Rockland County

Ed Day, Rockland County Executive

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
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Douglas J. Schuetz
Acting Commissioner

Arlene R. Miller
Deputy Commissioner

May 24, 2018

Ramapo Zoning Board of Appeals
237 Route 59
Suffern, NY 10901

Tax Data: 56.15-1-6

Re: GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW REVIEW: Section 239 L and M
Map Date: 2/8/2018 **Date Review Received:** 4/17/2018

Item: ***ISRAEL SCHIFF/7 ROBERTS ROAD (R-2644)***

Variances for lot area, lot width, front setback, front yard, side setback, total side setback, rear setback, street frontage and floor area ratio to permit the construction of a two-family residence on .2296 acres in an R-15 zoning district.

East side of Roberts Road, approximately 225 feet north of Suffern Place

Reason for Referral:

NYS Route 59

The County of Rockland Department of Planning has reviewed the above item. Acting under the terms of the above GML powers and those vested by the County of Rockland Charter, I, the Commissioner of Planning, hereby:

Disapprove

1 The subject site does not meet the minimum lot area standard of 15,000 SF required for a single-family residence, let alone the 20,000 SF needed for the proposed use. Additional non-conformities include lot width and street frontage. The applicant is proposing to construct a two-family residence with less than 50 percent of the required lot area available. The proposed building will require a floor area ratio variance of 100 percent. Additional yard and setback variances are necessary to accommodate an oversized residential building on an undersized parcel. The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by similarly-sized parcels. Granting these bulk variances will set a precedent that may result in nearby property owners seeking the same relief. A doubling of the residential density in this neighborhood of non-conforming parcels will negatively impact its community character. Additional residents will generate more traffic on the local streets. The potential for traffic conflicts is great. While two-family residences are permitted as of right in the R-15 zoning district, they are subject to stricter bulk requirements. This site is particularly deficient in meeting these more stringent standards. We recommend that the required variances be denied.

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2 Permitting development that does not comply with the applicable bulk standards can set an undesirable land use precedent and result in the overutilization of individual sites. As noted above, the applicant is seeking significant variances for lot area and floor area ratio, as well as yard and setback deviations. The ability of the existing infrastructure to accommodate increased residential density on undersized, nonconforming parcels is a countywide concern and must be evaluated. This evaluation must consider whether local roads will become more congested and the sewer system, stormwater management systems and the public water supply will be overburdened. The Town must consider the cumulative and regional impacts of permitting such development.

The following comments address our additional concerns about this proposal.

3 A review must be completed by the New York State Department of Transportation, and any required permits obtained.

4 A review must be done by the Rockland County Department of Health to ensure compliance with Article XIX (Mosquito Control) of the Rockland County Sanitary Code.

5 A review must be completed by the Rockland County Sewer District #1, and any required permits obtained.

6 The NYS Department of State has determined that the Town is not administering or enforcing the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code in accordance with minimum standards set forth in 19 NYCRR part 1203. Given the concerns about the Town's administration and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code raised in the Executive Deputy Secretary of State's letter of July 15, 2016, the proposed residential building must be held to the requisite minimum standards and comply with all requirements of this code.

7 A review must be completed by the Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services, the Town of Ramapo Fire Inspector, or the Monsey Fire Department to ensure that there is sufficient maneuverability on site for fire trucks, in the event an emergency arises.

8 All proposed exterior stairways, building entrances, window wells and sidewalks must be delineated on the site plan demonstrating that they will not impact yard requirements, pedestrian safety and parking maneuverability for the site.

9 It will difficult for a vehicle parked in space #2 or #4 to maneuver out of the space without a turnaround area. No exterior stairways, building entrances or sidewalks are shown on the site plan, making it difficult to assess the parking area in relation to pedestrian movement on site, and whether there will be safety issues for the residents. A turnaround area must be provided so that vehicles do not have to back out into the roadway, and the exterior stairways, building entrances or sidewalks must be illustrated on the site plan so that safety issues can be properly evaluated.

10 The GML referral form and the application form both incorrectly indicate that the parcel is on the west side of Robert Road. The property is on the east side of the street. This information must be corrected.

10 The site plan shall contain map notes that list all appropriate information, including the district details.

11 Pursuant to General Municipal Law (GML) Section 239-m and 239-n, if any of the conditions of this GML review are overridden by the board, then the local land use board must file a report with the County Commissioner of Planning of the final action taken. If the final action is contrary to the recommendation of the Commissioner, the local land use board must state the reasons for such action.

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12 In addition, pursuant to Executive Order 01-2017 signed by County Executive Day on May 22, 2017, County departments are prohibited from issuing a County permit, license, or approval until the report is filed with the County Commissioner of Planning. The applicant must provide to any County agency which has jurisdiction of the project: 1) a copy of the Commissioner report approving the proposed action; or 2) a copy of the Commissioner of Planning recommendations to modify or disapprove the proposed action, and a certified copy of the land use board statement overriding the recommendations to modify or disapprove, and the stated reasons for the land use board's override.

13 The following additional comment is offered strictly as an observation and is not part of our General Municipal Law (GML) review. The board may have already addressed this point or may disregard it without any formal vote under the GML process.

The application materials reference both Robert and Roberts Road, as do the street signs. Our GIS database indicates Roberts Road. Several utilities and the United States Post Office use Roberts Road. The Town Assessor's records indicate Robert Road, as do the tax maps and filed map. If Roberts Road is what is commonly used, and the preferred street name, the tax maps must be updated accordingly. Our GIS will need an updated resolution from the Town of Ramapo to fix the discrepancy.

Douglas J. Schuetz
Acting Commissioner of Planning

cc: Supervisor Michael B. Specht, Ramapo
New York State Department of Transportation
Rockland County Department of Health
Rockland County Sewer District #1
New York State Department of State
Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services
Monsey Fire District

Anthony R. Celentano P.L.S.

Israel Schiff

Mona Montal, Chief of Staff
Rockland County Planning Board Members

**NYS General Municipal Law Section 239 requires a vote of a 'majority plus one' of your agency to act contrary to the above findings.*

The review undertaken by the Rockland County Planning Department is pursuant to, and follows the mandates of Article 12-B of the New York General Municipal Law. Under Article 12-B the County of Rockland does not render opinions, nor does it make determinations, whether the item reviewed implicates the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. The Rockland County Planning Department defers to the municipality forwarding the item reviewed to render such opinions and make such determinations if appropriate under the circumstances.

In this respect, municipalities are advised that under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, the preemptive force of any provision of the Act may be avoided (1) by changing a policy or practice that may result in a substantial burden on religious exercise, (2) by retaining a policy or practice and exempting the substantially burdened religious exercise, (3) by providing exemptions from a policy or practice for applications that substantially burden religious exercise, or (4) by any other means that eliminates the substantial burden.

Proponents of projects are advised to apply for variances, special permits or exceptions, hardship approval or other relief.

Pursuant to New York State General Municipal Law §239-m(6), the referring body shall file a report of final action it has taken with the Rockland County Department of Planning within thirty (30) days after final action. A referring body which acts contrary to a recommendation of modification or disapproval of a proposed action shall set forth the reasons for the contrary action in such report.