

Portland Township Zoning Board of Appeals

May 15, 2023

Emergency Services Building

733 E. Grand River Avenue

Portland, MI 48875

CALL TO ORDER

Thomas Klein, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

ROLL CALL

Present: Thomas Klein, Mark Simon, Evelyn Walkington-Jensen,
Nic Schneider and alternate Theresa Iskra. Kristine Bond excused for late arrival.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The meeting minutes for April 17, 2023, were presented. Motion was made by Mark Simon to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Nic Schneider. Motion passed.

VARIANCE APPLICATION

8045 Meadowland Drive, Portland - Sarah Harraka presented an explanation for the application for variance requests in order to expand the child home daycare license from the current limit at 6 child home care to 12 child license at this location. As there is a waiting list within the families currently enrolled in the 6 child home care here, due to some families expecting newborns within the year. She has a potential employee ready for hire to comply with State of Michigan requirements of a 12 child home care license. However, there is a problem with construction of the current drive that does not allow parents to avoid backing out onto the street, which Sarah proposed a potential solution of having staggered drop/pickups to even the flow of traffic utilizing the current driveway as is throughout the day. She did not know any driveway change estimates and her husband was not present, but he may know some things about their driveway details. Also, she's requesting a variance for the multiple small lot dimensions as this property is too small for a 12 child home care license zone requirements.

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Neighbors within 300' received notice. For public comment Mary Hengesbach was present and in support of the increase of this 6 child care to 12 care license. Also, there were two emails received as public comment. One email received from Rebecca Reffitt in support of Sarah Harraka's request to expand her daycare and the additional traffic. The other email requested to remain confidential and their wish is not to increase the license from 6 to 12 child care, due to the location being a main entrance drive to the subdivision with nearly all traffic passing this residence.

Board Members discussed the application containing multiple variance requests:

The Residential-1 Zone District (R-1) requires *"A drop off/pickup site area shall be provided for motorists to be off the public street, which permits vehicles to exit the property without backing into the street. One (1) parking space is required for each two (2) beds, plus (1) space for each employee and owner."* This supports that off street parking must be arranged so that parents do not have to back out into the street plus needing to meet certain designated parking space numbers. This driveway is rather short and needs a way for parents to safely turn around after drop off/pickup of the children.

Additionally, the board discussed the lot size issues with this proposed license increase for expansion to a 12 child license. The R-1 district section requires: *"The minimum lot size shall conform to the minimum lot size regulations applicable in the district in which the group child care is located."* Meaning a minimum of 30,000 square feet of lot area and 132 feet of frontage, but currently this lot is only about 105 feet wide and .558 acre which is 24,306.46 square feet.

Therefore, it was determined this lot is not enough land for the group home standards of a 12 child care license for the existing small drive as it is for vehicles to exit safely. If licenced as a 12 child care home, this driveway has the potential of up to 12 multiple cars coming/going at the Meadowland Drive. This driveway is located at the opening of Stillmeadows Subdivision, which is approximately 66 homes and the driveway is just a short distance/first driveway of being off from Kent Street—a primary road (classification by the Ionia County Road Department). These factors cause concern with traffic congestion at the ingress and egress of Stillmeadows Subdivision's Meadowland Drive. It was noted a recent day care licensed on Divine Highway (classified a primary road) had added a circle drive to comply with safely drop off/pickup for variance to the R-1 district section requirements. The board discussed an array of inexpensive specific solutions/modifications that could be done minimally for the driveway to be made into compliance. The board members went through the standards section of the Dimensional Variances.

Motion by Thomas Klein to approve the lot size of 24,306.46 square feet vs the required lot size of 30,000 square feet minimus and the lot size frontage of 105 feet vs the required 132 feet, with the provision of being contingent upon meeting the variance request that the applicant must add a 9 feet x 18 feet turnaround for vehicles to not be required to back out onto Meadowland Drive. Seconded by Nic Schneider. Motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Thomas Klein to adjourn. Seconded by Mark Simon. Motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. or as requested