

January 30, 2024

From: Jean and Jeff Barber

To: Town of Lansing Zoning Board of Appeals

Attn: Mason Molesso, Planner

Re: Garage project at 2 Ladoga

We wish to provide this as a narrative regarding the above-mentioned project. We purchased the property in March of 2018. This information is to provide a timeline explaining different issues and approvals we have experienced as we have progressed, and how they have affected the development of the garage.

Although this need for a garage has been present, our initial priority upon purchase was directed toward repairs to the house and living area. Once those repairs were accomplished, and we could focus on a garage, our biggest question was where to site it, knowing that much of our space is utilized by our septic leach field.

For that reason, our first inquiry was to the County Health Department to clarify any options available to us. Included with this correspondence are emails (doc. 1, page 1) from February of 2023 from Chris Laverack of the Tompkins County Health Department which explain the site visit from Chris and Scott Freybuger, the Engineer for the Department. They found it "best to leave the current functioning septic system in place and build the garage behind it." (note: this means construct the garage towards the railroad tracks). Until we were provided with this information, we were wondering if it would be best to remove and relocate the leach field toward the tracks, and site the new garage closer to our house.

The email (doc.1, page 1) from Chris of 2-9-23 states: "A grinder pump type bathroom can be installed in the interior of the garage and it may be pumped to the existing septic tank at the cottage without the need for a permit, inspection by our office, or alteration of the current cottage septic system."

A few days later, on 2-13-23, Scott Freyburger sent an email (Doc. 2) to Jeff Barber and Scott Russell in which he stated: "I just wanted to clarify one more thing related to this topic. That bathroom in the garage would not count as an increase in daily flow if the space it was going into would not be counted as a bedroom according to NYS building code."

Scott Freyburger had explained this to me (Jeff Barber) during his site visit....Septic usage is rated by number of bedrooms, not bathrooms. Copies of these emails in their entirety are included with this correspondence. We have NEVER had any intention of having living space in this garage....It will include a sink, toilet, and shower, but no bedroom(s) or kitchen.

Scott Freyburger's email (Doc. 2) of February 13th also mentions a request that was made to him 2 days after our meeting on site which refers to a question posed by a realtor concerning adding a bathroom and bedroom to an existing garage at a "neighboring property".

Once we understood that this project could be sited between the leach field and the railroad track, we had another obstacle....which is the NYSEG power pole that is exactly in the way of this new garage

location. The pole is shown on the survey maps provided for this project. Not only the pole, but the guy wires attached to it, and also the overhead wires, are very much a problem....unless we could manage to get the pole moved.

Scott Russell was kind enough to provide us with a very informative email (doc. 3) on 11-16-22 explaining what approvals are required for this project. He listed all individuals along with their respective departments, agencies, etc. Knowing that this power pole was a unique problem, and one with which we ourselves had to deal with, we were a bit slowed down after we realized the garage would need to be sited between the leach field and the railroad tracks.

After many, many hours of effort contacting “the right people” at NYSEG, we were advised by them (Doc. 4 page 2) on 6/2/2023 that we had a Job number, and they were waiting for an easement. Our neighbors directly across the road have been very kind in agreeing to have the wires moved from our pole to a pole that already exists on their property. (Doc. 4 page 3)

Enclosed is information from NYSEG regarding this situation. (Doc. 4....9 pages) Please note that we received an email (Doc. 4 page 4) dated June 5, 2023, from Richard Hansen of NYSEG in which he states that NYSEG would be receiving an easement from our neighbor to relocate the pole and remove it from our property. This relocation would of course require payment by us. On June 6th we received the quote from NYSEG. (Doc. 4 page 5). The amount to accomplish this pole relocation is \$7,811.42.

At that time, we were still trying to be sure that we could receive the proper permission from The Town of Lansing Planning Board. One by one, we were contacting the different entities as outlined by Scott Russell in November of 2022. On November 14, 2023, I met with Mike Moseley and received an email (Doc. 5) the following day in which he said there are “no issues from a Highway maintenance perspective.” (copy enclosed)

With that, the setback variance request meeting was scheduled for December 13th, 2023. The only variance that was in question for that meeting was the West boundary between our property and the neighbors, who submitted a letter (Doc. 6) stating their approval to reduce the setback from ten feet to 5.1 feet.

At the meeting, the proximity to the road was discussed, with some questions even being raised among board members concerning whether or not the road in question was a Township road, or a private road. (We have always fully understood that it is a Township road... It provides public access to the lake and is snow plowed and maintained by the Township).

Even though this was a public hearing, and advertised as such to many neighbors, there were no other people present, other than us. (Jean and Jeff Barber). The planning board’s desire and decision to schedule another meeting for the purpose of granting a variance on the road side of the project is understood.

Referring once again to our NYSEG situation with the pole re-location, please see the attached quote from NYSEG dated 6-6-23. (Doc. 4 page 5). In the center of the statement (Doc. 4 page 6) you can see that the quote was valid for 90 days. The ninety- day period expired on September 6, 2023. We decided to go ahead and issue payment to NYSEG and did so with a personal check on November 6, 2023, (Doc. 4 page 8) which was 60 days after the quote was deemed valid. We didn’t want to wait any longer, and we were by then aware of our neighbors’ acceptance of the setback variance change.

Enclosed is an updated survey and updated drawings showing the changes to our original plan which was presented at the December meeting. Foremost among our concessions is the elimination of the original building (labeled garage) that is on the property. As we have stated previously, we were advised by the prior owner that this structure was built and used by the boatbuilder that built many if not most of the original cottages in the neighborhood. The structure is over 100 years old. When we bought the property in 2018 the roof was totally open to the elements, and we were advised to tear it down. Instead, we installed a new roof, straightened up the structure, repaired the windows, and repainted it. In addition to losing the historical character of the building, we are accustomed to the much-needed storage it provides. It is in fact the ONLY storage building we have.

By eliminating this structure, the setback from the railroad property increases from 8.7 feet to 15.3 feet. (see survey). If this original structure had been rotated and attached to the new construction as we requested, the setback would have been 9.9 feet. We are hopeful that elimination of this original building mitigates any concern regarding the northwest boundary of our property.

Additionally, we have re-designed the garage so there is entry for vehicles from the north (railroad) side of the building. This eliminates two out of three doors that were originally designed to enter onto the street. The footprint of the garage itself has been reduced from 48 feet to 46 feet, with those two feet included now under the shed roof which covers the patio/porch portion of the structure.

With only one overhead door now facing the street, we have accomplished a greater distance between the garage and the road, as said distance increases as it proceeds toward the lake. We also plan to "radius" the apron to this overhead door, so any vehicle can start turning earlier as it enters the road. This stated re-design should mitigate any concern regarding safety when compared to the original plan.

For perspective, the south (porch/patio) end of the garage will be approximately 138 feet from the north side of our house at 2 Ladoga. The meeting on January 10th included discussion of the "character" of the neighborhood. We are VERY fortunate that our property provides us with arguably the "deepest" lot in the entire neighborhood. We feel that this structure provides very minimal sight disruption or proximity to any neighbors. As stated previously, our two closest neighbors to this project have voluntarily offered their cooperation to assist us.

In addition to the documents mentioned above, drawings of the structure are also part of our submitted material. An updated professional survey has already been dropped off to the Township offices.

Thank you for your continued consideration and attention to this project.

Regards,

Jean and Jeff Barber

