the application.

Member O'Brien stated that in the application it did not list the zoning action and he is trying to confirm that the letter attached goes with the application as it is not dated. Mr. Harden stated that yes, the letter does go with the application and that he was told that certain things were not required as it is not a store, etc. and that everything was not filled out because he was told it was not necessary.

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Member O'Brien stated that he is trying to clarify the information on the plat. The dark line on the right is the east side of the property and runs west to another line running west. Mr. Harden stated yes.

Member O'Brien stated that he is trying to clarify the numbers. The numbers are 29 for the house and another four feet. Mr. Harden stated yes, for the south side of the garage to 191<sup>st</sup> Street. Mr. Harden stated that the fence does not extend to the garage wall; it is four feet from the garage wall.

Member O'Brien asked if there is a gate or if the fence is open. Mr. Harden stated that there is no gate.

Member O'Brien asked if the garden is on the south-side of the fence. Mr. Harden stated the garden is on the east side of the garage and the south side of the house.

Member O'Brien asked if the fence is in the same position as before the fire. Mr. Harden stated the fence is in the same location and they were able to reuse the existing post holes. Mr. Harden stated the fence prior was a picket fence and it offered no privacy. The new fence also hides the garbage and recycling cans.

Member O'Brien asked Mr. Harden if the fence was there when they bought the house. Mr. Harden stated that they bought the house in 1999 and the fence was there before buying the house.

Member Cap asked Mr. Harden if he had given thought to alternative ways to screen the garden such as shrubs or a tree. Mr. Harden stated he had looked into other ways to screen.

Member Cap asked if there were pictures of the garden. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that there are pictures.

Mr. Harden stated that the neighbor had to look at the garbage without the fence. Mr. Harden stated that he spoke to the neighbor about hiding the cans and he was okay with extending the fence to hide the garbage cans.

Member Cap asked Mr. Harden if the fence was in the exact same spot, but just one foot higher. Mr. Harden stated yes, it is taller and used the same post holes.

Member Bransky stated that he had no questions, he does not have a problem with the fence, and the location does not impede the sight lines for traffic or the yards.

Mr. Harden stated that he has gotten a lot of compliments on the fence, asked who did it, etc. and that he is telling them that a permit is needed.

Chairman Sierzega stated that he does not have a problem with the fence and the fact that it is five feet tall and not six feet tall is in Mr. Harden's favor. Having the fence provides plenty of visibility for 191<sup>st</sup> Street and Center Avenue and it is a nice looking fence. The fence doesn't look like a wall to hide the house. Chairman Sierzega stated that he does not have an issue with the fence.

Motion was made by Member O'Brien for approval of Case 20-13 to grant an Administrative Variance for fence height at 19055 Center Avenue; seconded by Member Bransky.

AYES: Members Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Planera, and Chairman Sierzega.

NAYS: None.

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Alfonso and Johnson

**Case No. 20-17 – Variance from Section 8.2A to permit a detached garage exceeding the size limitations at 18436 Dixie Highway:**

Chairman Sierzega introduced and swore in the petitioner, Dan Warning, property owner; who presented the application.

Chairman Sierzega stated that Mr. Warning is requesting permission to exceed 936 square feet for a detached garage at 18436 Dixie Highway.

Chairman Sierzega stated that he has been watching the course of construction/renovation and the house has turned out very nice. Mr. Warning thanked Chairman Sierzega and stated that his wife loves it. Mr. Warning stated the house is 90 years old and putting it back together has been a labor of love. He bought it in 2018.

Mr. Warning stated that he had a large workshop previously and he wants to have a workshop in the rear of the garage to do custom built-ins for inside the house. Mr. Warning stated that the proposed garage would be a two-car garage with the wood shop in the rear. Mr. Warning stated he had tried to do the layout in other ways that complied with the code, but they did not work out. He is requesting an extra 144 square feet for a workable layout. Mr. Warning stated that the previous garage was in really bad shape so it was demolished. The new garage will meet building code. Mr. Warning stated that the neighbors on both sides are happy with the improvements to the property. The new garage will reflect the appearance of the house with the siding and architectural details. From the street it will look like a regular garage and will not stand out.

Chairman Sierzega asked Mr. Warning if the additional space would be behind the house and to the south. Mr. Warning stated that yes that is correct.

Chairman Sierzega stated that he no other questions at this time.

Member Bransky stated that he looked up the property on Google Earth which shows the framing on the front porch and asked if that was the old garage that was shown. Mr. Warning stated that yes that is the old garage.

