



City of Oakbrook Terrace  
Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting  
Tuesday, April 19, 2022  
Case #22-10

The Planning and Zoning meeting was called to order by Chairman Caslin at 6:00 P.M.

Chairman Caslin asked Building and Zoning / Planning and Zoning Secretary Lozano to take roll call.

Present: Chairman Caslin, Commissioners Ventura, Jackson, Freda, Donoval, Cardenas

Absent: Vice Chairperson Walberg

Also Present: Mihaela Dragan, Building & Zoning Administrator, Thomas Holleran, City Attorney, Addy Lozano, Building and Zoning / Planning and Zoning Secretary

Chairman Caslin said the first order of business was to approve the minutes of April 5, 2022, Case #22-09, 17W453 Eisenhower Road, Petitioner, Saverio Suraci and Francesca Suraci. Chairman Caslin asked if there was any final discussion.

**MOTION** Commissioner Freda moved, and Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion to approve the minutes of April 5, 2022, Case #22-09, 17W453 Eisenhower Road Petitioner, Saverio Suraci and Francesca Suraci.

Chairman Caslin asked Building and Zoning / Planning and Zoning Secretary Lozano to take the roll call.

Ayes: Commissioners Ventura, Donoval, Jackson, Freda, Cardenas,

Nays: None

Abstain: Chairman Caslin

**MOTION PASSED WITH A 5-0 VOTE.**

Chairman Caslin stated, in the past year we have gone through our zoning laws and have tried to be fair and change things the way the City wants them to be. We have lowered the size of the garage to 800 square feet, and you are here to ask to go larger and higher than 16 feet, which we lowered for a reason. I would like for this to be on the record so that the City Council understands it.

Chairman Caslin asked all those who will be speaking this evening to please stand up and be sworn in.

Kathy Flanagan and John Ahrens from 17W390 Karban Road were sworn in by Addy Lozano, Building and Zoning / Planning and Zoning Secretary.

Kathy Flanagan took the floor and stated, my name is Kathy Flanagan and I am here for a variance for my garage, very briefly I would like to say that my parents moved from Chicago to Oakbrook Terrace in 1946 they were one of the first few residents in Oakbrook Terrace where there were just a handful of houses. They made it their home and a few years later they built a garage and then later added to the garage. They lived there their entire life and after my father passed away, I moved back in with my mother so that she could stay in the house until she passed away. About 4-5 years ago I had major foundation work done that involved excavating partly around the house which destroyed the porch, sidewalk, siding, and landscaping. Eventually one thing led to another, and I have then replaced the roof, windows, siding, and added new landscaping and sidewalk which gave my house a whole new look that I love. Now John and I would like to make it our home. My current garage was built originally for vehicles from 1946 and now the vehicles don't fit. I would also like for my new garage to match my new home and compliment it. My intention was never to cause harm to my neighbor, and I apologize for that. I would like to thank you for the opportunity, your time, and attention.

John Ahrens stated, I am sure everyone has seen the house and we would like to duplicate what the house looks like. We are trying to add storage room in the upper area so that we can get stuff off the concrete floor. The size of the garage doors are 8 feet you have to put in a 10-foot ceiling to accommodate the new garage doors.

Chairman Caslin directed his questions to Building & Zoning Administrator Dragan and asked, how are the measurements on this property?

Building & Zoning Administrator Dragan answered, in compliance. The lot is over 15,000 square feet. According to the definition adopted for structure, we no longer include the area of the driveway in the lot coverage.

Commissioner Freda asked, why do you have to have such a high garage to match your home? You can probably match the garage with a lower roof.

John Ahrens answered, we probably could, but we are here to ask for a variance to see what we can do. I am a contractor, and we like the steeper roofs for water run off and longevity of the shingles. When you do a shorter pitch roof the sun does more damage.

Commissioner Freda also asked what is the idea of having the porch added to the side of the garage?

John Ahrens answered, the porch is on the east side, if we use our patio where it is, it is too hot in the summer. It is not a car port. It will either be pavers or concrete.

Commissioner Freda added, it almost looks like a coach house versus a garage.

John Ahrens added, we are trying to do something that gives it character.

Building & Zoning Administrator Dragan added, the existing concrete patio located on the west side of the garage will be removed.

