

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES
City of Geneva
109 James Street - City Council Chambers

JULY 28, 2022 — Meeting #43

Chairman Stocking called the meeting of the Geneva Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m., and read a statement of procedures for participation in the meeting for those present remotely and in person.

Roll Call:

Present: Chairman Scott Stocking, Commissioners Rebecca Holoman; Adam Matyskiel; John Mead; Tim Moran; and Michael Slifka

Absent: Commissioner Mim Evans

Staff Present: City Planner Chayton True and Assistant Planner Matt Buesing

Also Present: Jonathan and Amber Hylton, Applicants of Request for Variation
1258 Meadows Road; Planet Depos Court Reporter Paula Quetsch;

and Recording Secretary Vanessa Quail

Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Moran, second by Commissioner Slifka to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote 6-0.

Approval of July 14, 2022 Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Mead, second by Commissioner Slifka to approve the July 14, 2022 minutes. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

Requests for a Variation from Section 11-11C-3 (Access Control Standards for Streets) to allow more than two driveway entrances; and a Variation from Section 11-5B-4 (Lot and Area Requirements) to increase the allowable lot coverage from 35% to 38.13%.

Location: 1258 Meadows Road

Applicant: Jonathan and Amber Hylton

City Planner True read the contents of the planning file. Chairman Stocking administered the oath to those who will provide testimony.

The Applicant, Mr. Jonathan Hylton addressed the Commission, and provided a summary of his Letter of Intent which seeks the addition of a semi-circle driveway oriented in the front of the house with two access points on Meadows Road. He explained that the one existing driveway access point is situated on the side of the house along Dryden Road which is a private roadway, not maintained by the City. Mr. Hylton said that the existing driveway is not a practical access point to the house, given the existing driveway's distance from the house, as well as the difficulty to navigate on foot to the entrance

of the house Mr. Hylton also described concerns related to the absence of a curb on Meadows Road, namely that of pedestrian safety as well as the ongoing damage to lawn and landscaping caused by parking and heavy traffic. He said that the approval of his requests would provide a reasonable use for the front yard, and alleviate the practical difficulty of the continual repair of the lawn and landscaping. He noted that the plan would fit in with the character of the neighborhood because there are 19 homes in the immediate area which have semicircle driveways; and there are two homes within 500 feet of his property that have three access points. Mr. Hylton concluded his remarks by commending city staff, in particular City Planner True, for his helpfulness throughout the application process.

Commissioner Mead asked the applicant to clarify that the change in width of the proposed semicircle driveway, from 12 feet to 15 feet, is to accommodate a reasonable turn radius around the bend, and to allow another vehicle to pass. The Applicant confirmed that is correct, and cited the same reason for the additional lot coverage request. He added that it would not be practical to cut off the access on Dryden Road, since that is the entry point to the garages.

Commissioner Holoman inquired about the other options Applicant referred to in his opening remarks. The Applicant explained that the one option discussed was to bring the driveway in off of Meadows to Dryden; but that it would cause the design to slope and connect back with a narrow turn radius, which would also not fit in with the aesthetic of the neighborhood. It would also require the removal of a tree on the corner which the Applicant does not want to do. Applicant added that the neighbors in the area are all supportive of the plan, because they agree with safety concerns since Meadows Road is congested with traffic and pedestrians.

Commissioner Holoman asked staff why there are no curbs, and if there would be any plans to construct curbs in the future. City Planner True indicated that the reason is unknown, but noted it would be a capital improvement project for the city; and that he was not aware of any such plans in the future.

Mr. Hylton explained that Dryden Road is actually privately maintained in four segments for which he is responsible for half and two other neighbors are responsible for the other half. He said that the reason the City does not maintain it is because of the depth of the pavement. Commissioner Mead asked for clarification from staff about what distinguishes public and private access points; and City Planner True read from the code and confirmed that Dryden Road is indeed considered an access point, by definition. Applicant indicated that he was surprised to learn during the application process, that Dryden Road was considered an access point since it is a private road. Commissioner Mead stated that the two access points in the request would be on the public road, which is the street address of the house. Applicant noted that he initially thought that he would not have needed a variation because he assumed the two proposed access points on Meadows Road would have been compliant, with Dryden Road not counting as a third since it is private.

Chairman Stocking invited additional testimony from the public or virtual participants. He noted that there was no one present online, nor any further public testimony.

Motion by Commissioner Moran, second by Commissioner Mead to close the public hearing. Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Holoman; Matyskiel; Mead, Moran; Slifka; and Stocking
NAY: None

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

City planner True reminded the Commission that there are four standards which should be met, as outlined in the Findings of Fact prepared by staff. He noted that three of the four standards are not

met, as written; and that the commission would have to amend the findings of fact if the motion is made in the affirmative, on both access control and lot coverage.

