



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MINUTES

Meeting on Wednesday, May 21, 2025 at 7:00 pm

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Chairman Tom Smith. Also present were board members AnnMarie Fusco, Joe Gunset, Hilary Kao, Counsel John Loveless, Conservation Board Liaison Marilyn Shapiro, and Administrator Nicole Engel.

Mr. Smith explained that the applicant first presents his/her case before the Board. Board members, as well as members of the public, may ask questions. The hearing is then normally closed, and the members discuss the application. After the hearing is closed, neither the public nor the applicants are normally allowed to comment.

Mr. Smith stated that the Board usually votes at the meeting, but if there is an issue to be resolved, a decision could be held off until the following meeting.

The meeting was called to order and the minutes from the previous meeting on April 16, 2025 were approved. A motion was made to approve the minutes as presented.

Mr. Kao made a motion to approve the April 16, 2025 minutes. Ms. Fusco seconded. All in favor.

Robert & Theresa Molinaro, 1 Bengier Road, Pound Ridge, NY 10576, also known as Block 9830, Lot 16, Zone R-3A. The application for approval to construct a 20' by 20' two-story addition, located 22' from a side property line is disapproved on the following grounds: Section 113-37 of the Code of the Town of Pound Ridge requires a 50' side yard setback. In order for this application to move forward, a 28' side yard variance will be required.

Present: Robert & Theresa Molinaro

Rob Molinaro presented the application for a 20' by 20' addition to their house. He explained that the addition would be 400 square feet on each floor, totaling 800 square feet. Mr. Molinaro addressed the five criteria for granting a variance, stating that they believed the addition would not create an undesirable change in the neighborhood and would instead improve the property's appearance. He mentioned they had written approval from a direct neighbor and verbal approval from others in the area. On whether the benefit sought can be achieved by a feasible alternative other than a variance, Mr. Molinaro explained that given the size of the property, there are no other feasible alternatives for an addition. On whether the variance requested is substantial, he believes it is not considering

they are only impinging on the driveway. Mr. Molinaro does not believe there will be an adverse effect on the physical or environmental conditions of the neighborhood, there will be none. And, he believes the alleged difficulty is not self-created.

Board members expressed concerns about the bulk and size of the proposed addition, noting that it appeared massive and awkward for the small lot. They suggested setting back the addition slightly from the front of the house to reduce its visual impact. The board also discussed the possibility of moving the addition to the back of the house, but Mr. Molinaro explained that the terrain drops off in that area, making it difficult to build there.

The board members were troubled by the current design and felt it would cause an adverse impact on the neighborhood. They suggested that the applicants consult with an architect to redesign the addition in a way that would reduce its bulk and better fit the character of the neighborhood.

The applicants agreed to continue the application to allow time for redesign. The board kept the public hearing open for this application.

Frederick Wake, 317 Stone Hill Road, Pound Ridge, NY 10576, also known as Block 10047, Lot 6.2, Zone R-3A. An application for approval to remodel and expand an existing 2-car garage to be located 25.54' from the side property line is disapproved on the following grounds: Section 113-37 of the Code of the Town of Pound Ridge requires a side yard setback of 50', in order for this application to move forward a 24.46' variance will be required.

Present: Attorney Gerri Tortorella, Owners Bella Rae & Frederick Wake, Attorney Michael Fuller Sirignano

Ms. Tortorella presented the application. The proposal was to add a 3.5-foot addition to the rear of an existing garage to accommodate an interior staircase. The existing garage was in poor condition due to tree damage and needed repair.

Ms. Tortorella explained that in 2022, the board had approved a larger variance for a new garage, but the applicants were now seeking a smaller variance. The proposed garage would be 19.75 feet tall, lower than previously approved plans.

Ms. Tortorella addressed the five criteria for granting a variance, explaining that the proposal would not negatively impact the neighborhood and was the only feasible option due to site constraints. The proposed variance will not result in an undesirable change to the character of the neighborhood or cause any detriment to nearby properties, as the plan includes removing an existing shed and increasing the setback, which will reduce visual clutter and enhance the appearance of the lot. The garage will be tastefully designed to remain consistent with the neighborhood's character. The benefit sought cannot be achieved by a feasible alternative other than a variance due to the heavily constrained nature of the lot, leaving no other viable options. The requested variance is not substantial,

as it involves only a small addition. Furthermore, there will be no adverse effect on the physical or environmental conditions of the neighborhood, and the difficulty is not entirely self-created given the existing limitations of the property. There will be no environmental impact since the existing structure will be used. Finally, the alleged difficulty is not self-created since the building is where the building is.