Commissioner Cardenas commented, I know it will be very comfortable to have a big garage and have space for cars and extra storage, I don't know what the dimensions of the house are, but I just can't imagine the house with that size of a garage. Wouldn't it look awkward?

John Ahrens answered, it is more economical to do this rather than an addition to the house. I think it will look nice from the street.

Building & Zoning Administrator Dragan added, the dimensions of the house are approximately 31 feet by 26 feet for the footprint of the building which is a little bit over 800 square feet.

Commissioner Donoval stated, I am in favor of the request, if you are going to improve your property it will make the street look nice.

Chairman Caslin added, I am not in favor of having the patio on the side of the garage, I would rather see you build a gazebo. I have a 24 feet by 24 feet garage and I manage to get in a truck with plow, a van, benches, and toolboxes. Some of the garages have gotten out of line that is why we adopted the 800 square feet which is still a very big garage. As far as the height, I don't agree with it either.

John Ahrens added, a 24 by 24 garage is fine, but we have 3 vehicles, and my truck is 22 feet long. I can't walk around the garage door that's why we are doing this.

Commissioner Ventura added, the average size of a 3-car garage is 700 square feet and ranges from 576 to 864 square feet. What I am having trouble with is finding where the hardship is with this, that you can add a very ample 3 car garage. Secondly, I don't believe, and this is just my personal opinion,

that a garage that is larger than your home is a compliment to your home. My biggest concern is that you are setting a precedence going against two different times that the variance was changed for the City of Oakbrook Terrace since extra large garage were built in 1994 by the Berkshire's and the Shanahan's. If we change that today, and approve it, who comes in next will want a garage that is bigger than their home too, or a two-story garage. That is like allowing to have houses built behind houses. The idea of having a Zoning Board in the first place, and the reason why we have ordinances, is for flooding, ground coverage, and to see where rainwater goes. While home improvements are good for everybody, there is a reason why we have ordinances, and you are looking to go from 16 feet to 21 feet in height. It's the precedence that were setting and that worries me for everybody.

Commissioner Jackson added, I would like to repeat my comments from the last meeting, if the City Council wants us to do this, they need to change the ordinance which says to us we can only approve a variance that resulted from something of the requestors own creation. This clearly is of their own creation.

Chairman Caslin opened the floor for any positive testimony.

Sandra Johnson took the floor and stated, I have the largest garage in Oakbrook Terrace, my house is 72 years old, and I was grandfathered in. My neighbors also have a very tall garage and I have a flourishing garden that is approximately 24 by 30 feet between my house and neighbors house. I do not have a problem with Kathy having a higher roof because my garage is bigger than my home.

Bob Shanahan stated, I live two houses away from Kathy and I admire what what she is doing. She did a beautiful job with the house, it is one of the original homes in town and she has made it a beautiful addition to Karban Road. I also admire a person that wants to put their cars in the garage every night rather than leaving them out. We allow it because we are a blue-collar neighborhood that allows people with vans that have ladders on them to park in their driveways. I'm not sure why we ever allowed that, buy a former Mayor said that we are a working-class community and that we should allow that. This family is trying to build a garage that will fit their vehicles so they can put them away at night. If this garage would be attached to the house it would be okay, it can be as tall as the house, and that's how most houses are built now. The house down the street on Karban Road has a huge second story above the garage and that's okay but you can't build a garage in the backyard a bit taller. I am in favor of this request, and I hope you recommend it.

Nicole Berkshire stated, I am a resident of Karban Road and as someone who recently built a new home and has gone through a similar process, I think we all need to consider the esthetic that the garage will bring not only to this property but to Karban Road and Oakbrook Terrace. I personally believe that this is a positive impact to our City. The more new construction we have the better the home value will be. I am 100% in favor.

Bruce Almeroth stated, I am in favor of the garage because it is a way to improve the property and the home value. As for the patio on the side of the garage it makes sense because you have electricity there for lighting. The house is beautiful, and I am in favor.

Chairman Caslin opened the floor for any negative testimony.

Craig Mandernach stated, I oppose to the construction of this two-story garage because I am to the west and I am downhill from the proposed construction. I oppose this project for several reasons that adversely impact exposure to sunlight, overall height of structure, the proximity to west and northwest sloping land, the east/west running roof ridge with western extending eave, and proximity to shared property line. I also oppose this project due to the potential impact of future water issues. Overall increase in footprint of structure relative to existing structure possibly increasing runoff. Change in location of down spouts due to greater depth of building will change flow patterns, direction, and location of runoff.

