IN THE MATTER OF BEFORE THE CECIL COUNTY THE APPLICATION OF BOARD OF APPEALS DIANNA ZARLI AND CASE NO.: 4306 STEPHANIE PERACCHIO

(Variance – LDR)

OPINION

The Cecil County Board of Appeals (the "Board") is now asked to consider the application of Dianna Zarli and Stephanie Peracchio (the "Applicants"), for a variance to expand lot coverage limitation by 7.2% for construction purposes at the subject property located at 200 Delaware Ave., North East, MD 21901 being designated as Lot 10A on Parcel 724, Block 9 on Tax Map 31G in Cecil County Election District 5 (the "Property"), in an area presently zoned Low Density Residential ("LDR"). The Property is located within the Limited Development Area of the Critical Area (the "LDA"). The Property is owned by the Applicants, both of whom properly signed Application 4306 (the "Application").

Under the provisions of Article XVII, Part I, Section 306(1) of the Cecil County Zoning Ordinance (the "Ordinance"), Variances, as defined in Article II, Part I, Section 12 of the Ordinance, may be granted by the Board, and where, due to special features of a site or other circumstances, literal enforcement of provisions relating to the Critical Area District would result in unwarranted hardship to a property owner, the Board may grant a variance in the Critical Area District. An Unwarranted Hardship is defined as the denial of "reasonable and significant use of the entire parcel or lot for which the variance is requested." (Md. Code Ann. Nat Resources § 8-1808(d)(1))1

Critical Area Law is codified in Section 8 of the Natural Resources Article of the Maryland Annotated Code, and the Board must consider the Critical Area Variance standards as set forth in COMAR 27.01.12.

COMAR 27.01.12 prohibits a local jurisdiction from granting a variance in the Critical Area unless the Applicant overcomes the presumption of non-conformance set forth in § 8-1808(d)(3)(ii) and satisfies the following variance requirements:

- A. The variance request is based on a situation where, because of special conditions, a literal enforcement of the provisions of the Ordinance would deprive the Applicant of a right commonly enjoyed by other parties in the same zone under the terms of the Ordinance.
- B. Special conditions and circumstances exist that are peculiar to the land, buildings, or structures involved, and that are not applicable to other lands, buildings, or structures in the LDA zone, such conditions and circumstances not being the result of actions by the Applicant.
- C. The granting of the variance will not confer upon the Applicant any special privileges that are denied by the Ordinance to other properties in the LDA zone.
- D. The variance request does not arise from any condition related to land or building use, either permitted or non-conforming, on any neighboring property.
- E. The variance is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of land, building, or structures.

Page 2 of 8

¹ All references to the Maryland Annotated Code are to the Natural Resources Article unless otherwise specified.

- F. The Board shall not grant variances in the Critical Area District (the "Critical Area") unless the decision is based on the following criteria:
 - Strict enforcement of the provisions within the Critical Area would deprive
 the Applicant of rights commonly shared by other owners of property in
 the LDA.
 - The granting of a variance will not confer upon the Applicant any special privilege that would be denied to other owners of like property within the Critical Area.
 - 3. The variance request is not based upon conditions or circumstances that are self-created or self-imposed, nor does the request arise from conditions or circumstances that are related to adjacent parcels.
 - 4. The granting of a variance will not adversely affect water quality or adversely impact fish, wildlife, or plant habitat within the Critical Area, and that the granting of the variance will be consistent with the spirit and intent of Cecil County's Critical Area Program and associated ordinances as well as state law and regulations adopted under Title 8, Subtitle 18 of the Natural Resources Article and COMAR 27.01.
 - Greater profitability or lack of knowledge of restrictions shall not be considered as sufficient cause for a variance.

The Applicants appeared and testified before the Board on September 23, 2024, in support of the Application. The Applicants provided the following testimony:

- The Applicants are applying for a variance to allow for 22.8% total lot coverage, which would exceed the lot coverage limitation on the Property by 6.8%.
- The lot size is 21000 square feet, with coverage allowance of 16%.

