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REC'D BY: 

**SUFFIELD ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 7pm**

Present: Mark Blackaby
John Schwemmer
Despina Tartsinis
Gerard Chase
Victor Roy, Alternate
Tim Casey, Alternate

Absent: Susan Hastings

Also Present: Jim Taylor, Zoning Enforcement Officer
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary

The proceedings of this meeting were recorded and made available on the Town website, along with all of the application materials.

Chairman Blackaby called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and took a roll call and designated as voting members for this hearing, Schwemmer, Tartsinis, Chase, Roy and Casey.

He called for a vote on the minutes from the November 26, 2024 meeting. Mr. Chase moved approval and the motion was seconded by Ms. Tartsinis and approved unanimously.

Ms. Binns read the legal notice into the record.

2025-ZBA1 Michael Alexopoulos, Jr., property Map 85, Block 53, Lot #114, 834 River Boulevard, Suffield, requesting a variance of the required frontage and lot coverage, to expand a non-conforming structure. Sections XIII and XI apply.

Chairman Blackaby announced that he would be recusing himself from the public hearing. He asked Mr. Schwemmer to act as chairman for the meeting

Correspondence:

There was correspondence received from Mariam Blackaby, 844 River Boulevard who is an abutter stating her support of the application.

The applicant, Michael Alexopoulos Jr. introduced his wife Caroline and daughter Cara who were present for the hearing and distributed a packet of information to the Commission members on the plans, the explanation of the hardship and pictures of the site and other neighboring properties. Commissioners had also received pictures of the site that were taken by Zoning Enforcement Officer, Jim Taylor as well as the house renovation plans and the garage which was the subject of the need for a variance from the required 50 feet to 20 feet for the front setback. Mr. Alexopoulos explained the existing house which was built in 1890 and is setback approximately 10 feet from the road so is a preexisting nonconforming structure. The plan is to renovate the structure on the same footprint and add the garage to be setback 20 feet from the road. Mr. Alexopoulos detailed

through pictures and description the topography of the property that would make it impossible to locate the garage anywhere else on the property. He also showed examples of two other properties on the river side of the that have similar constraints and the garages that are on those properties. Mr. Alexopoulos noted the need for the one car garage and the enhancement to the safety on the street that would result from this change. He explained that with the proposed garage the property coverage would go from 11% to 15% that is still within the maximum of 25% for the zone. The side yard setback would be 20 feet which is also allowable in the zone.

Mr. Schwemmer opened the hearing to anyone from the public who wished to speak. Gary and Gail LaMagna who own 829 and 833 River Boulevard spoke in favor of the application and noted that having the garage would improve the safety on the street especially for snow removal. They said that the project would be an enhancement for the neighborhood.

Cara Alexopoulos further explained the advantages of making the house habitable again for her and her parents long term and the need to have the garage.

With no further requests from others to speak, Mr. Schwemmer asked for a motion to close the public hearing and enter deliberations. The motion was made by Mr. Chase and seconded by Mr. Casey with all voting in favor 5-0-0.

Mr. Chase stated that this is a text book case for a hardship based on the age of the house and the topography of the land.

Mr. Schwemmer noted the unique situation and the historic preservation of the property.

Ms. Tartsinis also noted the preservation of the existing structure and the modest request for a single car garage that would be in conformity with the neighborhood.

With no further discussion, Mr. Schwemmer called for a motion on the variance.

Ms. Tartsinis moved to approve file # 2025-ZBA1 requesting a front yard variance on the west side of the property from the required 50 feet to 20 feet to allow for an addition of a garage to a non-conforming structure, as the result of the hardship being the location of the non-conforming preexisting structure on the lot and the size and the topography of the lot. The motion was seconded by Mr. Casey and approved unanimously 5-0-0.

It was explained to the applicant that he had 15 days after the decision is published in the newspaper before acting on the variance.

The applicant will be receiving an approval letter explaining the details of filing the variance.

With nothing further to come before the Commission, Mr. Casey moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tartsinis and with a unanimous vote the ZBA meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Recording Secretary, Ellie Binns