

MINUTES

Valdosta-Lowndes Zoning Board of Appeals

Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room

300 North Lee Street, Valdosta, Georgia

February 4, 2020 2:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Nathan Brantley
Victoria Copeland
Nancy Hobby
John Holt

John "Mac" McCall
Gretchen Quarterman
Allan Strickland

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Hogan, III

STAFF PRESENT

Trinni Amiot
Matt Martin
Tracy Tolley
Debra Tulloch

VISITORS PRESENT

Marian Belanger
Al Turner
Jane Williams

Agenda Item # 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman McCall. It was determined that a quorum of members was present. Chairman McCall thanked everyone for coming and reviewed the meeting procedures with those in attendance today.

CITY OF VALDOSTA CASE

Agenda Item # 2: APP-2020-01 — Keith Quarles (16 Bellemeade North)

Chairman McCall announced the case. Matt Martin stated that the applicant, Keith Quarles, is asking for a variance to LDR Section 214-1, Table 3, as it relates to the minimum heated floor for a single family dwelling located at 16 Bellemeade North. The property consists of 0.344 acres and is zoned R-15. The property contains an existing building, currently used as the clubhouse. Mr. Martin stated that the applicant is requesting to renovate the clubhouse into a single family dwelling, which does not meet the minimum 1200 sq. ft. of heated floor space. (The applicant is not proposing any exterior additions.) Mr. Martin stated there was some discrepancy in floor area, and that the applicant stated the building was 977 sq. ft, while the Lowndes County Tax Assessor lists the total heated square footage as 1125 sq. ft. The applicant could enclose either the front or rear porch and more than likely meet the minimum floor area requirement. Staff cannot find a hardship to support the variance, and is concerned about a dwelling unit that is about half the size of the average dwelling unit in the neighborhood. However, staff understands that the neighborhood would like to see the building sold, and is supportive of the variance request. Staff also understands that this building is at the rear of the development and has existed here for more than thirty years, and the particular building design seems to fit in well with the neighborhood. Staff also understands that the parcel is heavily encumbered by various easements that greatly limit additions, other than enclosing the existing porches. While staff cannot recommend approval of the variance request, any variance approval should carry the stipulation that it be for this building only to prevent the possibility of a future owner from demolishing the building and replacing it with a smaller dwelling unit that would not fit in as well with the neighborhood.

Chairman McCall asked if the Board had any questions for Mr. Martin. Mrs. Hobby asked if the front or back porch were enclosed, would it give the proposed dwelling space the sufficient square footage? Mr. Martin stated it would more than likely give the building enough square footage. Ms. Tolley stated that the applicant would much prefer not to add on to the building. Vice-Chairman Strickland stated he was very familiar with the property, and that if the building was used as a house, it would not have the same technical issues with parking as does the clubhouse currently does.

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman McCall asked if someone would like to speak on behalf of the application. Ms. Marian Belanger, 3 Bellemeade North, spoke in support of the application. Ms. Belanger stated she was president of the HOA, and the HOA is the property owner. Ms. Belanger stated they were anxious to support the applicant, and would like to sell the clubhouse. Ms. Belanger stated that there were many delays, and the HOA was ready to move on. Ms. Belanger stated that any larger renovation may damage their privately-owned road, and that they do not use the clubhouse, which requires a lot of maintenance. Ms. Tolley stated that Mr. Quarles was unable to attend the meeting due to having the flu. Ms. Belanger stated that the HOA would appreciate a resolution today if possible.

Mrs. Hobby asked if there was still interest from prospective buyers in the clubhouse within the last six months. Ms. Belanger stated there was still interest, and there had been interest over the last six months. Mrs. Hobby asked if any of the prospects were aware that the building did not meet minimum dwelling size. Ms. Belanger stated that they were aware. Vice-Chairman Strickland asked if they were to glass the porch in as a sunroom, would that meet HOA requirements? Ms. Belanger stated that had been discussed, and would be acceptable.

Chairman McCall asked if anyone else would like to speak in support of the application. No one spoke. Chairman McCall asked if anyone was in opposition to the application. No one spoke. Chairman McCall asked if anyone had contacted staff. Ms. Tolley stated there had been no contact.

There being no further discussion, Chairman McCall called for a motion. Mrs. Quarterman made a motion to approve as presented, with the condition being that approval is for the existing building only. Vice-Chairman Strickland seconded the motion. The motion was called and carried with a vote of 5 to 1, with Mrs. Hobby voting against.

Agenda Item # 3: Approval of Minutes: January 7, 2020

Chairman McCall asked if any changes needed to be made to the draft minutes. There being none, Chairman McCall called for a motion regarding the January 7, 2020 meeting minutes. Vice-Chairman Strickland made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. The motion was called and carried with a vote of 5-0-1, with Mrs. Hobby abstaining.

Agenda Item # 4: Attendance Review

Chairman McCall asked staff if they had heard from Mr. Hogan. Ms. Tolley stated he intended to be at today's meeting, and had not heard anything since.

Agenda Item # 5: Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

/s/ John "Mac" McCall
John "Mac" McCall, Chairman

March 3, 2020
Date