

The Richland Township Zoning Hearing Board met on December 14, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. as per the request of Ronald G. Shomo, representative of Richland Township Fire Department, located at 1321 Scalp Ave, Johnstown, PA 15904, for a side yard variance of 22.9' from Richland Township Ordinance 240-39C(2)(b) "Side yard abutting side street: not less than 30 feet", to construct a storage addition at the fire department. This hearing was conducted in the Richland Township meeting room, 322 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA 15904.

Present:

Bill Patrick, Chairman

Pat Wess, Vice-chairman

Rodney Kniss

PJ McGowan

Mark Rychak

Eric Hochfeld, Solicitor

Tiffany Shomo, Secretary

Attorney Hochfeld began the hearing by listing exhibits. Board Exhibit #1 was the appeal application with attachments. Board Exhibit #2 was the Richland Township Zoning Ordinance, by reference, and Board Exhibit #3 was the posting of the municipal building, the property involved, advertising in the Tribune-Democrat and notification of this hearing to adjoining property owners.

Court stenographer Lori Behe swore in the following:

Ron Shomo, President of Richland Fire Department

Attorney Hochfeld explained a similar request was approved but had expired on October 29, 2014.

Mr. Shomo explained that they are going to be shutting down the Geistown Fire Department and will no longer need the engine that is stored there. The engine moved 20 times out of 97 calls and was cancelled on most calls. They will be moving the engine to the Scalp Avenue Station. There is no storage room left at the Solomon Run Station. The fire department needs this facility to consolidate everything they have from the Geistown Station. He is hoping the Geistown Station is sold within the next few weeks.

The proposal is for a 14' x 60' timber constructed addition with a concrete floor. The interior walls would be left unfinished. The outside would be tin to match the existing building. The addition would be lower than the current roof line. The existing front of the fire station is about 30' high and the addition would be roughly 12' high. The department used to own all of the property but, PennDot took property for installation of the off ramp. The actual property line goes through the roof and is a very odd situation. The addition will be the length of the existing building, extending from the second set of double man doors to the parking lot. The double door entry will remain. The staff from the Geistown Station will be relocated to Scalp Avenue, but not into the addition. It will strictly be used for storage. Mr. Shomo said they would not be eliminating any parking and they currently have more than required by code. He stated that the public would not have access to the addition and it would function in same manner as existing storage.

The social hall has been updated since 2014, when the last approval was given. There is an existing air conditioning unit that will not have to be moved for the addition. The pad is 10' deep. The previous HVAC compressor located in the footprint has since been removed.

Mr. Shomo stated that there will be exterior access because they are required to for code approval.

Off ramp adjacent, 14' at closest point? Yes. Goes at a diagonal.

The proposed addition would be 15' x 19', including the overhangs. Mr. Shomo requested to amend the application to a 23.9' request.

The township had no comments.

Mr. Shomo said that all stormwater was calculated in 2014 so there will not be an issue with that.

Mr. Wess made a motion to grant an amended 24' variance as requested contingent upon PennDot approval on the plan. Seconded by Mr. Rychak. All in favor.

Mr. Hochfeld explained that the approval expires in six (6) months and if an extension is needed, he will have to come back to the zoning hearing board for an extension.

Mr. Kniss motioned to adjourn the hearing at 7:01 pm. Seconded by Mr. McGowan. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

*T. Shomo*

Tiffany Shomo