



Tuscaloosa Neighborhoods Together

notes on TUSCALOOSA ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS March 24, 2008

(*** These notes are NOT official minutes. They are notes taken by a private citizen and are not to be used or relied on as an official document.***) Please excuse any errors/omissions in this report. Any that exist are my own and were unintentional.

The regular note taker did not attend the meeting – but rather wrote up notes based on the information provided by another citizen

The Zoning Board of Adjustment consists of 5 board members and two supernumerary members. The supernumerary members are called upon if one of the 5 board members can't attend the meeting or if one of the board members has a conflict of interest. The board members in attendance were Joe Romanek, John Sheffield (Chair), Louis Barnett, Bill McGuire and Dana Keith.

John Sheffield called the meeting to order and explained to those in attendance how the meeting would proceed. The following are the petitions that were brought before the board.

ZBA-9-08: Moorland Properties, LLC petitions for a variance from minimum lot width standards to allow the construction of a two-family dwelling at 18 Meador Drive. Zoned R-2; proposed rezone to R-4U. (Council District 4)

(<http://www.tuscaloosaneighborhoods.org/Documents/Maps/District4.pdf>)

Continued until next month

ZBA-10-08: Moorland Properties, LLC petitions for a variance from minimum lot width standards to allow the construction of a two-family dwelling at 13 Meador Drive. Zoned R-2; proposed rezone to R-4U. (Council District 4)

(<http://www.tuscaloosaneighborhoods.org/Documents/Maps/District4.pdf>)

Continued until next month

BA-13-08: Brooks & Brooks, Inc./Chris Latham petitions for a variance from minimum lot width standards and a variance from minimum setback requirements to allow the construction of a two-family dwelling at 926 Homewood Drive. Zoned R-4U. (Council District 4)

(<http://www.tuscaloosaneighborhoods.org/Documents/Maps/District4.pdf>)

Issues: This property is located near 10th street and backs up to the railroad tracks. The lot is irregularly shaped which creates 2 rear yards and the lot tapers from approximately 32 feet in width to approximately 90 feet in width at its widest point. The shape results in a small buildable area. The home should have a 52 foot setback – they are requesting a 25 foot setback which is consistent with the rest of the homes on the street. The staff recommends requiring rear parking and a ball and chain in the front right of way to prevent parking in the front yard.

Vote: 5 to 0 in favor.

ZBA-14-08: Brooks & Brooks, Inc./Chris Latham petitions for a Special Exception to the minimum off-street parking requirements to allow the construction of an addition to an existing church at 2650 Elizabeth Street. Zoned R-4, BN, & MG. (Council District 2)

(<http://www.tuscaloosaneighborhoods.org/Documents/Maps/District2.pdf>)

Issues: The property is located on the corner of Elizabeth Street and 26th Court. The church is building a new 560 seat sanctuary. This building requires 112 parking spaces. The church has 134 spaces on site... but the construction will reduce it to 63 spaces. However, the church owns vacant lots on and around the block and at the completion of the new building they will have a total of 146 on site parking spaces. They are requesting a special exception to reduce the number of on site parking spaces during the construction of the new facility.

Vote: 5-0 in favor.

ZBA-15-08: The Lorna Group petitions for a Special Exception to allow the use of a modular building (automated ice vending machine) at 1621 Skyland Blvd East. Zoned BN. (Council District 7)

(<http://www.tuscaloosaneighborhoods.org/Documents/Maps/District7.pdf>)

Issues: The property is located on a section of the paved parking lot of the Beauty Mark Warehouse located on Skyland Blvd next to Walmart. This board has approved similar structures as this one for the same use on four other properties in Tuscaloosa. The building will only take up one parking space in front of the Beauty Mark store.

Vote: 5-0 in favor for one year only and with required landscaping.

