



Date: August 16th, 2023
To: Chairman Shockey and Commissioners
From: Kim White, Planning Department

RE: **QUASI JUDICIAL (PUBLIC HEARING)** : Consideration to Grant an Variance to Height Regulations for Retaining Walls at 1204 West Portal Rd, Grand Lake, Colorado.

Public Hearing Process

The public hearing should be conducted as follows:

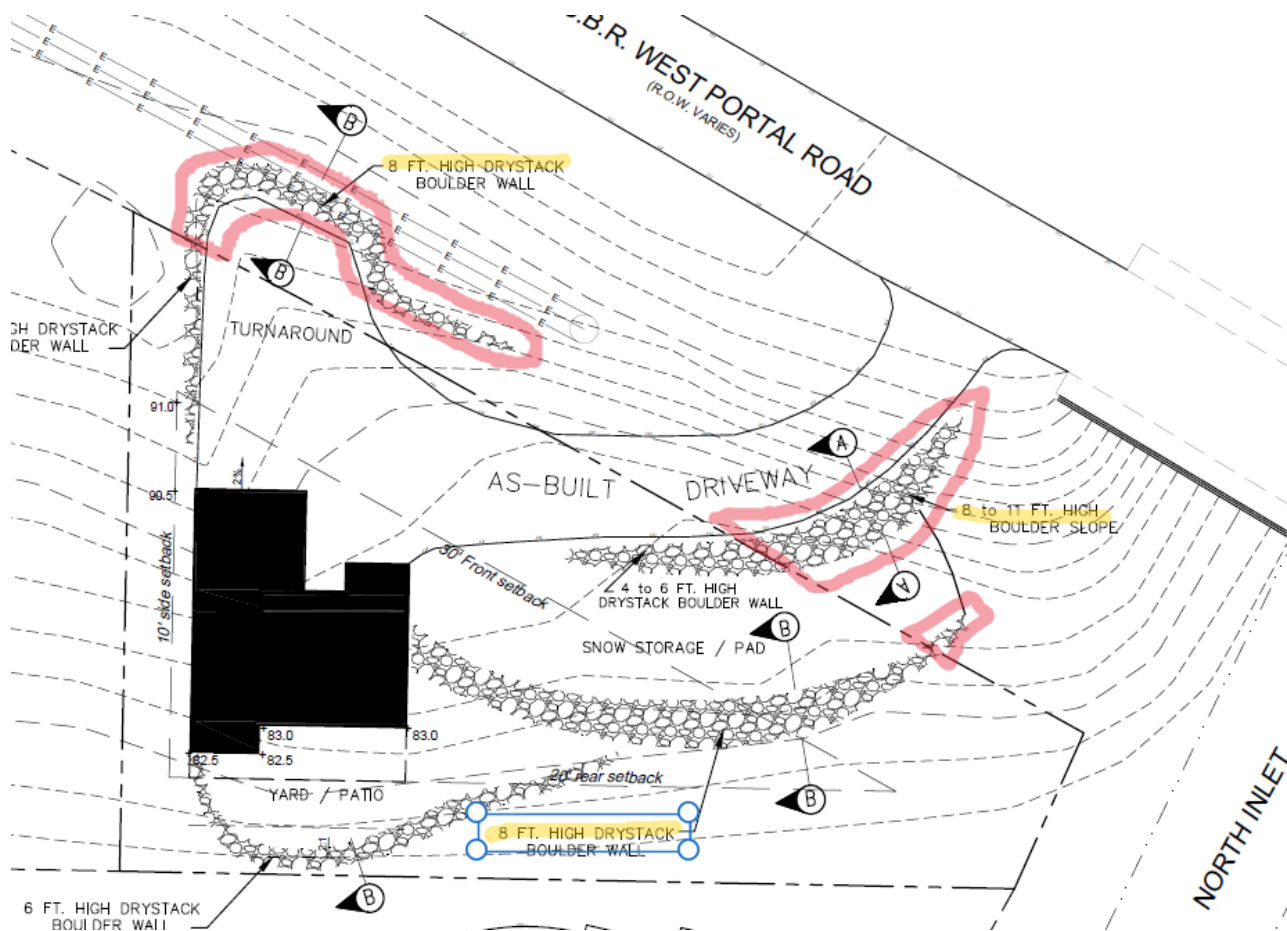
1. Open the Public Hearing
2. Allow staff to present the matter
3. Allow the applicant to address the Commission
4. Take all public comment
5. Close the Public Hearing
6. Have Commission discuss amongst themselves
7. Commission make a motion

Location Map





Wall Height and Location Graphic



Purpose

The Town has received a variance request from Cynthia A. Biersdorfer and Keith Nichols to permit 8 foot retaining walls to remain on their property and in the Town Right of Way. Per Municipal code 11-2-11, this request requires Planning Commission review and Board Approval.

