

**GRAND RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
NOVEMBER 13, 2007**

A meeting of the Grand Rapids Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following present: Secretary David VanDyke, Beverly Wall, Lee VanPopering, and Jim Kubicek. Also present was Township Planning Director Richard Sprague Jr. and Planning/Zoning Clerical Assistant Robin Rothley. Absent were Chair Ronald Hull and Vice-Chair George Orphan.

**1. Approval of the October 9, 2007 minutes.**

Lee VanPopering, seconded by Beverly Wall, moved to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**2. #2007-13; Leigh Soderman – 3820 Duchess Ave.**

Joel Peterson, Insignia Homes, spoke regarding the variance request to allow a 25' front yard setback, on the garage side of the home, where 35' is required. He distributed a front elevation of the proposed house.

Joel Peterson said that the property is located in a neighborhood of older cottages. Originally Miss Soderman planned to remodel the home but the home has been added on to several times so they found that it would be more cost effective to demolish the existing structure and build a new house.

Miss Soderman wants to preserve the trees, the integrity of the lot and aesthetics of the neighborhood. The grading of the lot makes this the best location. Most homes in the area have closer front yard setbacks than the requested 25 feet.

Dave VanDyke said that the rear and side yard setbacks all meet the Township Zoning Ordinance so the only variance needed would be the front yard.

Lee VanPopering suggested that they move the home further north east to fit with in the setback requirements. Joel Peterson said that there is a 40" Oak tree in the middle of the lot which would have to be removed if they moved the location. Also because of grading issues this would be the location with the least impact to the lot.

Jim Kubicek said that the location is back 14' further than the existing house and it also meets the side yard setback which the existing house doesn't.

Dave VanDyke opened the Public Hearing at this time; there was no one in the public to comment so he closed the Public Hearing at the same time.

The Commission members discussed similar variances that had been approved for this neighborhood. Dave VanDyke said the grading issues are a definite hardship.

Lee VanPopering, seconded by Beverly Wall, moved to approve the request for a variance for a 25' front yard set back on the South West side to Duchess. Motion passed unanimously.

3. **#2007 – 14; Robert and Joyce Bouma – 2650 Oak Ridge Trail.**

Joe Grochowalski, Omega Architects, represented the property owners. He said that the Boumas are requesting a variance to be allowed to build an accessory building closer to the front lot line than the primary residence. The building would be constructed with the same materials as the house and would be used to house their motor home and a couple of Corvettes.

Joe Grochowalski presented photos of the lot and explained that it is a 10 acre parcel with the house sitting 400 feet from the cul-de-sac. He discussed the Zoning Ordinance and doesn't feel that it was written for a house that has a 400 foot setback. If the garage were attached to the house a variance would not be required.

Because the property is heavily wooded and hilly there is only two locations level enough for a building this size; the requested location and a spot to the North West of the house. This site is preferable because their drain field is located on the other spot and a ridge is located between the level area and the house so the access drive would have to wind across their front yard.

Mrs. Bouma sent letters to her neighbors informing them of their plans. There are some issues that the Boumas will be working out with the neighborhood association which is separate from this request.

Lee VanPopering asked why there appeared to be two different heights in the building. Joe Grochowalski said that because the motor home is 13 feet tall that side must be higher. The Board discussed the height of the building and Rick Sprague said that 20' is allowed per the Township Zoning Ordinance and this building is 19' 9 5/8". Joe Grochowalski said they plan to berm the back side of the building so the building would not appear any taller than the house on the north east side. Dave VanDyke explained that in the Suburban Residential zoning district a 20' in height to the midpoint of the roof and 1800 s.f. building with is allowed by right on a ten acre parcel.

Dave VanDyke opened the Public Hearing at this time.

David Kurita, 2640 Oakridge Trail, said he and his wife own the home next door, on the east side of the applicant. He said he has no doubt that the Bouma's will construct a quality structure. Their concern is with the location; their house is located on the same ridge so the building would obstruct their view. Their house is approximately 490 feet from the street.

As there was no one else in the audience to comment the public hearing was closed at this time.

Dave VanDyke discussed the last ordinance changes for accessory buildings.

Beverly Wall discussed the four criteria for approving a variance.

Joe Grochowalski said that the Boumas are willing to plant Pine Trees to help screen the building from the neighbors. Dave VanDyk said the trees would have to be larger than ten feet to have any affect on the Kurita's view.

Lee VanPopering, seconded by Jim Kubicek, moved to approve the variance request to allow the submitted elevation plans for an accessory building to be constructed in front of the main residence with the following condition:

- There will be two staggered rows of 12' – 15' Evergreens spaced 15' center to center. The trees will follow the contour line 15' from the building and must extend from the center of the building back to the end on the north east side.

The board further discussed the size of the building. The neighbors are still concerned with the size of the building. Mr Bouma said that this building would be only two feet higher than the existing attached garage.

Beverly Wall said that she is not comfortable with the substantial detriment to neighboring property owners. There is 256' from the Kurita's house to the corner of the accessory building.

The board voted 2 in favor and 2 opposed. Motion Denied.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,