

Town of Stockbridge

ZBA Meeting

March 25, 2021

6:30 pm via ZOOM

Present:

Jon Benson
Jim Burns
Lou Chap
Tom Weymouth
Lee Ann Isaacson ZA
Janet Whitaker

Topic: Variance request for side-setback for Outdoor Classroom Structures

The SCS is putting up two truss-like structures for outdoor classrooms. The one on the left side facing the school does not meet the 25-foot set-back requirement. There is only 8 feet. The adjoining property owner does not have any issue with it. The SCS was required to go through ZBA review as there isn't another location for that structure.

Although they are temporary by design and will not be attached permanently to the ground, the ZA felt it was important that they be properly reviewed in the event that the structures are converted to a more permanent fixture.

Lou Chap – question - do these structures have to do with Covid as it is waning?

Response – Lee Ann Isaacson ZA – the SCS has learned the value of outdoor learn as a result of Covid requirements and are looking to continue the benefit to the students via more sturdy structures. They are nice structures which have been underwritten to some extent.

Lou Chap – comment - it feels like it is tucked in close to the school, so it won't blow away.

Response – Lee Ann Isaacson ZA – These structures are actually timber frame structures with raised seam roofing and very sturdy as well as attractive. The only issue is the one that abuts Janet Whitaker - who has no issue – but it is necessary to have input from abutting property owners – of those notified no one has voiced a concern.

The goal is to follow protocol so as to assure that there is no favoritism.

Tom Weymouth – comment – is there a sunset on this and could it be turned into a permanent structure.

Response – Lee Ann Isaacson ZA - Lee Ann stated that with the Variance it could in fact be converted as some point in the future. As long as they don't change the footprint it wouldn't require further review.

Tom Weymouth – comment – for the record I will sign off on it here.

Jim Burns – comment – do we have Janet Whitaker’s permission in writing?

At this point Janet joined the meeting.

Lee Ann Isaacson ZA – comment – Jim ask your question again for Janet. Janet said she would put something in writing. She has been noticed and is the one facilitating paperwork. There have been no other concerns from neighbors.

Lou Chap – comment - has the SCS discussed this? Not that the ZBA has any input.

Janet Whitaker – comment – the SCS intends the structures for outdoor use only. They can be moved if need be but it is not a simple thing. There isn’t intent at this time to enclose them. They aren’t to become buildings. The tents worked ok but are not a year-round option. These structures are made for snow and shedding rain.

Lee Ann Isaacson ZA – comment – Is this a crossover from Covid where we had to be outside, and they liked it and we want to make it more available.

Janet Whitaker – comment - They fit the current needs as far as air flow.

Lou Chap – comment - in reviewing Variance guidelines there’s nothing unusual here, it seems to meet the criteria.

Lee Ann Isaacson ZA – comment – We just wanted to make sure they were legal to have them up if someone noticed and asked the question. There are only 3 abutting properties; all setbacks are met except for the one between structure 1 on the left side.

Vote Taken – all approved.

Lee Ann requested that the findings be submitted to the ZA from the ZBA. Lou Chap said he would do that. Lee Ann will submit a sample variance letter for him to utilize.

Meeting Adjourned 6:45