



**CITY OF COLLEGE PARK ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**4500 KNOX ROAD COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND 20740**  
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**ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION**

*Approved Minutes of Meeting*

*January 4, 2018 – 7:30 P.M.*

*City Hall – Council Chambers*

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Lawrence Bleau	_____	_____ X
Santosh Chelliah	_____ X	_____
Rose Greene Colby	_____ X	_____
Ben Flamm	_____ X	_____
Christopher Gill, Chair	_____ X	_____
James McFadden	_____ X	_____
Stephanie Stullich	_____ X	_____

Also Present: Planning Staff – Miriam Bader and Theresheia Williams;  
 Attorney – Susan Cook

There were three new members in attendance: Ben Flamm, District 1, Stephanie Stullich, District 3 and Santosh Chelliah, District 4.

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

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

Christopher Gill moved to table approval of the November 2, 2017 minutes until the next APC meeting where a quorum of members attending that meeting would be present.

**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. CPV-2017-13** Variance to validate and extend existing second-floor dormer windows and validate existing front building setback  
Applicant: Caroline and Jeannette Wick  
Location: 4806 Erskine Road

Christopher Gill explained the hearing procedures and placed witnesses under oath. Miriam Bader summarized the staff report. The applicant is requesting a variance to extend existing second floor dormer windows. The subject house was constructed in 1919 prior to the County zoning regulations. The property has an area of 6,012 square feet and is improved with a 1.5-story, frame house, rear deck, a 4-foot high chain-link fence along the front and side property line and a 6-foot high wooden fence along the rear and eastern side yard. The property is mostly rectangular in shape; approximately 50 feet wide by 120 feet long. The house is setback approximately 14 feet from the front property line. The existing second floor dormer windows are setback approximately 24 feet from the property line. Second floor dormer windows are not uncommon in the neighborhood.

The County denied the applicants building permit to extend the dormer windows because neither the house nor the existing dormer windows meet the current front yard setbacks.

Staff recommends the 11-foot front yard setback for the house be validated and the 1.09-foot front yard setback variance for the new dormer windows be approved.

Miriam Bader submitted the staff report, Exhibits 1-10 and the PowerPoint presentation. She also entered into the record two letters from adjoining property owners supporting the variance, which were entered as Exhibits 11 and 12.

Christopher Gill asked why are two separate variances being requested?

Miriam Bader stated that the existing house needs to be validated, which is the 11-foot variance and the dormer is new construction so it needs to be 25 feet back. It is grandfathered in but we validate it to recognize it. The County would not issue a building permit until the applicant went through the variance process.

Stephanie Stullich asked if the validation is considered a variance?

Susan Cook stated no, but the non-existing use needs to be recognized and made official going forward.

Caroline Wick, applicant, testified that she is proposing to extend the dormer window to be flush with the existing window. She stated that if the extension were built 25' from the property line, the two windows would be mismatched and would be an eyesore in the neighborhood. She showed several photographs indicating where the dormer window would be located. She stated that the occupant in that bedroom is 6'2" tall so the dormer would increase the usability of the space. The widened dormer window would also increase the amount of light to the room.

Stephanie Stullich asked what is the height of the area where the dormer is not extended?

Caroline Wick stated that it is about four feet.

Santosh Chelliah asked if any other houses in the neighborhood had this same modification?

Caroline Wick stated that Exhibits B and C show similar dormers to what she is proposing, but she is unclear of what the dimensions are.

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

- 1) There is an extraordinary condition associated with the property in that the house, constructed in 1919, was sited nearer to the front property line than would be allowed under current regulations. It is this fact alone that necessitates a variance for the enlargement of the dormer. No change in the location of the footprint of the house is proposed.
- 2) The strict application of the Zoning Ordinance will result in a peculiar and unusual practical difficulty to the Applicants by rendering the second floor bedroom in this 1 ½ story house to be less useful because of the low ceiling height. In addition, if the dormer window expansion were required to meet current setback requirements it would be out of alignment with the existing dormer window, creating an unaesthetic appearance.
- 3) Granting the variances will not substantially impair the intent, purpose or integrity of any applicable County General Plan or County Master Plan because there will be little noticeable impact to the appearance of the house or to the neighborhood. Neighboring houses are located with similar reduced setbacks and have similar minor second-story dormer window modifications.

Stephanie Stullich moved to recommend approval of the variance and validation of the existing condition because the request meets the criteria for granting the variance for the reasons stated above. Ben Flamm seconded. Motion carried 6-0-0.

**VI. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair:**

Rose Greene Colby moved to elect Christopher Gill as Chair. James McFadden seconded. Motion carried 6-0-0.

Stephanie Stullich moved to elect James McFadden as Vice-Chair. Christopher Gill seconded. Motion carried 6-0-0.

**X. Other Business:**

Miriam Bader stated that the City Council has expressed the opportunity to be involved in the pre-application discussions on development projects coming to the City. The City Manager has discussed with staff the idea of streamlining the development review process by having the APC host a meeting inviting the City Council, Civic Associations and anyone interested in the development project. This would take place at a regular APC meeting where the agenda is small or if needed, schedule an extra meeting that month. The City Manager will discuss this idea with the City Council and meet with staff to see if this is acceptable.

- X. Adjourn:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.