In regard to overall height of proposed structure, proximity to west and northwest sloping land, east/west roof ridge (as opposed to existing north/south roof ridge), approximately 2 feet western roof eave and proximity to shared property line the proposed two-story garage is documented on the drawings as being 21 feet tall on the eastern side of the structure, however the land slopes to the west and northwest so it's difficult to know exactly, but from existing grade to proposed 21 feet roof ridge will be significantly higher than 21 feet on the western side or dirt will need to be piled up to change the contour of the land immediately surrounding the foundation, in either event, at our shared property line the height of the proposed two-story garage will be much greater than 21feet.

Also note that the proposed structure will have an east to west oriented roof ridge which the submitted plans show will be built near the 10 feet easement, but the roof eave (overhang) will extend further west by approximately 2 more feet.

The combination of west/northwest sloping land, the proposed 21 feet structure height (on the east side), proximity to shared property line and east/west roof ridge with an overhanging eave will mean that our existing family gardens, elderberry bushes and land will not get direct sunlight until 11am or later during the growing season. This height variance request is not acceptable to me as it will materially impair adequate sunlight to our existing garden beds, elderberry bushes and land. It will directly impact our ability to enjoy use of our property as we do now.

Regarding the proposed increase in building footprint and extended depth of structure this has the potential to alter and increase runoff, change the flow patterns of runoff, which may increase erosion as well as increasing flooding and pooling on the Northwest corner of our adjacent property which is already listed as a flood plain area.

Aside from the direct impact to our property by loss of sunlight and potentially increased runoff, erosion and flooding, I would again like to bring the Board's attention to the absolute height of the proposed two-story garage, it would be significantly higher than my single-story ranch style home and garage. Should this be built, it will silhouette above my house and garage when viewing from the west (further down the street). Additionally, the proposed two-story detached garage is nearly the same size as our 3-bedroom house and is completely out of the longstanding character of this community and neighborhood, in fact I am unaware of any other two-story detached garages in the area.

I do not envy but do respect the Planning and Zoning Commissioners responsibility to cast votes in these situations as many of us are friends or well-acquainted outside of official meetings. I appreciate careful consideration of my objections to the proposed two-story garage variance requests due to the adverse effects to my property to the west and offer to the panel a "field trip" over to my house/property to better visualize what I have attempted to describe.

Building & Zoning Administrator Dragan added, the neighbor adjacent to the property located at 17W390 Karban Road submitted a letter prior to the meeting which will be included in today's minutes, expressing concerns addressed in his testimony. As far as the flooding, I would like to read the plan review report we received from the City Engineer which shows, *we have reviewed the plans for a new garage at the above property, the proposed garage will replace an existing smaller garage. The lot does not contain any flood plain and the proposed impervious area is less than what mandates an engineered grading plan. Based on the DuPage County GIS topography, it*

*does not appear that the proposed garage will impact neighboring properties. Therefore, we have no objection to the City issuing a permit for this project.*

Building & Zoning Administrator Dragan also added, the City engineer comments have nothing to do with the variations requested for height or area of the garage, they are looking from a stormwater perspective. On another note, a local code required any new garage to have downspouts and gutters that discharge into the storm sewer. Prior to the meeting, the applicant submitted a petition signed by 10 residents of Karban Road that are in favor of the request.

MOTION Commissioner Freda moved, and Commissioner Jackson seconded to vote on Case #22-10.

Chairman Caslin asked Building and Zoning / Planning and Zoning Secretary Lozano to take the roll call.

Ayes: Commissioner Donoval

Nays: Chairman Caslin, Commissioners Freda, Ventura, Jackson, Cardenas

Absent: Vice Chairperson Walberg

MOTION DENIED WITH A 5-1 VOTE

Building and Zoning Administrator Dragan added, the Letter of Recommendation will be placed on the agenda for the April 26, 2022, City Council meeting. The next Public Hearing meeting is May 3, 2022. Addy will contact you when the packets are ready.

MOTION Commissioner Jackson moved and Commissioner Freda seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY THROUGH A VOICE VOTE OF 6-0.

Chairman Caslin adjourned the meeting at 6:39 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Addy Lozano

Building and Zoning / Planning and Zoning Secretary