Attorney Michael Fuller Sirignano, representing neighbor Marc de La Bruyère at 323 Stone Hill Road, spoke in opposition to the application. He argued that the variance was substantial and would negatively impact the neighborhood. Sirignano also mentioned potential future changes to the property's driveway configuration, which he believed made the current garage proposal unnecessary.

There were no letters from neighbors.

Mr. Gunset made a motion to close the public hearing; Ms. Fusco seconded. All in favor. The public hearing was closed.

Deliberation:

The board discussed the application, noting that it was smaller than previously approved plans. They also addressed concerns about windows facing the neighboring property.

After deliberation, the board decided to approve the variance for the garage addition with certain conditions.

Mr. Gunset made a motion to approve the side yard variance for the garage addition as indicated in the application, with the stipulations that lighting sources not extend beyond the property lines, and to plant and maintain 6-8 evergreens to block the side yard behind the new shed. Ms. Fusco seconded. All in favor. Application approved.

Tara Schjorring, 97 Hack Green Road, Pound Ridge, NY 10576, also known as Block 9459, Lot 24, Zone R-3A. An application for approval to construct a 2-story wood frame addition to the existing single-family residence located 23.5' from the front property line, 38' from the eastern side property line and 40' from the western side property line. Your request to tear down the existing garage and replaced with a 2-story wood frame 2-car garage located 5' from the western property line is disapproved on the following grounds: Section 113-37 of the Code of the Town of Pound Ridge requires a 60' front yard setback and a 50' side yard setback in order for the residential addition to move forward a 36'6" front yard variance will be required as well as a 12' eastern side yard and a 10' western side yard variances. The new 2-story garage will require a 45' side yard variance.

Present: Architect Richard Vail, Owner Tara Schjorring

Richard Vail presented the application. He explained that the proposal included expanding the existing 1,200 square foot residence to accommodate a ground floor bedroom and bathroom for the owner's mother, as well as expanding the kitchen and replacing the

existing one-car garage with a two-car garage.

Mr. Vail went on to address the five criteria. The proposed variance will not result in an undesirable change to the character of the neighborhood or cause a detriment to nearby properties, as the existing house is already in keeping with its surroundings. The benefit sought cannot be achieved through any feasible alternative other than a variance due to the constraints of the small, irregularly shaped lot. He noted that the entire existing house was within setbacks, making any expansion impossible without variances. While the variance requested may be considered substantial, as it involves the addition of a 2-car garage, it is intended to bring the home up to modern standards. There will be no adverse effect on the physical or environmental conditions of the neighborhood; in fact, the proposed upgrade will enhance the property. Although the difficulty is self-created, it stems from the applicant's desire to improve the home in a way that aligns with current expectations and functional needs.

Neighbors Janet and David Moorman, 99 Hack Green Road, expressed concerns about the size of the proposed additions and their potential impact on the neighborhood's character and property values. They worried about increased occupancy and its effects on noise, traffic, and privacy. Neighbors Leah Dunigan and Jeffrey Zemetis, 59 Siscowit Road, were present. They expressed their concerns mostly about the garage and the close proximity to their property. They explained that it's an infringement on their privacy and space. They also believe that the applicant's request for a variance is not based on any particular hardship.

Letters from neighbors: Janet & David Moorman, Leah Dunigan & Jeffrey Zemetis

Mr. Smith made a motion to close the public hearing; Mr. Gunset seconded. All in favor. The public hearing was closed.

Deliberation:

The board discussed the application, noting that the house expansion seemed reasonable given the existing structure's limitations and safety concerns with the current staircase. They decided to separate the decision on the house addition from the garage proposal.

The board approved the variances for the house addition:

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the two side yard variances and the front yard variance for the residence addition in accordance with the plans as submitted, with the stipulation that lighting sources not extend beyond the property lines. Mr. Gunset seconded. All in favor.

Regarding the garage proposal, the board expressed concerns about its size and proximity to the property line. They decided to deny this portion of the application.

Ms. Fusco made a motion to deny the application for the proposed new garage because its

volume is overbearing and will impact the neighbor more than the current existing structure. Mr. Gunset seconded. The voting was as follows:

Ms. Fusco - nay

Mr. Gunset - nay

Mr. Kao - abstain

Mr. Smith - aye

The board suggested that the applicant could return with a revised garage proposal in the future.

Meeting Adjourned:

Mr. Kao made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms Fusco seconded. All in favor.