



City of Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals

Arthur Mendonsa Hearing Room
May 26, 2022 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Minutes

MAY 26, 2022 CITY OF SAVANNAH ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Members Present: Stephen Merriman, Jr., Chair
Michael Condon, Vice Chair
Hunter Hall
Betty Jones
Stephen M. Plunk

Members Absent: Larry Evans
Karen Jarrett

Others Present: Pamela Everett, Esq., Assistant Executive Director
Marcus Lotson, Development Services Director
Nirva Gandhi, Development Services Planner and Historic Preservation Planner
Jacqualle Johnson, Development Services Planner Technician
Melissa Paul-Leto, Development Services Planner
Julie Yawn, Systems Analyst
Mary Mitchell, Administrative Assistant
Stacy Bennett, Administrative Assistant

I. Call to Order and Welcome

[1. Call to Order and Welcome](#)

Mr. Merriman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. He explained that this is a quasi-judicial proceeding. All those wishing to give testimony during these proceedings will please sign in. Witnesses will be sworn-in prior to giving testimony. All proceedings of the Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals are recorded. Decisions of the Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals are final. Challenges to the decisions of the Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals must be filed through the Superior Court of Chatham County.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

[2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance](#)

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

III. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

IV. Item(s) Requested to be Removed from the Final Agenda

[3. Variance Request I 308 Kensington Drive I File No. 22-0001724-ZBA](#)

Motion

The Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve to move the petition as requested to the meeting of June 23, 2022.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Condon

Second: Hunter Hall

Stephen Merriman, Jr. - Abstain

Karen Jarrett - Not Present

Hunter Hall - Aye

Michael Condon - Aye

Stephen Plunk - Aye

Betty Jones - Aye

V. Item(s) Requested to be Withdrawn

VI. Approval of Minutes

[4. Approval of April 28, 2022 Meeting Minutes](#)

📎 [April 28, 2022 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

Motion

The Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve the April 28. 2022 Meeting Minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stephen Plunk

Second: Hunter Hall

Stephen Merriman, Jr. - Abstain

Karen Jarrett - Not Present

Hunter Hall - Aye

Michael Condon - Aye

Stephen Plunk - Aye

Betty Jones - Aye

VII. Approval of Final Agenda

VIII. Consent Agenda

IX. Old Business

X. Regular Agenda

[5. Variance Request I 710 East Bolton Street I File No. 22- 000406- ZBA](#)

📎 [Aerial Map.pdf](#)

- 📎 [Aerial View.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Front View.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Map View.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Text Map.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Staff report.pdf](#)

The petitioner was sworn-in by Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Jacqualle Johnson gave the staff report. The petitioner, Jonathan Leonard, is requesting a variance for the property at 710 East Bolton Street, Lot #14. The variance is to decrease the minimum lot size from 2,250 square feet to 2,143 square feet in order to construct a duplex on the parcel.

Mr. Johnson explained that the subject property has frontage on E Bolton Street and is located in the TR-1 (Traditional Residential) zoning district. It is 0.30 acres in size, with a lot width of 120 ft and depth of 110 feet. It is located on the Eastside of Savannah. This area consists primarily of single family detached residences, two family residences, and a small number of quadplex residences. The proposed lot size is generally consistent with this pattern.

Mr. Johnson said based on TR-1 zoning district developmental standard requirements, Section 5.9.5 Development Standards for Permitted Uses states the following: **“Two-family (over-under or side-by-side) minimum lot area per unit is 2,250 square feet.”** The petitioner has already subdivided this 120-foot lot into three 40-foot lots. All lots are too small to meet current zoning regulations for the TR-1 district. On blocks without lane access in the TR-1 district, a minimum lot width of 40- feet is required. This regulation is related to vehicular access to the property. The applicant is proposing one off street parking space for each new dwelling unit.

Mr. Johnson reported that based upon the review criteria, staff recommends approval of the requested variances for 710 East Bolton Street. He entertained questions from the Board.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Jonathan Leonard came forward and stated that he is representing the owners for 710, 712, and 714 East Bolton Street. He entertained questions or concerns of the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board was in agreement with the staff recommendation.

