



CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
ZONING HEARING EXAMINER
NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

321 Jefferson LLC (Agent, Martin Grummer) requests a variance of 5 ft to the required 5 ft front yard setback for Lot 12, Block 11, Valley View, located at 323 Jefferson ST SE, zoned MX-T [Section 14-16-5-1(D)]

Special Exception No:..... **VA-2019-00442**
Project No: **Project#2019-002841**
Hearing Date: 02-18-20
Closing of Public Record: 02-18-20
Date of Decision: 03-04-20

On the 18th day of February, 2020, Martin Grummer, agent for property owner 321 Jefferson LLC (“Applicant”) appeared before the Zoning Hearing Examiner (“ZHE”) requesting a variance of 5 ft to the required 5 ft front yard setback (“Application”) upon the real property located at 323 Jefferson ST SE (“Subject Property”). Below are the ZHE’s findings of fact and decision:

FINDINGS:

1. Applicant is requesting a variance of 5 ft to the required 5 ft front yard setback.
2. The City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance, Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a) (Variance-Review and Decision Criteria) reads: “... an application for a Variance-ZHE shall be approved if it meets all of the following criteria:
 - (1) *There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property that are not self-imposed and that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity such as size, shape, topography, location, surroundings, or physical characteristics created by natural forces or government action for which no compensation was paid. Such special circumstances of the property either create an extraordinary hardship in the form of a substantial and unjustified limitation on the reasonable use or return on the property, or practical difficulties result from strict compliance with the minimum standards.*
 - (2) *The Variance will not be materially contrary to the public safety, health, or welfare.*
 - (3) *The Variance does not cause significant material adverse impacts on surrounding properties or infrastructure improvements in the vicinity.*
 - (4) *The Variance will not materially undermine the intent and purpose of the IDO or the applicable zone district.*
 - (5) *The Variance approved is the minimum necessary to avoid extraordinary hardship or practical difficulties.*”
3. The Applicant bears the burden of ensuring there is evidence in the record supporting a finding that the above criteria are met under Section 14-16-6-4(N)(1).
4. Agent for property owner appeared and gave evidence in support of the application.
5. All property owners within 100 feet of the subject property and the affected neighborhood association were notified.

6. The subject property is currently zoned MX-T.
7. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, there are special circumstances applicable to the Subject Property that are not self-imposed and that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity such as size, shape, topography, location, surroundings, or physical characteristics created by natural forces or government action for which no compensation was paid, as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(1). Specifically, new regulations within the IDO would require a setback from the front yard property line, which would destroy harmony with the neighboring property. The proposed variance would allow construction that would continue the existing setback of the neighboring property, with which the subject property shares parking access, and would thereby further the visual and functional harmony of the area. The government's action caused the site to be subject to a special circumstance that creates a hardship in the form of substantial and unjustified limitation on the reasonable use or return on the property and practical difficulties that result from the strict compliance of the minimum standards. Since no other lots would be used to share existing access with the already-constructed neighboring property, the required setback on the subject site creates a special circumstance that does not apply generally to other property in the same zone district and vicinity of the subject site. No evidence to the contrary was presented.
8. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, the variance will not be contrary to the public safety, health and welfare of the community as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(2). Specifically, Agent testified that, if granted approval, the Applicant intends to develop the property in a manner that is consistent with the IDO and the Development Process Manual (DPM), which requires proper drainage and vehicular access onto the subject site. No evidence to the contrary was presented.
9. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, the variance will not cause significant adverse material impacts on surrounding properties or infrastructure improvements in the vicinity as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(3). Specifically, the configuration of the site is designed specifically to be in harmony and consistency with what currently exists on the neighboring site, which shares a boundary and parking access. No evidence to the contrary was presented.
10. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, the variance will not materially undermine the intent and purpose of the IDO or applicable zone district as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(4). Specifically, Applicant presented evidence that the intent of IDO will still be met in that the subject site will still be developed as a multi-family building, as is the neighboring parcel, and will still allow the site to meet other setback and building height requirements that are outlined in the site's applicable zone district. No evidence to the contrary was presented.
11. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, the variance approved is the minimum necessary to avoid extraordinary hardship or practical difficulties as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(5). Specifically, evidence was presented that the applicants did explore the opportunity to have other site configurations but that would have required an additional variance request. The configuration of the building will allow development to be in harmony with the neighboring lot. Thus, the applicants are not requesting more than what is minimally necessary for a variance. No evidence to the contrary was presented.
12. The proper "Notice of Hearing" signage was posted for the required time period as required by Section 14-16-6-4(K)(3).

13. The Applicant has authority to pursue this Application.

DECISION:

APPROVAL of a variance of 5 ft to the required 5 ft front yard setback.

APPEAL:

If you wish to appeal this decision, you must do so by March 19, 2020 pursuant to Section 14-16-6-4(U), of the Integrated Development Ordinance, you must demonstrate that you have legal standing to file an appeal as defined.

Successful applicants are reminded that other regulations of the City must be complied with, even after approval of a special exception is secured. This decision does not constitute approval of plans for a building permit. If your application is approved, bring this decision with you when you apply for any related building permit or occupation tax number. Approval of a conditional use or a variance application is void after one year from date of approval if the rights and privileges are granted, thereby have not been executed, or utilized.



Robert Lucero, Esq.
Zoning Hearing Examiner

cc:

ZHE File
Zoning Enforcement
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Martin Grummer, 331 Wellesley PL NE, 87106