



Rockland County

Ed Day, Rockland County Executive

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

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Douglas J. Schuetz
Acting Commissioner

Arlene R. Miller
Deputy Commissioner

December 20, 2019

Spring Valley Zoning Board of Appeals
200 N. Main Street
Spring Valley, NY 10977

Tax Data: 57.24-1-48

Re: GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW REVIEW: Section 239 L and M
Map Date: 10/22/2019

Date Review Received: 11/14/2019

Item: **41 ROSE AVENUE (SV-756E)**

Variances to permit the construction of a 12-family dwelling on 0.344 acres in the PRD zoning district. Variances are required for lot area, lot width, front yard, side yard, rear yard, floor area ratio, number of parking spaces, parking space size, and units per acre. A special permit from the Village Board is also requested for the multi-family dwelling.

West side of Rose Avenue, approximately 184 feet north of Fred Hecht Drive

Reason for Referral:

Towns of Clarkstown and Ramapo

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 provides only 75% of the lot area required for a multi-family dwelling. The lot itself is non-conforming for width, as well. The proposed multi-family residence will require substantial yard variances 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 and infrastructure capacity. Additional residents will generate more traffic on the local streets, leading to congestion and traffic conflicts. Because multi-family residences are permitted by special permit in the PRD zoning district, they are subject to stricter bulk requirements. This site is particularly deficient in meeting these more stringent standards. The required variances must be denied, and the size of the building be scaled back to more conform to the standards of the PRD zoning district.

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2 The Village zoning regulations authorize the Zoning Board of Appeals to "vary or modify the strict letter of this chapter, where its literal interpretation would cause practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships..." The subject property is a regularly-shaped site with sufficient lot area for multi-family use. There are no unusual conditions or hardships associated with this property for which a variance would be necessary to grant relief. The application, therefore, does not represent a request for relief from a hardship, but rather is a request to overdevelop the property. Bulk requirements, such as minimum yard size and limits on the number of residential units per acre, serve an important and necessary function, and should not be dismissed without cause or the identification of a legitimate hardship. We recommend that this application be disapproved, and that the property be developed within the requirements of the village zoning regulations.

3 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. The lot area is 75% of the required minimum while the lot width is deficient by 34%. The front yard and side yard are both only 50% of the required minimum and the rear yard is 86%. The floor area ratio exceeds the maximum permitted amount by 10%. In addition, 12 units are proposed when only 6.19 are permitted on the site; nearly double the allowed density. The ability of the existing infrastructure to accommodate increased residential density on undersized 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 Village must consider the cumulative and regional impacts of permitting such development. As indicated above, we recommend the variances be denied and the number of units reduced .

The following comments address our additional concerns about the proposal:

4 The Towns of Clarkstown and Ramapo are the reason this proposal was referred to this department for review. The municipal boundaries of Clarkstown and Ramapo are approximately 210 feet east of the site. The municipal boundary of Ramapo is the site. New York State General Municipal Law states that the purposes of Sections 239-l, 239-m and 239-n shall be to bring pertinent inter-community and countywide planning, zoning, site plan and subdivision considerations to the attention of neighboring municipalities and agencies having jurisdiction. Such review may include inter-community and county-wide considerations in respect to the compatibility of various land uses with one another; traffic generating characteristics of various land uses in relation to the effect of such traffic on other land uses and to the adequacy of existing and proposed thoroughfare facilities; and the protection of community character as regards predominant land uses, population density, and the relation between residential and nonresidential areas. In addition, Section 239-nn was enacted to encourage the coordination of land use development and regulation among adjacent municipalities, and as a result development occurs in a manner that is supportive of the goals and objectives of the general area.

The Towns of Clarkstown and Ramapo must be given the opportunity to review the proposal and its impact on community character, traffic, water quantity and quality, drainage, stormwater runoff and sanitary sewer service. The areas of countywide concern noted above that directly impact the Towns of Clarkstown and Ramapo must be considered and satisfactorily addressed, as well as any additional concerns about the proposal.

5 A review must be completed by the County of Rockland Department of Health, any comment or concerns addressed, and any required permits obtained.

6 A review must be completed by the County of Rockland Sewer District No. 1, any comments or concerns addressed, and all required permits obtained.

7 The proposed residential building must comply with all requirements of the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code.

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

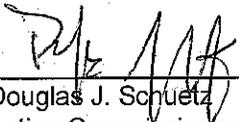
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9 It must be indicated if the multi-family building is intended to be of a condominium use or not.

10 The application form indicates the property receives water service from United Water. The form must be corrected to Suez.

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.

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.



Douglas J. Schuetz
Acting Commissioner of Planning

cc: Mayor Alan Simon, Spring Valley
New York State Department of State
Rockland County Department of Health
Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services
Rockland County Sewer District #1
Spring Valley Fire District

Anthony R. Celentano P.E.
Towns of Clarkstown and Ramapo

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.