

Members of the Somerville Planning Board,

Variance request narrative:

In August 2019, the Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals approved my Special Permit with Site Plan Review Application (ZBA 2019-57) to build my “age-in-place” home as a second principal structure on my property at 9 Clifton Street. The approval was granted under the previous Zoning Regulations.

Since that time, I have invested a considerable amount of time, effort and money to develop the architectural detailing and the accompanying structural/civil engineering for bidding and construction. The construction drawings were bid to 3 local contractors. The lowest bid (after value engineering) still came in significantly over the architect’s original estimate.

My goal in applying for this variance is to build my age-in-place home and to be able to afford to stay in my neighborhood of over 23 years. After exploring every possible funding option that is available to me, my only means of financing the project is to use a Construction 1031 Tax Exchange. This would allow me to combine the sale proceeds of my existing home and the deferred capital gains tax from that sale to pay for the new construction.

The only way to meet the Construction Exchange rules is to divide my property into 2 separate lots. The resulting lots would have a frontage width of 50 feet and a depth of 60 feet.

The proposed and ZBA approved house and site plan will not change. It meets or exceeds all the setbacks required by the Zoning Ordinance. However, the lot depth under the existing Ordinance would be non-conforming and requires a Variance.

1. It is only the shape of the lot that interferes with the lot subdivision and the construction going forward by right.
2. The Variance, as it is proposed, does not change the already approved building envelope or site design. Therefore, granting the Variance will allow me a reasonable relief and reasonable use of my property.
3. The granting of the Variance will also be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance and will not be detrimental in any way to the neighborhood or to the public welfare as demonstrated in the previously approved building and site design. The home and garden design blends in and will be an asset neighborhood now and in the future for others to live in.

Granting this Variance request is the only means I have to make my age-in-place home a reality and simultaneously granting me the ability to make the highest and best use of my property.

Kind regards,
Sherri
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