Motion

The Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve the variance for 710 East Bolton Street as requested.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stephen Plunk

Second: Hunter Hall

Stephen Merriman, Jr.

- Abstain

Karen Jarrett

- Not Present

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Hunter Hall | - Aye |
| Michael Condon | - Aye |
| Stephen Plunk | - Aye |
| Betty Jones | - Aye |

6. Variance Request I 712 East Bolton Street I File No. 22- 002089- ZBA

📎 [Aerial Map.pdf](#)

📎 [Aerial View.pdf](#)

📎 [Front View.pdf](#)

📎 [Map View.pdf](#)

📎 [Text Map.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff report.pdf](#)

The petitioner was sworn in by Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Jacqualle Johnson gave the staff report. The petitioner, Jonathan Leonard, is requesting a variance for the property at 712 East Bolton Street, Lot #15. The variance is to decrease the minimum lot size from 2,250 square feet to 2,147 square feet in order to construct a duplex on the parcel.

Mr. Johnson explained that the subject property has frontage on East Bolton Street and is located in the TR-1 (Traditional Residential) zoning district. It is 0.30 acres in size, with a lot width of 120 feet and depth of 110 feet and is located on the Eastside of Savannah. This area consists primarily of single family detached residences, two family residences, and a small number of quadplex residences. The proposed lot size is generally consistent with this pattern.

Mr. Johnson said based on the TR-1 zoning district developmental standard requirements, Section 5.9.5 Development Standards for Permitted Uses states the following: **a. "Two-family (over-under or side-by-side) minimum lot area per unit is 2.250 square feet.** The petitioner has already subdivided this 120-foot lot into three 40-foot lots. All the lots are too small to meet current zoning regulations for the TR-1 district. On blocks without lance access in the TR-1 district, a minimum lot width of 40-feet is required. This regulation is related to vehicular access to the property. The applicant is proposing one off-street parking space for each new dwelling unit.

Mr. Johnson reported that based upon the review criteria, staff recommends approval of the requested variances for 712 East Bolton Street. He entertained questions from the Board.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Leonard explained that he was present to entertain questions and concerns of the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board was in agreement with the staff recommendation.

Motion

The Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve the variance request for 712 East Bolton Street as requested.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Hunter Hall

Second: Stephen Plunk

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Stephen Merriman, Jr. | - Abstain |
| Karen Jarrett | - Not Present |
| Hunter Hall | - Aye |
| Michael Condon | - Aye |
| Stephen Plunk | - Aye |
| Betty Jones | - Aye |

7. Variance Request I 714 East Bolton Street I File No. 22- 002090- ZBA

📎 [Aerial Map.pdf](#)

📎 [Aerial View.pdf](#)

📎 [Front View.pdf](#)

📎 [Map View.pdf](#)

📎 [Text Map.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff report.pdf](#)

The Petitioner was sworn-in by Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Jacqualle Johnson gave the staff report. The petitioner, Jonathan Leonard, is requesting a variance for the property at 714 East Bolton Street, Lot #16. The variance is to decrease the minimum lot size from 2,250 square feet to 2,138 square feet in order to construct a duplex on the parcel.

Mr. Johnson stated that the subject property has frontage on East Bolton Street and is located in the TR-1 (Traditional Residential) zoning district. It is 0.30 acres in size, with a lot width of 120 ft and depth of 110 ft. It is located on the Eastside of Savannah. This area consists primarily of single family detached residences, two family residences, and a small number of quadplex residences. The proposed lot size is generally consistent with this pattern. Based on the TR-1 zoning district developmental standard requirements, Section 5.9.5 Development Standards for Permitted Uses states the following: **a. “Two-family (over-under or side-by-side) minimum lot area per unit is 2,250 square feet.”**

Mr. Johnson explained that the petitioner has already subdivided this 120-foot lot into three 40-foot lots. All the lots are too small to meet current zoning regulations for the TR-1 district. On blocks without lane access in the TR-1 district, a minimum lot width of 40- feet is required. This regulation is related to vehicular access to the property. The applicant is proposing one off street parking space for each new dwelling unit.