- The Applicants need the variance in order to construct an accessory apartment for their parents.
- The Applicants' parents are currently living with them, and do not have anywhere else to live.
- The Applicants' parents were forced to leave their home in January 2023 for financial, medical, and safety reasons.
- The Applicants' parents are unable to safely navigate stairs, so they require a one-floor dwelling.
- The Applicants considered senior living facilities, existing apartments or houses, and condos, but were unable to find a financially viable choice that met their needs.
- The Applicants believe that the proposed apartment is the best way to accommodate the needs of their parents within their budget, with the added benefit that it would enable the Applicants to be their caregivers in the future, if such care is needed.
- The Applicants purchased the home approximately one year ago, and intend to retire there, and eventually pass the home on to other family members.
- The Applicants hired a contracting company to create plans for the proposed apartment.
- The contracting company submitted an Initial Site Plan to the County in April 2024.
- The contracting company has been working with the County on various aspects of the proposal, including stormwater management, and the existing County easement on the Property.
- During the review process for the Initial Site Plan, the County calculated the impervious lot coverage to be 31.25%.

- The plans received approval from the County for PI Occupancy, Health permits, DPR, building plans, Fire Marshal, and water and sewer.
- The contracting company submitted a revised plan to the County in July 2024 based on conversations they had with Planning and Zoning.
- Shortly after submission of the revised plan, Planning and Zoning informed the Applicant that due to the purchase of the two additional lots in 2019, the impervious lot coverage was 16%.
- If the variance is granted the Applicant will coordinate with the contracting company to produce a landscaping plan to address and comply with the reforestation requirements in § 200.11(E) of the Ordinance to have a minimum woodland cover of at least 15%.

In response to questions from the Board, the Applicant provided the following testimony:

- The Applicants propose to move the carport from the northeastern corner of the
 Property to the eastern edge, aligned with the shed in the southeastern corner of the
 Property.
- The proposed apartment will be 834 square feet in size and would be built directly onto the northeastern side of the house.
- The proposed plans include a patio and a deck off the apartment.
- The Applicants have worked with Planning and Zoning to reduce the lot coverage as much as possible.
- In the event that the apartment is no longer needed for the Applicants' parents, the Applicants intend to incorporate it into their home.

- The house currently has three bedrooms, but would be reduced to two bedrooms if the apartment is built.
- The Applicants do not intend to rent out the apartment in the future.
- The only point of ingress and egress into the Apartment would be via a door on the back patio. The proposal does not include a front door facing Delaware Ave. for the Apartment.
- There is an existing gravel driveway on the Property. The Applicants do not intend to pave or otherwise change the nature of the driveway from its current state.
- The proposal includes a patio 112 square feet in size.
- The Applicants consider their parents' housing situation to be a hardship.

No additional witnesses spoke in favor or in opposition of the Application. Aaron Harding, Division Chief of the Planning and Zoning Division of the Department of Land Use and Development Services testified that the Division of Planning and Zoning did receive written comments.

The Division of Planning and Zoning received written comments in support of the Application from the following persons:

- Mr. Joe Fairchild, of 12 Bridgewood Ave, North East, Maryland
- Mr. Robert Dye, of 31 Heisler Ave., North East, Maryland
- Ms. Alice Neal, of 192 Delaware Ave, North East, Maryland
- A person claiming to reside at 56 Northeast Ave, North East, Maryland
- Danny Neal, of 192 Delaware Ave, North East, Maryland

The Division of Planning and Zoning received written comments in opposition to the Application from the Critical Area Commission (the "CAC"). On behalf of the CAC, Natural Resources Planner Ms. Susan Makhlouf stated that a portion of the Property is designated as a Forest Conservation Area, and that unauthorized forest clearing has occurred at some point prior to when the Applicants purchased the Property. In the event that the variance is granted, the Applicants would need to provide forest or development woodland cover of at least 15% in order to bring the Property back into compliance with applicable forestation regulations. Under state Critical Area regulations, a lot coverage variance is not required for the proposed apartment.

In response to the comments from Ms. Makhlouf and the CAC, the Applicant provided the following testimony:

- The Applicants understand the reforestation requirements and have a plan to bring the Property into compliance.
- The Applicants purchased the Property in its current de-forested state.

