

City of Sugar Hill
Planning Staff Report
VAR-20-004



DATE: August 25, 2020; *Updated 10/1/2020.*
TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning Director
SUBJECT: Variance Request VAR-20-004
6409 Grand Loop Road – Andrew Ponzio

RECOMMENDED ACTION: (*Conduct public hearing, table decision until November.*)

Approval of the variance to allow a 19' front yard setback along Deer Crossing Drive with the following conditions:

1. The setback reduction shall be limited to the proposed attached garage as shown on the attached Exhibit 1.
2. A five-foot-wide landscape strip and no access easement shall be recorded and maintained along the length of Deer Crossing Drive. Existing trees and shrubs may be used to satisfy this requirement.

ISSUE

The City of Sugar Hill has received an application from Andrew Ponzio requesting a 16' front yard setback variance to install a garage addition with a 6' breezeway connecting to the house for the property located at 6409 Grand Loop Road.

DISCUSSION

- *Applicant has met with neighbors and they are attempting to come to a mutually agreeable solution. Staff would like to continue with the public hearing to avoid rescheduling and readvertising but ask to table the decision until after we can report back on the status of the neighborhood meetings.*
- Minimum front yard setbacks in suburban neighborhoods provide space for accessory structures such as sheds, arbors, fences and play equipment as well as landscaping and open views alongside roadways and sidewalks.
- The subject property is a corner lot. Corner lots are required to have two front yards.
- Typically, one of the front yards on a corner lot is secondary and reads more like a side yard due to placement of the driveway or situation of the home.
- In this case, the Grand Loop Road frontage may be considered the primary front yard because the driveway enters from and the front door of the home faces Grand Loop Road. Consequently, the Deer Crossing Drive frontage in practical terms reads as a side yard.
- Shortened driveway lengths resulting in vehicles overhanging or obstructing sidewalks is a common concern that is raised with residential front setback variances. Since the lot's driveway access is on the other frontage, this is not a factor for this particular request.

- The visual presence of the garage addition is further reduced for the following reasons:
 - it steps down in height and overall mass as compared to the principal structure.
 - its finished floor elevation is well below street level,
 - and the existing trees buffer views from the street.

BACKGROUND

APPLICANT/OWNER: Andrew Ponzio

EXISTING ZONING: Low-Density Single-Family Residential District/Planned Unit Development (RS-150/PUD).

REQUEST: Reduce the front yard setback from 35' to 19' for an attached garage.

PROPERTY SIZE: ± .376 Acres

LOCATION: Tax Parcel #7-341-103
6409 Grand Loop Road

Within the Wild Timber subdivision, the minimum front yard ranges from 25' to 35' depending on how wide the lot is. The minimum side yard ranges from 7' to 10' with a minimum of 20' between houses with adjoining side yards.

Granting the relief requested would reduce the set back to 19 feet from the property line. The reduction is greater than (50%) fifty percent from the standard dimensional requirements for this particular lot; however, most homes (10 of 17) with frontage on Deer Crossing Dr including the house behind the subject property (5881 Deer Crossing Drive) have a 25' setback.

The request is six feet closer to the property line than the nearest neighboring structure and at 19 feet is almost twice the distance when compared to the standard side yard.

VARIANCE CRITERIA

1. *Are there extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular property in question because of its size, shape or topography?*

No. The lot is designed in conformance with subdivision standards and is similar in size, shape and topography to most lots in this zoning category.

2. *Does application of the ordinance to this particular piece of property create an unnecessary hardship?*

Yes. The required setback does not permit the proposed building without a variance.

3. *Are there conditions peculiar to this particular piece of property involved?*

Yes. This is a typical corner lot but placement of the driveway, situation of the home, nearby setbacks, landscaping and proposed design of the addition create unique conditions as it relates to application of the setback requirements.

4. *Are these conditions the result of any actions of the property owner?*

No. The design of the lot was established in the plat process.

5. *Would relief, if granted, cause substantial detriment to the public good or impair the purpose or intent of this ordinance?*

No. There is sufficient right of way to accommodate all future public use and the visual characteristics of the proposed improvements are in general harmony with the rest of the neighborhood.

Kaipo Awana

From: Kaipo Awana
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 5:28 PM
To: 'Andy Ponzio'
Subject: RE: VAR20-004 Status

Thanks Andy. It is too late for us to reschedule the hearing. It sounds like you're close enough to go ahead and get the hearing out of the way and just ask for more time on the decision. As long as we open and close the hearing it can be tabled until November for the decision without us having to readvertise and send new notices. We can talk through this tomorrow afternoon if needed.

Kaipo

From: Andy Ponzio <andyponzio@goldsgympfh.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 5:13 PM
To: Kaipo Awana <KAwana@cityofsugarhill.com>
Subject: RE: VAR20-004 Status

Hi Kaipo –

I hope all is well. I'm not sure if you are who I should follow up with. Since, we spoke before and at the last meeting; I figured I would try you first. Please redirect me if needed.

I met with the Wild Timber HOA board last week. I outlined the project, had some sketches and the space drawn out on the driveway. They seemed very positive, liked the idea, met and got back to me.

They verbally followed up with me the next day and said they are comfortable giving me 16 feet to work with. This allows me to add a one and a half attached garage. This is 4 feet less than I requested.

I asked them to consider giving me 18 feet, which is a fair compromise – we meet in the middle. They are planning to do discuss this option at their next meeting 10/22. Obviously this date falls after the October Working Session (10/5) and Meeting (10/12).

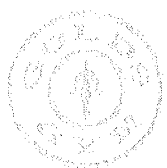
A couple of questions:

- Can we table my variance request to November? I don't want to push my luck, but the extra 2 feet will be worth the wait – from my point of view. However, I don't want to lose out on what they have already offered. If I need to proceed in October, I will.
- What do you need from me in regards to HOA approval?
 - I will need to supply the city with the HOA approval (size and design) whether we go in October or November.
- How do we adjust the variance application
 - 16 foot garage (I believe this changes my setback request to 23')
 - 18 foot garage (I believe this changes my setback request to 21')

Thank you for your assistance with our house project.

Please Advise

Andy and Steph Ponzio



KNOW YOUR OWN STRENGTH!

ANDY PONZIO

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From: Kaipo Awana [<mailto:KAwana@cityofsugarhill.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 2:05 PM
To: Andy Ponzio <andyponzio@goldsgympfh.com>
Subject: RE: VAR20-004 Status

Andy, these are the names I was given who were planning to speak last night.

Steve Mare
Dan Ryan
Chris Cangelosi
Glenn Levin

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