Mr. Johnson reported that based upon the review criteria, staff recommends approval of the requested variances for 714 East Bolton Street. He entertained questions from the Board.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Leonard stated that he was present to answer questions or concerns of the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board was in agreement with the staff recommendation.

Motion

The Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve the variance request for 714 East Bolton Street as requested.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Hunter Hall

Second: Stephen Plunk

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Stephen Merriman, Jr. | - Abstain |
| Karen Jarrett | - Not Present |
| Hunter Hall | - Aye |
| Michael Condon | - Aye |
| Stephen Plunk | - Aye |
| Betty Jones | - Aye |

8. Variance - 420 East Liberty Street - 21-005868-ZBA

- 📎 [SIGNED Board_Decision - 21-006787-COA 420_E_Liberty_St.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Map.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Application - 420 East Liberty Street.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Site Visit.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Submittal Packet - Easement Legal Letter.pdf](#)
- 📎 [STAFF REPORT.pdf](#)

Ms. Melissa Paul-Leto gave the staff report. The applicant is requesting a variance to the maximum footprint of an accessory dwelling unit that shall be a maximum of 40% of the habitable floor area of the principal dwelling. The applicant is proposing a variance of 7% to allow 47% of the habitable floor area of the principal dwelling at 420 East Liberty Street. The subject property, 420 East Liberty Street, is located on the north side of East Liberty Street between Price and Habersham Streets. The main building was constructed in 1871 and is a contributing structure within the Savannah National Historic Landmark District and the Savannah Local Historic District as well as the Downtown - Residential (D-R) zoning district. The requested variance is pursuant to the demolition of a non-contributing one-story garage structure and the new construction of a two-story carriage house. The new two-story carriage house is to be situated along East Perry Lane.

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that the property has a total lot area of 1,760 square feet with an average depth of approximately 88 feet, an average width of 20 feet, consists of one (1) two-story dwelling facing East Liberty Street, and an existing garage that was constructed to sit over the property line. It angles in from the rear of the main building by approximately 1'-2" along the lane. The property owners at 420 East Liberty Street and 422 East Liberty Street have reached an easement agreement to allow the new construction carriage house to remain in the longitudinal footprint of the existing garage. The easement is for a total of 45 square feet between the two properties. Staff was provided with a legal letter verifying this agreement.

Ms Paul-Leto explained that on March 9, 2022, the Savannah Downtown Historic District approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the non-historic garage and the new construction for the two-story carriage house located at 420 East Liberty Street.

Ms. Paul-Leto reported that based upon the review criteria, staff recommends approval of the requested variance for 420 East Liberty Street. She entertained questions from the Board.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Absent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board was in agreement with the staff recommendation.

Motion

The Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve the maximum 40% of the habitable floor area of the principal dwelling as requested for 420 East Liberty Street.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stephen Plunk

Second: Betty Jones

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Stephen Merriman, Jr. | - Abstain |
| Karen Jarrett | - Not Present |
| Hunter Hall | - Aye |
| Michael Condon | - Aye |
| Stephen Plunk | - Aye |
| Betty Jones | - Aye |

9. Variances - 513 East 33rd Street - 22-002098-ZBA

- [☞ Sheet 129-1916.pdf](#)
- [☞ Sheet129-1955.pdf](#)
- [☞ Application.pdf](#)
- [☞ MAP.pdf](#)
- [☞ SITE VISIT.pdf](#)
- [☞ STAFF REPORT.pdf](#)
- [☞ Letter of Denial #1.pdf](#)

The petitioners were sworn-in by Mr. Merriman.