 From the evidence presented, the Board makes the following findings of facts:
- 1. The Applicant has not overcome the presumption of non-conformance set forth in County and State law2 and has not established an unwarranted hardship justifying a substantial and urgent need for the variance. The Board finds that denial of the variance, and thus denying the Applicant the ability to construct the desired apartment, would not deny the Applicant any use of

² See Cecil County Zoning Ordinance § 306(3)(f); COMAR 27.01.12.04(A); Md. Code Ann. Nat. Resources § 8-1808(d)(3)(ii)

- the Property which is commonly enjoyed by other property owners in the LDA sufficient to justify a substantial and urgent need for the variance.
- 2. Literal enforcement of the provisions within the Critical Area would not deprive the Applicant of the use of the Property. The Board finds that denying the Applicant the ability to construct the accessory apartment at the desired location does not deny the Applicant reasonable use of the Property.
- 3. Approving the variance would confer a special privilege upon the Applicant that would be denied to other owners of like property within the LDA. The Board finds that other property owners in the LDA are prohibited from surpassing the legal lot coverage limitations without establishing all the legal requirements of a variance in the Critical Area.
- 4. The Applicant has failed to address the issue of an existing right of way on the Property. The Board finds that re-calculating lot coverage limitations to account for said right of way would materially alter the Application.

For the reasons stated, by unanimous vote, the Board is not satisfied that the criteria set forth in Section 306 of the Ordinance have been met, application is therefore **DENIED**.

Date

Mark Saunders, Chairman

BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND	RECEIVED	MEET. MONTH: FILE NO. 436	Sept 9094
AFFEAL	AUG 0 8 2024 Cecil County DLUDS		100
A. APPLICANT INFORMATION - ALL APPLICANTS MU	sion of Planning & Zo	ning	
	ERACCHIO		
APPLICANTISIGNATURE APPLICANTISIGNATURE	North East CITY dgzarli@o EMAIL		2190 ZIP CODE 610 - 216 - 3173 PHONE NUMBER
B. PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION - ALL PROPERT	Y OWNERS MUST SIGN		
DIANNA ZARLI 3 STEPHANIE PROPERTY OWNER NAME - PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY	PERACCHIO		
200 Delaware Ave ADDRESS PROPERTY OWNER SIGNATURE	North Earling CITY dg Zarl EMAIL	st MD STATE	2190 ZIP CODE 610-216-3173 PHONE NUMBER
E PROPERTY INFORMATION			152117
200 Delawaye Ave PROPERTY ADDRESS	Fifth	Election Dist.	ID2163 ACCT. NUMBER
316 9 724 101	4 .	48	LDR
TAX MÅP BLOCK PARCEL LOT#		#ACRES	ZONE
De Purpose of Application – Indicate reasons why this as the are applying for a variance in ord shed, and de ck and to build an a lot coverage. The proposed plan complication area, the proposed plan complication area, the plan adds a small bedrood. On an attached sheet, PLEASE submit a sketch of the property indicated the dimensions of the project. A variance to carred hot coverage limital and the dimensions of the project. A variance to carred hot coverage limital and its property in the 100 year Floodplain? Is property in the 100 year Floodplain? Is property is located in the Critical Area, all provisions and required. If property is located in the Critical Area, all provisions and required.	der to request an accessory apartment of primary of and bathroom to cating the proposed project. Shows by 7.2%. YES Lot coverage YES YES THE STATE OF THE ST	of Cecil County of County	ep existing carport, allowance of 22-8%. Toning ordinance (who more than 30% of grospart of primary Stuctuation, side and rear property lines & III of the Zoning Ordinance.
G. PROVISION OF ZONING ORDINANCE: Residentia	Art XI Brt	I Section	200 13 MA XVII W
I. SPECIAL EXCEPTION RENEWAL – PREVIOUS FILE NO. & CO			Section
I. SPECIAL EXCEPTION FOR A MANUFACTURED HOME – Plea	se fill out the following informati	on:	
Will unit be visible from the road?	If yes, distance:		
Will unit be visible from adjoining properties?	If yes, distance:		
Distance to nearest manufactured home: Si.	ze/Model/Year of Unit:		-
Number of units on property at present time:			Revised 6/13/24 JB











