

Variance Hearing
Jay Caroli & the Town of Greensboro
Grange Building
September 30, 2014

To consider a variance request to build a landing for a secondary exit from the former Grange building at 9 Craftsbury Rd.

The application requires a review under the following sections of the Greensboro Zoning By-Law: 2.3 Greensboro Village District; 3.8 Nonconforming Structures; and 5.5 Variances.

Warnings were posted on September 4, 2014 at the Town Hall, the Greensboro Post Office, the Greensboro Bend Post Office, and Smith's and Willey's stores. It was also sent to applicant Town of Greensboro; Jay Caroli, architect; and the following abutters and neighboring property owners: Greensboro U.C.C.; James Cook; and Richard and Linda Ely. It was published in the Hardwick Gazette on Wednesday, September 10, 2014.

Development Review Board members present: MacNeil, Linda Romans, Nat Smith, Sean Thomson, Janet Travers, Jane Woodruff, Wayne Young and Lee Wright, alternate.

Others present: Jay Caroli, architect; Anne Harbison; June Cook from the Hardwick Gazette; and Kristen Leahy, Zoning Administrator.

Correspondence from interested persons:

An email letter from abutters Richard and Linda Ely

During the course of the hearing the following exhibit was submitted to the Development Review Board:

1 A printed email letter from abutters Richard and Linda Ely supporting the proposed plans for the former Grange building.

This exhibit is available at the Greensboro Town Clerk's office and on the Town's website.

Summary of Discussion

Ms. Woodruff began the hearing at 7:02 PM. She noted that the hearing was semi-judicial, explained the procedure for the hearing, and asked the clerk to swear in all those who wished to speak at the hearing. She then asked Mr. Caroli to describe the proposed plan for the old Grange building. Mr. Caroli began by stating that the proposed plan is to gain a second egress from the building so it can be used as a public space. The egress is on the Northwest side of the building and has been placed as far back as is allowed by the setbacks and still maintain the dimensions needed for a proper stairway and landing. The egress is about 22 inches into the setback from the road and is at the edge of their wetlands buffer permit (from the State) on the other side. The egress comes out a door in the Northwest corner of the building onto a landing and then down the stairs which wind down to grade, leading people towards Church Lane. There will be a walkable surface to the road. (If the stairway were straight, it would run further into the setback from Church Lane.) The landing has half walls with openings on the North, South and West sides so smoke could escape if there is a fire. It will be about 14 feet deep, almost 11 feet side to side and about 18 feet high to the peak of the roof. Ms. Woodruff then read the letter from Mr. and Ms. Ely which stated they are in support of this revised plan.

Findings of Fact:

Based on the application and testimony, the Development Review Board makes the following findings:

2.3 Greensboro Village District

The former Grange building is a pre-existing, nonconforming structure. The lot is smaller than permitted and the building is located within the setback of Church Lane and the wetlands buffer.

3.8 Nonconforming Structures

1 – 5 The need for a secondary emergency exit and the nonconformance of the building and lot requires the egress to be built in a manner that will increase the nonconformity of the structure.

A 6. The proposed egress provides a secondary means of exit from the building in case of a fire or other emergency situation. It is the minimum area required to meet this need.

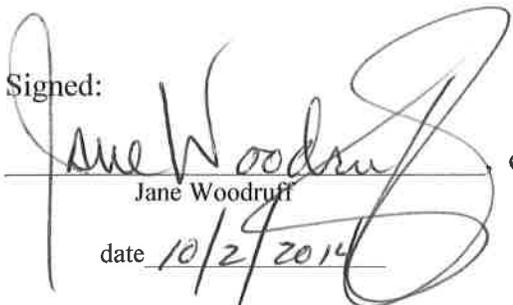
5.5 Variances

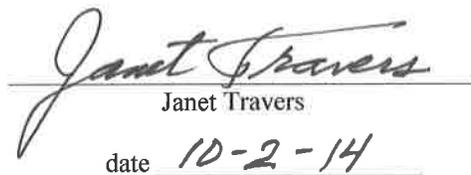
1. The size of the lot and proximity to the wetlands and road cause the need to create a secondary egress in a manner that will increase the structure's nonconformance.
2. Because of the wetlands and road setback, the egress must be located at the back of the building.
3. The hardship has not been created by the applicant.
4. The pre-existing structure is located in the village among a church, residences, wetlands, and the Town Hall. The present proposed secondary exit is supported by the owners of the abutting residence. (see exhibit #1)
5. These plans represent the minimum variance that will afford relief and the least deviation possible from the by-law and the town plan.

Decision and Conditions

Based upon these findings, the Development Review Board voted unanimously to approve the variance as presented. The proposed egress provides a necessary secondary means of exit from the building in case of an emergency. These plans represent the minimum that will afford relief and the least deviation possible from the by-law and the town plan.

Signed:


Jane Woodruff, chair
date 10/2/2014


Janet Travers, clerk
date 10-2-14

NOTICE:

This decision may be appealed to the Vermont Environmental Court by an interested person who participated in the proceeding (in person or in writing) before the Development Review Board. Such appeal must be made within 30 days of the date of this decision, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. #4471 and Rule 5(b) of the Vermont Rules for Environmental Court Proceedings.