Ms. Paul-Leto gave the staff report. The applicant is requesting variances to the minimum lot width, lot area, and minimum side yard setbacks to subdivide 513 East 33rd Street into two parcels. The property is located on the south side of East 33rd Street, with East 33rd Lane on the north side, in the Streetcar Historic District within the TN-2 (Traditional Neighborhood -2) zoning district. 513 East 33rd Street is .12 acre, or 5,227 square feet. There is an existing two-story dwelling on the lot. The petitioners are proposing to subdivide the lot into two (2) parcels. The proposed plat indicates the two parcels would not meet the following variances:

1. Minimum lot area of 3,000 square feet. Whereas the applicant is proposing 2,700 square feet for both parcels;
2. Minimum lot width of 30-feet. Whereas the applicant is proposing 27-feet for both parcels;
3. Minimum side interior yard setback of 3-feet. Whereas the proposed subdivision property line

places the existing two-story residence with a 1.4-foot side setback to the west of the building. The 2, 9-foot side yard setback to the east of the building is an existing non-conformity.

Ms. Paul-Leto explained that while staff was researching the Sanborn Maps, they found that the 1916 map showed that 513 East 33rd Street was separated into two parcels. The Sanborn Map of 1955 shows that the property continued to be two parcels. She stated that the majority of the lots in this area are smaller lots. She showed the Board some photos of the existing vacant area of the property and pointed out that the "yellow" house is the existing vacant two-story residence.

Ms. Paul-Leto reported that based upon the variance criteria, staff recommends approval of the variance requests for 513 East 33rd Street. She entertained questions from the Board.

The Board saw that an email requesting denial was sent to staff pertaining to this request. They asked the staff to please expound on the email.

Ms. Paul-Leto explained that staff received an email yesterday from Ms. Christy Crisp. Ms. Crisp resides at 509 East 34th Street.

Mr. Merriman asked Ms. Paul-Leto to read the letter, so that it will be included as a part of this record.

Ms. Paul-Leto read the email. The email is attached to the Agenda and made a part of this meeting.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Stanley Smart, owner, stated that it appears that Ms. Crisp's concern is pertaining to parking. The property that he is trying to build on will have off-street parking, just like his other property.

Attorney Yellin explained that he was representing Mr. Stanley Smart and Ms. Tesha Johnson, property owners of 513 East 33rd Street. He explained that this property is located between Price and Plant Streets, close to the railroad tracks. Attorney Yellin thanked staff for their recommendation of approval for the variances and for the recognition of the historical development pattern in this district. As noted in the application, between 32nd Street and 34th Street Lane east of Price Street, the traditional development pattern has always been 27 foot wide lots. The lots in question today are 511 and 513 East 33rd Street. These lots have always been traditionally subdivided. In fact, even today, if you go down 33rd Street, the addressing point jumps from 509 East 33rd Street to 513 East 33rd Street with "511" being the missing address point, which previously existed. They are trying to get this restored today. Therefore, they are asking that this lot be restored. Attorney Yellin explained that on 33rd Street, 13 of the 22 lots, being about 60%, are currently 27 feet or less in lot width. This is not the first time that a variance of this type has come before the Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals.

Attorney Yellin explained that in 2020, **Ms. Ellen Harris** brought a similar petition before the Board for 514 East 34th Street, which is one block away. As Ms. Harris noted during her presentation to the Board, this property is located in the Thomas Square Streetcar District and the Streetcar Local Historic District. As such, the historic development pattern and context are critical to preserve. The historic development pattern, in the few blocks north and south of the subject property, is unique and the lot widths are slightly smaller than the ones found in other areas of the district. They are 27 feet as opposed to 30 feet or greater. Thereby, reducing the lot size from 3000 square feet to 2700 square feet. He said that when Ms. Harris came before the Board with this request, her plans had similarly gone before the Historic Preservation Commission [HPC] for review. The HPC additionally requested and recommended approval for the variance request because the approval was in keeping with the historic development pattern of this district.

Attorney Yellin stated that last year, June 2021, the Board additionally granted a similar request adjacent to 514 East 34th Street, which was 504 East 34th Street, to split a 54 foot lot into two 27 foot wide lots. The vote was unanimously passed by this Board. Attorney Yellin stated that, therefore, they respectfully request that the Board approve their variances as recommended by staff and that such requests have been approved by this Board on recent occasions in the nearby vicinity. He entertained comments from the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one was present in-person or virtually. However, **Ms. Christy Crisp resides at 509 East 34rd Street** and sent staff an email on May 25, 2022. Her email was read aloud by Ms. Paul-Leto. The email is included as a part of this record.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board was in agreement with staff recommendation.

