

**Alma Zoning Board of Appeals
January 28, 2021**

Chairperson Justin called the meeting of the Alma Zoning Board of Appeals to order at 5:03 PM at the City of Alma Municipal Building.

Present: Godfrey, Ayers, Justin, Guerrero, and Hall
Absent: Wight

Others Present: Aeric Ripley, City of Alma Zoning Administrator
Jerry Clark, Clark Construction
Lorrie Neeb, Edward Jones Investments

A motion was made at 5:04 PM by Godfrey, and supported by Ayers, to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2020 meeting.

Yes: Godfrey, Ayers, Justin, Hall, and Guerrero
No: None

Variance Request 320 Allen Avenue: An appeal of the required 30' front yard setback. The applicate Jerry Clark, propose to construct a new 8' x 8' front porch. The applicant is proposing a front yard setback of six (6'). This parcel is zoned R1, Single Family Residential.

The public hearing was opened by Chairperson Justin at 5:05 PM. A presentation was given by Ripley. Ripley reported that most structures in this neighborhood are located close to the front property line and do not meet modern setback requirements. This property was formerly a commercial and residential property. It has been converted to a single-family home with a single address. The presented plan is a porch 8 feet deep with a set of stairs 3.8 feet in length. This would make the setback from the front line at 5 feet. The contractors have suggested that the stairs could be located off the side of the porch which would put the setback from the front property line at approximately 9 foot which is consistent with the neighboring properties in the area. The board has the option of granting the variance with the stairs in either location. Ripley feels this project is an improvement to the building and two phone calls were received in support of the project.

Hall inquired the about the current setback of the former commercial portion of the building. Ripley replied that it is approximately 9 to 10 feet in that location.

Godfrey clarified that the proposed deck is on the other portion of the building.

Hall replied that it would be an improvement to the property.

Ripley commented that it is positive that this building is no longer a commercial use.

Godfrey suggested that the variance be granted so that the steps come off the North or South to preserve the larger setback and not set further precedent.

Ayers, Hall, and Justin agreed. Ayers suggested allowing setups to the North and South if desired.

Clark commented that he was agreeable to the steps coming off the North or South, but would prefer towards the street for aesthetic reasons.

Godfrey suggested keeping the setback uniform by having the steps run to the South.

Clark suggested shortening the deck 2 feet to maintain the setback while still having the steps face the street.

Ripley replied that to match the setback the deck would need to shorten by 3 feet. Clark agreed that this would be possible.

Hall agreed that aesthetically, this would be the best solution.

Godfrey inquired if a concrete sidewalk was planned from the steps to the current city sidewalk.

Clark confirmed this the case and that a 3' tall retaining wall in line with the deck will be installed to create a planting bed in the front of the home.

Hall clarified that it was landscaping rather than structural and beyond the scope of this discussion.

A motion was made at 5:20 PM by Hall, and supported by Ayers, to approve a variance of 8 feet of the 30 feet normally required for the front yard setback by creating a 5 foot by 8 foot porch with steps 3.8 ft in length running towards the street.

Yes: Godfrey, Ayers, Justin, Hall, and Guerrero
No: None

Clark thanked the board for their time.

Variance Request 313 N State Street: An appeal of the projecting sign ordinance size limitation. The applicator, 3one3 Boutique Hotel, proposes to install a 144 inch x 30 inch historic theme project sign on the front southeast corner of the building for the new hotel to be constructed on the ground floor. The property is zoned B1, Central Business District. The B1, District allows for the installation of projecting signage.

Chairperson Justin opened the public hearing at 5:22 PM.

A presentation was given by Ripley. The current sign ordinance allows for projection signs within the district at a size restricted to 7.5 sq ft per side. The proposed hotel is a novel edition to downtown and the proposed projection sign is of a historical design fitting the façade of the building. However, it does not meet the size or height requirements listed in the sign ordinance. The sign ordinance is currently being reviewed and re-written by the Planning Commission. It is

suggested that a variance to the ordinance would be most expeditious solution given the circumstances. Engineering calculations have been submitting detailing the safety of the signs structural plan.

Hall disclosed that he is a tenant of Gemini Capital Management and was concerned in respects to a conflict of interest.

Godfrey, Ayers and Ripley commented that it would not be as Hall is not positioned to directly benefit from the variance.

Hall commented that the existing tree in front of the building would block the view of the sign. Ripley commented that the developer is aware of the issue and there are current discussions concerning an overall plan for downtown in respect to trees. This is an ongoing process that is just beginning and will develop further when the ability to meet in person is restored.

Ayers recommended that the sign be allowed with the tree remaining unaltered for now.

Justin inquired if any comments were received from the public concerning the request.

Ripley commented that he had not.

Neeb commented that she was agreeable to the sign variance.

A motion was made at 5:34 PM by Hall and supported by Godfrey to approve the presented variance.

Yes: Godfrey, Ayers, Justin, Hall, and Guerrero
No: None

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Justin at 5:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron K. Hale, Recording Secretary