



**CITY OF COLLEGE PARK ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**4500 KNOX ROAD COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND 20740**  
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**ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**June 7, 2012 – 7:30 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Advisory Planning Commission – Lawrence Bleau, James McFadden, Charles Smolka and Rose Colby; Planning Staff – Terry Schum, Elisa Vitale and Theresheia Williams; Attorney – Sue Ford.

**I. Call to Order:** Lawrence Bleau called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

Charles Smolka moved to accept the minutes of May 3, 2012, after the correction of Rose Colby's name. James McFadden seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

**III. Amendments to Agenda:** There were no Amendments to the Agenda.

**IV. Public Remarks on Non-Agenda Items:** There were no Public Remarks on Non-Agenda Items.

**V. Public Hearings:**

<b>CPV-2012-02:</b>	<b>Variance to install a 4-foot deep by 6-foot wide cover for an existing front porch</b>
<b><u>Applicant:</u></b>	<b>Richard Ceresa, III</b>
<b><u>Location:</u></b>	<b>9608 Rhode Island Avenue</b>

Lawrence Bleau explained the hearing procedures and placed witnesses under oath. Elisa Vitale summarized the staff report. The applicant is requesting a variance of 2.5 feet from the minimum required front yard depth of 25 feet to construct a 4-foot deep by 6-foot wide cover for the existing front stoop. The Zoning Ordinance Section 27-442(c), Table IV, Yards requires that front yards have a minimum depth of 25 feet. The property is regular in shape and has an area of 6,250 square feet. The front and rear property lines measure 50 feet and the side property lines measure 125 feet. The surrounding neighborhood is single-family residential. The home dates to 1949 and the subdivision dates to 1913. The property is improved with a one-story single family home and a shed in the rear yard. The existing home is sited 26.5 feet from the front property line and the existing porch, which is not under cover, encroaches 2.5 feet into the required front yard setback. Section 27-442(c)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance states that steps, not over one story high may extend beyond the front building line up to nine feet. The square footage of the existing house is small at approximately 735 square feet with only one finished floor of living space. The front door opens directly to the living area without a buffer or vestibule. The applicant's contractor applied for and obtained a Prince George's County building permit, but when the City's application was requested, it was determined that the County permit was issued in error. The North College Park Citizens

Association Variance Committee is not opposed to the variance request and indicated that the request is modest and in keeping with the neighborhood. Staff recommends approval of a variance of 2.5 feet from the minimum required front yard depth of 25 feet to allow the applicant to construct a 4-foot deep by 6-foot wide cover over the front porch.

James McFadden asked for an explanation of what is meant by open porch?

Elisa Vitale stated that once the porch is under cover, it has to meet the setback requirements as stated in the Zoning Ordinance.

Richard Ceresa, applicant, testified that they would like to construct a covered entrance over the existing front stoop. He stated that the structure would consist of a roof with two posts. He also stated that covered front porches are characteristic of other homes in the neighborhood.

Lawrence Bleau asked what would be the hardship if the variance were not granted?

Richard Ceresa stated that it would benefit the owner and the neighborhood to have a cover over the porch to fit in with the other homes in the neighborhood. It would also provide protection during inclement weather. He stated that the County permit has already been approved, and they have already hired a contractor and purchased materials. The contractor had to delay working on the roof until the variance request was granted.

Commissioners reviewed the criteria that need to be met before the variance can be granted and determined that:

- 1) The property has an extraordinary situation in that the existing home is set 26.5 feet from the front property line and features an open concrete front porch that extends 2.5 feet in the required front yard setback. The applicant is not able to construct a shorter porch of a functional depth, or construct a cover over the existing open front porch without the need for a variance.
- 2) The strict application of the County Zoning Ordinance will result in undue hardship by unreasonably preventing the applicant from adding a roof to the existing front stoop to create a covered porch.
- 3) Granting the requested variance will not impair the intent and purpose of the applicable County General Plan or County Master Plan because reasonably sized covered front stoops are not inconsistent with other properties in the surrounding neighborhood and the setback of the subject property is consistent with other houses on the street.

James McFadden moved to approve the variance because the request meets the three criteria for granting the variance for the reasons stated above. Charles Smolka seconded. Motion carried 3-1-0, with Lawrence Bleau voting nay.

**VI. Update on Development Activity:** Terry Schum reported on the following:

- 1) **Maryland Book Exchange** – The District Council will hold oral argument on July 9, 2012, at 1:30 p.m. The City will be meeting with the Old Town Civic Association, St. Andrews Episcopal Church and other parties of record to discuss the case before the oral argument hearing.
- 2) **Cafritz Property** – June 11, 2012 is the deadline for the District Council to make a decision on the case. The attorney for the applicant sent a letter to the County Council reminding them of the deadline.

**VII. Other Business:** There was no Other Business.

**VIII. Adjourn:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Theresheia Williams