

Variance Worksheet – Finding of Facts

Variances. Except as provided herein to hear and decide applications for variance from the terms of this chapter, because of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific piece of property which on June 16, 1981, was a lot of record or where, **because of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary or exceptional situation or condition of a piece of property**, the strict application of this chapter would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to exception or undue hardship upon the owner of such property, provided that such relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent and purpose of this chapter. In granting a variance the board may attach thereto such conditions regarding the location, character and other features of the proposed building, structure or use as it may deem advisable in furtherance of the purposes of this chapter. Before any variance is granted, the board must find all of the following, which shall be recorded, along with any imposed conditions or restrictions, in minutes and records and issued in written form to the applicant to constitute proof of the variance:

a. The specific conditions in detail which are unique to the applicant's land. Such hardship is not shared generally by other properties in the same zoning district and the same vicinity.

The 30ft setback all around the cul-de-sac presents an issue on the northmost side leaving a narrower than usual “pinch point” of buildable space.

b. The manner in which the strict application of this chapter would deprive the applicant of a reasonable use of the land.

The applicant would need to provide a different smaller unit rather than another duplex that will match all the other units and fit the intent of the development.

c. The unique conditions and circumstances are not the result of actions of the applicant taken subsequent to the adoption or amendment of this chapter.

Correct

d. Reasons that the variance will preserve, not harm, the public safety and welfare and will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

This encroachment only affects the property that is asking for the variance and thus does not affect any neighboring properties. The setbacks against the adjacent properties can remain honored if this encroachment is allowed.

Further, a variance may be granted only if the Board finds that such relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent and purpose of the zoning plan and this chapter. Variances shall not be granted permitting an increase in floor area or density above the maximum permitted by the zoning district; allowing a use other than those specifically authorized by this chapter in the applicable zoning district; or from the denial of a zoning permit when such denial is due to the fact that such lot has no frontage on a public street unless such lot was a lot of record on June 16, 1981.

Hardship - There is no definition of a "hardship". Some guidelines, based on legal precedent, for applying the concept of unnecessary hardship are:

1. The premises of cannot be used in a manner permitted by the Zoning Ordinance unless the variance is granted.
2. A strict application of the terms of the Zoning Ordinance precludes its use for any purpose to which the land is reasonably adopted.
3. Inability to put the property to its most profitable use DOES NOT constitute a "hardship".
4. Mere inconvenience to the applicant is not sufficient grounds for determining a "hardship". In granting a variance the BZA may not make any decision that is contrary to the purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance.