

Board Members Present: Shane O'Connor, Howard Aspinwall, Curtis Ruckey
Robert Rosenberg and Peter Lambert

Town Staff Present: Jennifer Rodriguez,
Planning Coordinator and Assistant Zoning and Wetlands Officer

Chairman O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Board roll call was taken.

MINUTES:

Chairman O'Connor referred to the August 1, 2011 meeting minutes and asked for any corrections or changes. There were none. He then asked for a motion. Mr. Lambert moved to accept the August 1, 2011 meeting minutes, as published. Mr. Ruckey seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5 – 0, the motion was approved.

BILLS & CORRESPONDENCE:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **Public hearing on Application #FY11-12-02, Owner/Applicant: Steven Ratcliffe for a variance for the property located at 40 Juniper Drive to decrease the side yard setback to 4.7 feet, where 12 feet is required.**

Tamara Ratcliffe of 40 Juniper Drive addressed the Board and stated that they wanted to add a standard 24 foot garage onto their home. She went on to say that their hardship was that the house was placed very oddly on the lot.

Mr. Ruckey asked what they currently had there. Mrs. Ratcliffe replied that there was currently just a driveway and nothing else. Mr. Ruckey questioned whether the home was placed oddly, because it was centered on the lot. Mrs. Ratcliffe acknowledged that the home was centered on the lot. She then pointed out that because the home was centered on the lot, there was not enough room to add the standard garage onto the home; if the home had been placed a little off-center on the lot there would be plenty of room for the garage. Mr. Ruckey then asked why they could not just add a single garage instead of a two-car garage. Mrs. Ratcliffe replied that they owned three vehicles and that both her and her husband had essential jobs that they had to get to, even during bad weather. She explained that she was a Registered Nurse at Hartford Hospital and that her husband, Steve, was an Adjuster for



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Traveler's Insurance. She went on to say that during the previous winter's snowstorms it had taken them nearly three hours, each storm, to get their vehicles out of the driveway in order to get to work.

Mr. Rosenberg asked if the side of the proposed garage would be flat or if there would be an overhang. Dave Palmer, the builder hired by the Ratcliffes, replied that it would be a standard front facing garage with two garage doors. He went on to say that the side of the garage would be flat, with no overhang; it would match the rest of the house.

Mr. Ruckey asked if the home was a single story. Mrs. Ratcliffe replied that it was a single story ranch. Mr. Ruckey then asked if the garage would be the same level as the house. Mrs. Ratcliffe replied that it would be the same level as the house.

Mr. Lambert asked how close their neighbor's home was to the property line. Mr. Ratcliffe stated that it was about the same distance as their home was from the property line. He then stated that their neighbor, the Parmalees, had written a letter stating that they had no problem with the construction of the proposed garage. Mr. Ratcliffe submitted the Parmalees' letter to the Board along with three photographs of other homes in the neighborhood with garages.

Mrs. Ratcliffe noted that she had several medical conditions, including very aggressive Diabetes, which made it very difficult for her to shovel snow. She went on to say that she could get medical documentation of those conditions for the Board, if necessary.

Mr. Ruckey noted that there was a fence indicated on the plans that had been submitted. Mr. Ratcliffe explained that the fence actually belonged to their neighbor, the Parmalees.

Chairman O'Connor asked the Board members for any questions or comments. They had none.

Chairman O'Connor asked Ms. Rodriguez for any questions or comments. Ms. Rodriguez asked if the driveway would need to be widened. Mr. Palmer replied that it would only need to be widened by about one foot. Ms. Rodriguez stated that that would need to be included as part of any approval.

Mr. Palmer pointed out that the current driveway came out to the end of the garage and then tapered down to one and half wide near the street. Mrs. Ratcliffe commented that it would be great if they could widen the driveway for the entire length, but if that was going to keep them from obtaining approval of the variance then they would do without it. The discussion regarding the driveway continued briefly.

Chairman O'Connor asked for any public comments in favor the application.



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Ernest Frevel of 329 South Elm Street addressed the Board and stated that he and his wife lived behind the applicants and that they had no objection to the proposed addition of a garage.

Chairman O'Connor asked for any public comments in opposition to the application. There were none.

Mr. Ruckey asked Ms. Rodriguez if a medical condition could be considered as part of a hardship. Ms. Rodriguez replied that generally, by statute, hardships were not personal in nature. She went on to say that there was nothing stating that they could not read it in for the record. Mr. Lambert commented that he felt that it would help if they did read it in.

Chairman O'Connor asked for a motion regarding Application #FY11-12-02. Mr. Ruckey moved to approve Application #FY11-12-02, Owner/Applicant: Steven Ratcliffe for a variance for the property located at 40 Juniper Drive to decrease the side yard setback to 4.7 feet, where 12 feet is required. He then noted that the hardship was that the house was positioned on the property so that it did not allow sufficient space for the garage addition. In addition, the individual's health warrants that weather protection for their vehicles be allowed. The variance is not a permit to build. The applicant shall obtain all necessary permits from the Town's Building Office. Mr. Rosenberg noted that the driveway also could not be closer to the property line than the 4.7 feet as requested in the variance. Mr. Lambert seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5 – 0, the motion was approved.

Chairman O'Connor moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ruckey seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5 – 0, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Ferrari
Recording Secretary

THIS IS A DRAFT

Please check the following month's meeting minutes for official approval of these minutes and any amendments or corrections that were made.