

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ZONING COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND PARK, TEXAS, HELD AT TOWN HALL, 4700 DREXEL DRIVE, HIGHLAND PARK, TX, 75205 ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022, AT 4:00 P.M. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST TO AMEND THE TOWN'S ZONING ORDINANCE BY COMBINING 4636 AND 4642 BELCLAIRE AVENUE INTO ONE BUILDING SITE.

Present at the meeting were: Chair Margaret Keliher and Commission Members Carolyn Seay and Rick Jones. Absent from the meeting was Alison Hunsicker and Brian Ficke.

Madam Chair Keliher called the meeting to order and explained the procedure the Commission would follow in considering the request.

Hugh Pender, Director of Development Services, introduced staff, Serena Palomino, Permit Technician. The owner, Patrick McGee, was also present. Approval of this lot combination will drop the lot coverage from 40% to 30%, setbacks become 10% of the lot (with no maximum), remain permanent, amend the Zoning Ordinance, and amend the Zoning map. The final public hearing will go before Council on April 19<sup>th</sup>, should this Commission choose to approve the request. With the obtained lot, Mr. McGee plans to build a new swimming pool and outdoor kitchen/entertainment area. The following items were displayed/explained via PowerPoint: Zoning Commission completed application, Surveys of both properties (4642 Belclaire vacant), existing structures of both lots, aerial view of both properties.

Madam Chair Keliher asked the applicant to speak on behalf of his case.

Patrick McGee, owner, thanked this Commission on behalf of him and his wife. The home was purchased from a building contractor, who planned to build a new home. Their intent is to expand their yard and possibly build a new pool.

Madam Chair Keliher questioned if response letters were received. Mr. Pender stated none neither in favor or opposition were received.

Madam Chair Keliher asked if there is anyone present who would like to speak in favor of this request.

Karen Stepick, 4635 Belclaire, expressed her happiness on the land not being used for a new home construction. Majority of this block is in support of this request.

With no one else to speak, Madam Chair Keliher asked if there is anyone present who would like to speak in opposition.

Donna Lang, 4630 Belclaire, stated she has a few questions and concerns. She understands the current owner does not plan to build on the vacant lot, however a new buyer might. She questioned the maximum building square footage for the new lot.

Mr. Pender explained once a lot is combined, it is permanent. He also explained the building coverage drops from 40% to 30%. The setbacks also change to 10% of the lot, which is roughly about 12'. A Survey of the two lots were displayed.

A new build construction would be limited to the 10% of the lot setbacks. The 30% coverage would apply to a new build construction and addition to the existing structure on 4636 Belclaire.

Ms. Lang stated her concern remains regarding massive structures being built that do not match the consistency of the smaller homes along this block.

Madam Chair Keliher stated this Commission cannot predict the potential plans for building on a combined lot.

Madam Chair Keliher questioned the applicant's advantage of combining both lots rather than keeping them as is.

Mr. McGee stated to legally allow a fence on the purchased lot, the two must be combined. He emphasized his intent is for a yard expansion. If this is denied, he will sell it back to the building contractor, who will then build a new home on the vacant lot. Mr. McGee understands Donna's concerns and hopes to live on this lot for years to come.

Ms. Lang concerns remain and hopes the Town puts future possibilities into consideration.

Madam Chair Keliher highly suggested that these concerns be heard among Town Council.

Commissioner Seay expressed when an entire neighborhood is negatively impacted by combined lots, the Town is more inclined to act.

Ms. Lang feels that this case was presented as what the current owner plans, rather than a potential buyer plans. She believes the community should be informed of the future possibilities.

Madam Chair Keliher thanked Ms. Lang for her comments.

Gregory Swalwell, 4618 Belclaire, is in support of this request. He questioned if Mr. McGee can file for a variance that allows approval for the design, without combining the lots.

Madam Chair Keliher answered the installation of a fence requires both lots to be combined, however, landscape screening does not.

Mr. Pender explained an accessory building cannot be constructed without a main structure. Landscape screening is an option, however, the proposed accessory structures cannot be done without combining the lots.

Mr. Swalwell questioned if there is any avenue for a variance request.

Mr. Pender answered it would be the Board of Adjustment who receives such requests, and a property hardship of some sort has to exist.

Mr. McGee stated he has had the same conversations with Town staff and the best solution is to combine both lots.

Carol Taylor, 4617 Belclaire, has no issues with this request. However, she understands if this is approved, it affects all Zoning amendments and all combined lots. Madam Chair Keliher explained this is not the case.

Mr. Pender explained this would only pertain to this property.

Madam Chair Keliher thanked all attendees present and their engagement with voicing their concerns.

On a motion by Brian Ficke, seconded by Rick Jones, the Zoning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval to the Town Council of a request to amend the Town's Zoning Ordinance to combine 4636 Belclaire Avenue and 4642 Belclaire Avenue into one building site within Zoning District E.

Being no further items on the Agenda, Madam Chair Keliher adjourned the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

APPROVED on this 5<sup>th</sup> day of October 2022.

BY:  
  
Margaret Keliher  
Chair

ATTEST:

Hugh Pender  
Director of Development Services