

The Richland Township Zoning Hearing Board met March 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. to hear the Appeal or Application of the Applicant, Keith and Alice Hogan for property located at 216 Arbutus Avenue, Richland Township, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, which is zoned R-2 Two Family Residential under the Richland Township Zoning Ordinance, to construct a detached garage. The Applicant requested a 550 square foot variance from Richland Township Zoning Ordinance Section 240-32A(9)(j) to construct a 1,200 square foot detached garage.

Present:

Bill Patrick

PJ McGowan

Dave Strushensky

Eber Verhovsek

Mark Kishlock

Eric D Hochfeld, Solicitor

Tiffany Shomo, Secretary

Absent:

Rodney Kniss

Mr. Patrick began the hearing at 6:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. 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 via certified mail.

Court stenographer Lori Behe swore in the following:

1. Keith Hogan
2. Alice Hogan

Mr. Hogan, the property owner of 216 Arbutus Avenue, presented his proposal to construct a 30-by-40-foot detached garage on his property. He explained that he initially believed a height variance would be required; however, upon further review, the structure will comply with the allowable height regulations. Mr. Hogan noted that the request is driven by the limitations of older homes, which were not designed to accommodate modern needs such as multiple vehicles and motorcycles. He stated that the existing property lacks sufficient square footage to meet these needs, and that the addition of the garage would improve the property, increase its value, and align with similar improvements made by neighboring properties, thereby enhancing overall quality of life for current and future occupants.

Mr. Hogan described the proposed structure as a stick-built garage set on a block foundation with poured concrete floors. The exterior will be finished with vinyl siding to match the existing house,

and the roof will be a gable style with asphalt shingles, also matching the residence. The garage will include two overhead garage doors and one man door.

He further explained that an existing garage located on the side of the house will remain in place. Access to the new garage will be provided by refinishing the current asphalt driveway and extending it to the right into the backyard. The plan includes a 30-by-36-foot asphalt pad in front of the new garage, with 15 feet of space between the rear of the garage and the pad. Mr. Hogan stated that the driveway is proposed to be 3 feet from the property line; however, he is also considering a 10-foot-wide driveway that would reduce the setback to 2 feet. Mr. McGowan clarified that the applicable ordinance requires a minimum setback of 3 feet from the property line for driveways. Mr. Hogan indicated that the current paving estimate is based on a 9-foot-wide driveway and acknowledged that he was previously unaware of the setback requirement. He expressed willingness to comply but requested clarification and documentation of the ordinance to ensure full understanding if the width must be restricted.

Mr. Hogan emphasized that the garage is intended solely for personal use as a workspace and for storage of personal property, including several motorcycles. He noted that his current garage houses four motorcycles but lacks adequate space for maintenance and general home projects. He confirmed that no commercial activity will be conducted in the proposed structure.

Regarding utilities, Mr. Hogan stated that the garage will initially be equipped with electricity only. While he is considering the possibility of adding water service, no final decision has been made. He also addressed structural details, indicating that the roof overhangs are expected to be approximately 12 inches, although exact measurements have not been finalized. He stated his understanding that eaves may be exempt from setback requirements, referencing definitions from the Richland Township Zoning Ordinance related to “yard, rear, accessory buildings,” and “yard, side.” Mr. McGowan clarified that such provisions apply to square footage calculations rather than setback or lot coverage requirements. Mr. Hogan also reviewed the ordinance definition of “floor area” and requested that his application be amended to account for the proposed eaves.

In closing, Mr. Hogan reiterated that the primary use of the structure will remain residential, with the garage serving as storage for personal property. He stated that the mean building height will be approximately 14 feet 6 inches, with a maximum elevation of 17 feet. Exterior lighting will consist of standard residential porch-style fixtures, with no high-intensity lighting planned. The man door will be located on the left side of the structure, just beyond the corner of the garage doors, with the asphalt driveway wrapping around to form a small porch area at that entrance. The two garage doors will be oriented parallel to the roadway, with the man door positioned to the left of the garage doors.

There were no further board questions. There were no comments or questions from the township.

There are others in attendance, but not for this hearing.

The board took a recess from 6:25 pm – 6:42 pm

Mr. McGowan made a motion to grant a 694 square foot variance requested to build a new structure of 1,344 square feet at 216 Arbutus Avenue. The applicant must follow all Richland Township Codes and Ordinances. Seconded by Mr. Strushensky.

Mr. McGowan made a motion to adjourn the hearing at 6:43 pm. Seconded Mr. Kishlock.

Respectfully submitted,

T. Shomo

Tiffany Shomo
Secretary