

CITY OF ALBERT LEA  
BOARD OF APPEALS  
MEETING MINUTES

*April 4, 2018 - 11:00 am  
City Center – Council Chambers*

**Board Members Present**

Rachelle Bizjak  
Margaret Ehrhardt  
Steve Guenthner

**Board Members Absent**

Larry Baker, Ex-Officio  
Craig Hoium  
Matt Maras  
Rich Sydnes

**Staff in Attendance**

Cierra Maras, Fire & Inspection Administrative Assistant  
Wayne Sorensen, Building/Zoning Administrator

**Interested Parties**

None

Board of Appeals Secretary, Cierra Maras, called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Guenthner made a motion to approve the agenda and Ehrhardt seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

**Approval of Minutes**

Ehrhardt made a motion to approve the minutes from February 6, 2018. Guenthner seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously on a voice vote.

**Staff report prepared by Wayne Sorensen and an audio recording of this meeting become part of these minutes by reference.**

**Appeal: VA2018-002**

The variance request is to vary from the "Coving Setback" for the front yard cited in the submitted PD plat for Wedgewood Cove Estates subdivision. The Wedgewood Cove PD plan was approved on April 28, 2008. This variance would be to allow for a 25' setback from the "front" property line to allow for the construction of a twin home. The site is platted as a one or two family lot.

"Coving" is often explained where homes are positioned to meander, extending visibility, instead of directly facing each other. Back yards are hidden from view. The street pattern

reduces intersections (traffic and pedestrian conflicts) and are designed to reduce time transit as well as energy consumption. Home setbacks meander to enhance scale increasing sense of space. Fewer intersections improves flow and reduces pedestrian conflicts with vehicles. The added space along the street provides an estate-like feel while also reducing visual impact from parked cars.

Sorensen explained that staff recommendation is to build somewhat closer to the original setback line, only granting part of the variance. Coving could then somewhat remain in place.

**Public Hearing opened and closed at 11:23 a.m. as no one was present to speak.**

Guenther noted that any homes proposed to be built in the future may continue to run into this same situation. Sorensen explained that staff has had discussion with the developer and he is looking to get the coving setback modified.

Ehrhardt said that there are already homes that were built that did not meet the required setback. Sorensen explained that several homes have been built that did not meet the required setback but staff has become more aware of this and the goal is to get a consistency set; he noted that past situations cannot justify future ones.

Guenther made a motion, seconded by Ehrhardt, to recommend to City Council the approval of a variance to allow for a 25' front yard setback which is less than the setback required by the PD zone requirements in the adopted Wedgewood Planned Development for the construction of a twin home. The motion was passed unanimously on a voice vote.

#### **New Business**

None

#### **Old Business**

None

#### **Commissioner Communications**

None

#### **Staff Communications**

None

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 p.m. The motion to adjourn was made by Bizjak and seconded by Guenther. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cierra Maras  
Administrative Assistant

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Margaret Ehrhardt  
Member, Board of Appeals