



CITY OF COLLEGE PARK ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION
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ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION
Approved Minutes of Meeting
March 7, 2013 – 7:30 P.M.
City Hall Council Chambers

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Mary Cook, Chair	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>
Clay Gump, Vice-Chair	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>
Lawrence Bleau	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>
James McFadden	<u> </u>	<u> x </u>
Charles Smolka	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>
Rose Greene Colby	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>

Also Present: Planning Staff- Miriam Bader and Theresheia Williams; Attorney – Sue Ford.

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

II. **Approval of Minutes:**

Lawrence Bleau moved to accept the minutes of February 7, 2013. Charles Smolka seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

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 Hearing:**

CPV-2013-01: Variance for an existing driveway that exceeds lot coverage

Applicant: Richard Barker

Location: 4706 Drexel Road

Mary Cook explained the hearing procedures and placed witnesses under oath. She stated that the hearing is continued from the February 7, 2013 meeting. Miriam Bader summarized the staff report. The applicant is requesting a variance of 224 square feet or 3.65% of the maximum allowable lot coverage in order to keep a constructed driveway. The property is located in Calvert Hills. The zoning is R-55, which is single-family detached residential. The house was built in 1949 and is improved with a two-story single-family home, storage shed and 4-bay garage. The property is regular in shape and the front and rear property lines measure 50 feet and the side property line measure 125 square feet. The total property area is 6,250 square feet, which is small for the neighborhood. The alley right-of-way is 15 feet and runs from Dartmouth Avenue to Rhode Island Avenue, where it dead-ends.

The applicant received a County and City permit to construct a 700-square foot garage and a 400-square foot driveway. The property owner re-configured and expanded the driveway from 400 square feet to 648 square feet in violation of the permit. The applicant met with the City Engineer to determine the minimum driveway area needed to make the needed turning radius. The City Engineer agreed that the requested variance is the minimum needed to access all the bays of the garage.

Staff is recommending approval with the condition that the surface of the parking area remain as gravel and/or asphalt millings and the driveway shall not be solidly asphalted or surfaced with concrete.

Miriam Bader submitted the staff report, Exhibits 1-9, and the PowerPoint presentation into the record. Commissioners accepted unanimously.

Clay Gump asked if the subject property was the only one in the neighborhood with a rear access to the garage?

Miriam Bader stated that they all have rear access.

Mary Cook asked if there are other pervious surfaces that could be used other than gravel or asphalt?

Steve Halpern, City Engineer, stated that there are several products on the market such as pervious concrete, asphalt and concrete grass.

Charles Smolka asked the city engineer if he thought this was the best solution?

Steve Halpern stated yes, for this case.

Clay Gump asked why wasn't the garage constructed vertically instead of horizontal?

Richard Barker stated that aesthetically it looks better. If he had constructed it vertically, it would block the alley and the windows on the west side of the house.

Rose Colby asked why was the garage built with 4-bays?

Richard Barker stated that the extra bays are used for storage space and a play area.

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 vehicle access to the lot is only via a rear alley. The 9-foot wide alley has been dead-ended at Rhode Island Avenue so access to the alley is only from the east side via Dartmouth Avenue. The property is near the end of the alley. No provision was made to allow vehicles to turn around when the alley was closed at Rhode Island Avenue.
- 2) The strict application of the County Zoning Ordinance will result in a practical difficulty to the applicant. The alley is narrow with only a 9-foot width of asphalt and is a dead-end. This dead-end alley creates a situation in which drivers unfamiliar with the area use the applicant's property to turn-around once they realize that the alley doesn't go through. The additional graveling of this area protects the applicant's property from damage caused by this activity.
- 3) Granting the requested variance will not impair the intent and purpose of the applicable County General Plan or County Master Plan because it is a relatively small variance with minimal impact on the surrounding neighborhood. The applicant is requesting the minimum variance necessary. Furthermore, the applicant is reducing the impact the increased lot coverage will have on the lot in terms of storm water management by using a mixture of gravel and asphalt millings, which is a more pervious surface than solid asphalt. The visual impact of the driveway is reduced because the driveway is located to the rear of the property and is not visible from the front of the house.

Clay Gump moved to approve the variance because the request meets the criteria for granting the variance for the reasons stated above, with the condition that the surface of the parking area remain as gravel and/or asphalt millings or similar pervious surface and not be solidly asphalted or surfaced with concrete. Rose Colby seconded. Motion carried 3-2-0, with Mary Cook and Lawrence Bleau voting nay.

VI. Other Business: There was no other business.

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

Minutes prepared by Theresheia Williams