Context

The property is located at 1204 West Portal Rd. The property is approximately 0.4 acres located adjacent to the Tonahutu Creek and zoned Single Family Residential High Density.

Background

The location of the walls that are over 8 feet are highlighted in yellow above. The applicant stated that the walls were not planned in the initial plans, but during the spring runoff, mud slides and flooding occurred and ran into their home, so they had to quickly build the walls to prevent further damage to their home. They stated that the runoff occurred due to the lack of vegetation upstream from the East Troublesome Fire.

Municipal Code:

Municipal Code 12-2-11(C) – [Zoning Standards]

Minimum Setback Front 25' Side 10' Rear 10' Shoreline 30'



11-2-4 (D) - Roadway Specifications.

9. Retaining Walls.

- (a) Where necessary to meet required side slope grades, walls may be utilized.*
- (b) Height. Retaining walls may not exceed six (6) feet in height and require a four (4) feet shelf between walls. Any walls exceeding six (6) feet will require a variance.*
- (c) Location. Retaining walls may not be located closer than ten (10) feet from the traveled lanes (maximum separation is desired).*
- (d) Design. Retaining walls over four (4) feet must be designed by a Colorado Professional Engineer. Retaining walls should include façade design, which is subject to approval by the Town and county building department.*

Municipal Code 12-2-27 Supplemental Regulations for Setback, Height and Area.

11-2-11 Variance Request and Procedure.

If an applicant responsible to the Town for public improvements desires to design and construct such improvements in variance to criteria in these standards, each variance shall be identified in the initial submittal.

- (A) Application. An application for a variance shall be filed with Town Staff no later than twenty-one (21) days prior to the next regularly-scheduled Planning Commission meeting...*
- (B) Planning Commission Review. Variances from the Street Development Policies, Standards, and Specifications shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission at a Public Hearing and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.*
 - 1. Fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled Public Hearing date, legal notice shall be placed in the local newspaper of general circulation advertising the time, date, and location of the Public Hearing.*
 - 2. In addition, certified letters are to be mailed at least fifteen (15) days prior to the Public Hearing to all property owners within two hundred (200) feet of any portion of the property.*
- (C) Board of Trustees Review. The Board of Trustees shall grant no variance without first receiving a recommendation from the Planning Commission. The Board may opt to hold a Public Hearing before granting the variance.*
- (D) Hardships for Consideration. Variance requests will only be granted if the applicant can demonstrate all of the following:*
 - 1. That by reason of exceptional shape, size or topography of lot, or other exceptional situation or condition of the building or land, practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship would result to the owners of said property from a strict enforcement of these Regulations;*
 - 2. That literal interpretation of the provisions of these Regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same district under the terms of these Regulations.*
 - 3. That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant;*
 - 4. That granting the variance request will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this ordinance to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district;*
 - 5. That the granting of the variance does not pose a detriment to the public good and does not substantially impair the intent and purpose of the Zone Plan and these Regulations.*

Staff Comments

This hearing is to request an exception to the height of the walls due to a hardship listed in the attached submission. This hearing is not to request the encroachment license for the wall into the Town right of way. The Encroachment license is being requested and heard by the Board as a separate item.



A public hearing was properly noticed in the Middle Park Times and the Town has received 17 of the 23 notices that were sent to neighboring properties within 200'. No comment has been received against the walls, but 2 letters received with no issues with the walls (see attached).

The Applicant has submitted the engineered drawings of the walls as required by the code for walls over 4' (attached). The site plan is also attached for review.

Staff received all required items for the request:

1. Appropriate Fee and/or deposit; and
2. Signed Agreement for Services; and
3. A site plan and/or survey; and
4. The applicable Municipal Code Standard to be waived; and
5. A letter explaining the Hardships for Consideration associated with the variance request.

Commission Discussion

The Commission should discuss the findings of fact from the code 11-2-11 (D) (1-5), in order to make a decision/recommendation.

1. That by reason of exceptional shape, size or topography of lot, or other exceptional situation or condition of the building or land, practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship would result to the owners of said property from a strict enforcement of these Regulations;
2. That literal interpretation of the provisions of these Regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same district under the terms of these Regulations.
3. That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant;
4. That granting the variance request will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this ordinance to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district;
5. That the granting of the variance does not pose a detriment to the public good and does not substantially impair the intent and purpose of the Zone Plan and these Regulations.

Suggested Commission Motion

Motion to approve Resolution xx-2023, a variance to Municipal Code 11-2-4(D)(9)(b) allowing retaining walls over 8 feet to remain on the property located at 1204 West Portal Rd.

OR

Motion to approve Resolution xx-2023, a variance to Municipal Code 11-2-4(D)(9)(b) allowing retaining walls over 8 feet to remain on the property located at 1204 West Portal Rd. with the following conditions:

OR

Motion to Deny the Request for Variance.