Motion

The Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve the minimum lot width, lot area, and minimum side yard setbacks as requested for 513 East 33rd Street.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Hunter Hall

Second: Stephen Plunk

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|-----------------------|---------------|
| Stephen Merriman, Jr. | - Abstain |
| Karen Jarrett | - Not Present |
| Hunter Hall | - Aye |
| Michael Condon | - Aye |
| Stephen Plunk | - Aye |
| Betty Jones | - Aye |

10. Variance - 59 Ponoma Circle - 22-001938 - ZBA

📎 [Application.pdf](#)

📎 [MAP.pdf](#)

📎 [EXISTING REAR CONCRETE PAD_PROPOSED ENCLOSED PATIO.pdf](#)

📎 [SITE VISIT.pdf](#)

📎 [SITE VISIT.pdf](#)

📎 [STAFF REPORT.pdf](#)

The petitioner was sworn-in by Mr. Merriman.

Ms. Paul-Leto gave the staff report. The subject property is located within the surrounding parcels around Pomona Circle with marsh to the rear of the property. 59 Pomona Circle is part of the Bradley Pointe South Area within the P-D (Planned Development) zoning district. This is a 3,484.8 square foot lot with a newly constructed two-story single family residence. The two-story residence includes a 10-foot by 20-foot concrete slab directly to the rear of the building facing the marshland. The applicant is proposing to construct an enclosed screened rear porch over the existing concrete pad. It will have one ceiling fan, one ceiling light, and three outlets.

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that as more homes are built in this subdivision, there will be other property owners who will be requesting to have an enclosed rear porch as each of the single-family homes in this area have similar layouts. If these homeowners want to enclose their existing 10 x 20 concrete slab, they will also require a rear yard setback variance request.

Ms. Paul-Leto reported that based upon the variance criteria, staff recommends approval of the variance request for 59 Pomona Circle. She entertained comments from the Board.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Collins of Vinyl Industries stated that they are requesting a 3.5 foot variance on the 20 feet. Presently, the concrete pad is 20 feet. He entertained questions from the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Victoria Singleton resides at 85 Pomona Circle. Ms. Singleton stated that she was not present in opposition to the petitioner's request., but wanted to report that she applied to the Homeowners Association (HOA) to get her rear porch screened. The HOA denied her request. They told her that she needed to get a request from the City. Ms. Singleton said she applied at the City, but was told by the City's representative that he did not know why the HOA denied her request as she has enough area to do what she wants to do. She said she just wants to have her back porch screened in order to keep the sun off them.

Ms. Singleton said she received the public hearing notice showing that Mr. Grant applied for a variance. She stated that Mr. Grant is a new owner here, but she has lived in the area more than three years. Ms. Singleton stated again that she only wants to be able to screen her rear porch.

Mr. Merriman, for clarity, asked Ms. Singleton if she is saying that she was denied by the HOA and not the Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ms. Singleton answered yes. She explained that she took pictures of her rear porch and took them to the HOA. The HOA denied her request. She then took the information to the City and the individual told her that he did not know why the HOA denied her request because she has enough room to enclose the porch. Ms. Singleton said she wants to get approval also; she wants to construct an enclosed screened rear porch over her existing concrete pad.

Mr. Merriman informed Ms. Singleton that she would need to go through the same process that Mr. Grant took to possibly get her rear porch screened.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board was in agreement with the staff recommendation.

Motion

The Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve the minimum rear yard setback variance to construct a screened porch at 59 Pomona Circle as requested.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Hunter Hall

Second: Michael Condon

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|-----------------------|---------------|
| Stephen Merriman, Jr. | - Abstain |
| Karen Jarrett | - Not Present |
| Hunter Hall | - Aye |
| Michael Condon | - Aye |
| Stephen Plunk | - Aye |
| Betty Jones | - Aye |

XI. Other Business

XII. Adjournment

11. Adjourned

Mr. Merriman thanked Mr. Lotson for getting the laptops returned to the Board.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Merriman adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcus Lotson
Development Services Director

ML:mem

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.