Member Bransky asked Mr. Warning if the new height garage would be taller. Mr. Warning stated that inside would be a loft ceiling of 10 feet and the roof pitch would reflect that. Mr. Warning stated that the maximum height allowed by the village is 17 feet and the planned height is 16 feet.

Member Bransky asked Mr. Warning if the garage would have a split ridge line. Mr. Warning stated the garage would have one long ridge line from east to west with a gable on the main roof. Mr. Warning stated that a flat roof is possible, but the gable is better aesthetically.

Member Bransky asked if there would be a man-door and if the garage would be a standard 2-car garage door. Mr. Warning stated that a man-door would be on the front left corner on the south wall with a flagstone walkway. The shop would be accessible in the garage with a set of double doors.

Member Bransky stated it is a good plan.

Member O'Brien asked Mr. Warning what the size of the lot is. Mr. Warning stated the lot is approximately 50' x 169'.

Member O'Brien stated that the finding of facts should be changed from 114 square feet to 144 square feet. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated she would make the change.

Member O'Brien stated that in the variance standards the application does not meet #1 and 2, but it does meet #3. Member O'Brien stated that it seems like a good design.

Member Cap asked Mr. Warning what he planned to do for storage of mowers and other items normally stored in a garage. Mr. Warning stated he has designed additional space for cabinets for lawn tools, the mower, and other items within the garage.

Member Cap stated that in this classification the maximum size allowed is 936 square feet and the property owner is allowed a shed of 144 square feet which would give a little over 1000 square feet total. Member Cap asked Mr. Warning if he would want a shed in the future. Mr. Warning stated that no, he would not need a shed. Mr. Warning stated that he would be keeping the garage at a temperature of 45-50° which is important for the wood working equipment and that he has found that temperature range is good for lawn equipment as well.

Member Cap stated that he had no further questions.

Member O'Brien asked Mr. Warning what kind of equipment and chemical finishes would he use in wood-working, and if they would be a fire hazard. Mr. Warning stated he has switched to all water-based stains and finishes for his health and safety. Mr. Warning stated that he would have a system installed for dirt collection and mitigation, which will be properly grounded and meet code.

Member Planera stated that member Cap must have stolen his notes, because they were the exact questions he was going to ask. Member Planers stated that a shed should be limited in future use because of the maximum square feet allowed at this point.

Member Planera asked Mr. Warning if the back wall of the garage would be open or if there would be a wall there. Mr. Warning stated that there would be a wall.

Member Planera asked, to clarify, at the Dixie side of the garage, would it be a hip or a gable and what would the pitch be. Mr. Warning stated that it would be a gable view and the pitch would be 5 or 6/12. Mr. Warning stated that he wanted to hit the numbers that were allowed.

Member Planera stated that he no issues and no more questions.

Chairman Sierzega asked Mr. Warning if he planned to have heat in the expanded garage and if it would be gas or electric. Mr. Warning stated that he would have heat in the garage, but he had not decided which kind. Mr. Warning stated that he was hoping to use gas heat, but will install whatever is allowed by the Village. Mr. Warning stated that the old garage had a wall furnace in it, but the gas line to it has been disconnected.

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Chairman Sierzega stated that the garage would be a nice improvement to the neighborhood and that he had no further questions.

Motion was made by Member Planera for approval of Case 20-13 to grant an Administrative Variance for an oversized garage at 18436 Dixie Highway; seconded by Member Cap

AYES: Members Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Planera, and Chairman Sierzega.

NAYS: None.

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Alfonso and Johnson

**NEW BUSINESS:** Chairman Sierzega asked Staff Liaison Mesaros about any upcoming cases/meetings. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that the parking structure for the casino proposal would be on the agenda for the second meeting in September. East Hazel Crest has already approved the PUD for the portion of the casino in E. Hazel Crest. Zoning has to be in place as required by the State prior to it being awarded.

At the next meeting, the site plan for Ely's Trailer Park is on the agenda. Chairman Sierzega asked if it would be remaining a mobile home park. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated yes, it would.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated also two zoning variance applications and one special use applications received.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Chairman Sierzega asked the status of the Triumph Building. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that it would likely be demolished until spring 2021 due to delays as a result of COVID-19. Chairman Sierzega asked if the purchase of the building had been finalized. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated no, not yet. The builder must have two leases before closing on the property.

Chairman Sierzega asked if the townhouses on Harwood would be going forward, as the signs are down. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that they are not moving forward.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Member Planera moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m., seconded by Member Cap. Motion passed by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

*Angela Mesaros*

Angela M. Mesaros  
Staff Liaison