The Commissioners proceeded to discuss the request for variations, with Commissioners Mead and Moran evaluating the meaning of “reasonable return.” They agreed that the proposal would make the property more attractive, accessible, and more easily identified by address; and that the impacts would include maintaining the value of the property, in addition to protecting the public safety as well as the landscaping and aesthetic. Commissioner Slifka concurred that the project would add to the value of the property. Chairman Stocking added that the street currently does not provide adequate passageway, and that the plan would allow delivery trucks to use the semicircle driveway, thereby keeping them off the street. Commissioner Matyskiel concurred and stated that half circle driveways are common to the area, and that Meadows Road does have blind spots which are of concern for neighborhood safety.

The Commissioners agreed that the reasoning for the three access points as described in the application, is acceptable and would meet the standard of reasonable return.

Discussion continued regarding lot coverage. Commissioner Mead said that that even though the plan exceeds the standard of allowable coverage, it is reasonable because it allows for safe navigation both on the street and the driveway. He asked City Planner True if the driveway lot coverage standard would be met if the entirety of the semicircle driveway were 12 feet wide. City Planner True indicated that it would not be in compliance whether it was 12 or 15 feet. Mr. Hylton added that the 15-foot wide expanse is needed for an adequate turning radius. Commissioner Moran stated that the applicant has presented a sound plan with adequate reasoning, noting that a 12-foot wide driveway would not be feasible, because it would too severely limit the turning radius. He added that the geometry of the front lawn, along with the way the house is situated, would also not allow for any other feasible alternative without exceeding the 35%. The Commission had no objection to the hardship as presented by the Applicant.

The Commissioners agreed that Applicant’s reasoning for additional lot coverage is sufficient, is justified due to the tight turning radius of the semicircle design, and is acceptable given the constraints of any alternatives.

Motion by Commissioner Mead to allow a variation for the property at 1258 Meadows Road, from Section 11-11C-3 (Access Control Standards for Streets) to allow more than two driveway entrances, subject to the amended findings of fact for Standards 1A (Access Control) and 1B (Lot Coverage) contained in the staff report. Second by Commissioner Moran. Roll Call:

AYE: Holoman; Matyskiel; Mead, Moran; Slifka; and Stocking

NAY: None

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

Motion by Commissioner Mead to approve a variation from Section 11-5B-4 (RE Estate Single Family Residential District - Lot and Area Requirements) to increase the allowable lot coverage from 35% to 38.13% of the residence commonly known as 1258 Meadows Road, subject to the amended findings of fact for Standard 2B (Lot Coverage) contained in the staff report. Second by Commissioner Moran. Roll Call:

AYE: Holoman; Matyskiel; Mead, Moran; Slifka; and Stocking

NAY: None

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

City Planner True said that both recommendations will be considered by the City Council on Monday, August 15, 2022. Chairman Stocking thanked the applicant for his presentation.

Public Comment

Chairman Stocking invited further public comment. There were none in person or online.

Other Business

City Planner True announced that a commission, council and staff appreciation event on August 18th will be held at a Kane County Cougars game. He asked that all those interested should reach out to staff to RSVP with the information found on the flyer that had been distributed.

City Planner True noted upcoming items for the next meeting on August 11th: Fox Valley Commerce Center will be bringing in their final approvals for subdivision and site plan review, for which no public hearing is required; and a concept review will be presented for a new truck repair business on east State Street on the eastern edge of Geneva.

City Planner True also mentioned that staff sent their recommendations to City Council regarding the Verizon tower at Oscar Swan that will be considered at the August 8th City Council meeting, which is a special meeting due to the amount of public interest.

Chairman Stocking asked staff about what appears to be a crane and a new tower near Delnor Hospital; and City Planner True explained that Delnor had expansion plans approved in February; but that staff would look into it further.

City Planner True said that there will be two public hearings coming up on the August 25th Planning & Zoning Meeting: (1) a dentist office looking to build on the south side of State Street, across from the Dairy Queen, seeking a variation for street setback because of the State Street widening project; and (2) staff will be proposing a text amendment for fence height to allow 48" fences in side yards for some properties with pools. Currently corner lots have a maximum fence height of 42"; but a height of 48" is required for properties with a pool; and consequently, staff has received a lot of requests for variations.

Commissioner Holoman asked for an update on the Evenflow sign. City Planner True confirmed that the sign had been taken down.

Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Mead to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote 6-0.