

Zoning Board of Appeals

Public Hearing

Public Hearing and Special Meeting Minutes Summary, August 29, 2023

The following Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) regular members were present: Ackerman, Harris, Judd, Kuhn. ZBA Counsel Sylvia Rutkowska was also in attendance. New, alternate ZBA members were also in attendance: Renee LaMark Muir, Sybil Higgins, and Edward Southworth. Muir was appointed to hear and vote on this case. Southworth recused himself from hearing the case, based on his membership with the applicant organization.

Deliberation of Application ZBA #23-01 for a variance to permit expansion of a non-conforming use construction of a pavilion on an existing outdoor patio area. Map 58, Lot 71. Applicant: United Scandinavian Society, Inc.

Forrest Cobb, Vice President of the Scandinavian Society, presented his appeal for a variance. He discussed the history of the site as an existing use of the Society since 1936, or 87 years ago, and the overall site improvements the variance would allow the Society to achieve. Photographs of social activities on the site were also submitted as Exhibit 1. ZBA members hearing the case asked several technical questions regarding the site as shown on the map included with the application.

The ZBA chair then asked if anyone present was opposed to the application. Alan Parady, a neighbor and abutting property owner to the Society site, said that larger, more frequent activity could occur if the variance were granted. He expressed that more noise, lighting, and traffic to the Society site could have a negative impact on the neighborhood. A letter in the form of an email message by Cynthia Sigurdson was also submitted and placed on record as Exhibit 2. She bought a house in January of 2021 and knew about the Society site. She wrote that she had not had many complaints regarding the club outside of a boisterous stag party. She stated the board members of the Society were responsive to her complaint. Her concerns also pertained to more lighting, noise, and traffic.

Mr. Cobb and other Society members expressed their willingness to limit activities at the site to alleviate such concerns as expressed by Mr. Parody and Ms. Sigurdson. Carol Hanover, an adjacent land owner to the Society site, suggested that the variance sought could result in an improvement to the area.

ZBA Counsel Sylvia Rutkowska and ZBA board members discussed the rationale to extend the hearing to a later date, when questions regarding expansion of the Society could be better defined via the Deep River ZEO. On a motion by Harris, seconded by Judd, the ZBA agreed to continue this public hearing at the next regular meeting, to be held on September 19, 2023. This meeting was called to a close at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Jerry Ackerman

ZBA Chair