ZBA-16-08: Billy Boyd Construction Inc. petitions for a variance from minimum setback requirements for an existing single family dwelling at 4154 Meretta Lane. Zoned R-1. (Council District 3)

(<http://www.tuscaloosaneighborhoods.org/Documents/Maps/District3.pdf>)

Issues: The property is located in Lexington Downs. The home was built approximately one foot into the required side yard setback. The setback should have been 10 feet... it is 8.69 feet. You would think that a construction company that has been in business as long as this one has would not make errors like this.

Vote: 5-0 in favor with the understanding that there are fines and penalties for repeat offenders.

ZBA-17-08: Teresa Beeker petitions for variances from minimum lot width and area requirements to allow the resurvey of Part of Lots 1, 2, & #, Block 108, T.C.I. & L. Co. Survey located at 1304 and 1308 – 12th Avenue. Zoned R-3. (Council District 4)

(<http://www.tuscaloosaneighborhoods.org/Documents/Maps/District4.pdf>)

Issues: The property consists of 3 parcels that encompass portions of 3 platted lots. Currently there are 2 single family homes located on two of the parcels. The property owner purchased all three parcels with the intention of removing the 2 homes and building 3 homes – one on each parcel. However, the zoning ordinance allows only one dwelling on each platted lot. The staff suggests that the lots be resurveyed to be consistent with the parcel boundaries so that the property owner would have 3 buildable lots. The lots would be nonconforming and only 36 feet wide. Most of the other lots in the area are 50 feet wide. If these properties were subdivided into 2 lots they would be closer in size to the others in the neighborhood but would still be nonconforming. However, this proposal will produce additional house for students outside of the adjacent historic neighborhoods.

Vote: 5-0 in favor with the following conditions: future development of these lots must meet all other zoning and building codes, required parking must be accessed via the adjacent alleys and located at the rear of the homes, parking of 3 spaces instead of 2, and the addition of ball and chain in the front yard to prevent parking in the front yards along 12th Avenue.

ZBA-18-08: A-1 Signs petitions for a variance from maximum sign height to allow the construction of a freestanding sign at 4251 Courtney Drive. Zoned BH. (Council District 2)

(<http://www.tuscaloosaneighborhoods.org/Documents/Maps/District2.pdf>)

Issues: This sign is for the new Sante Fe Cattle Company Restaurant located near Lowes off of 20/59 and I-359. The petitioner was not able to show any hardship related to this case. “Economic conditions” shall not be considered hardship for the purpose of granting variances from the sign ordinance. The petitioners state that the restaurant is below all existing roadways. Perhaps they are below 20/59 but they are not significantly below the other roads in the area (I-359, Skyland and Courtney Drive).

Vote: 0-5 against. Denied unanimously.

ZBA-19-08: Riverwalk Development, LLC petitions for a Special Exception to the minimum off street parking requirements to allow the construction of a restaurant on Lot 1, Riverwalk Place Subdivision. Zoned RD. (Council District 3)

(<http://www.tuscaloosaneighborhoods.org/Documents/Maps/District3.pdf>)

Issues: This property is located on Jack Warner Parkway and is adjacent to the site of a proposed public park. The park site will contain 47 parking spaces and will provide access to a boat dock on the Black Warrior River. The city and the petitioner have a shared parking agreement. The combined parking spaces for the restaurant and the park would meet the parking requirement for the restaurant site alone. The restaurant hours will peak at lunch and dinner. The city claims that this means that the restaurant and park peak parking hours would not coincide. I'm not sure I buy this. There is no comments from the city regarding the traffic on Jack Warner Parkway... in particular, will there be a turn lane added so that people turning into the restaurant will not slam on their brakes and cause an accident when they attempt to turn onto the property. One of the nice things about Jack Warner Parkway was that it had few lights and limited access and egress which made it a safe a quick way to get around town ... I wonder how long it will be before the city has to add yet another light to this road. Before long, it will be like HWY 69 south – a nightmare of traffic and lights.

Opposition from the floor: There were individuals from the nearby neighborhood who spoke against the development.

Vote: 4-1 in favor.