

Area or Dimensional Variances

Area variances may be granted where setback, frontage, lot size or yard requirements of this Code cannot be reasonably met. In making it's determination the ZBA shall take into consideration the benefit to the applicant if the variance is granted, as weighed against the detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood or community by such grant. In making such determinations the board shall also consider the following criteria:

Please give a written response to each section.

(1) Will an undesirable change be produced to the character of the neighborhood or a detriment to nearby properties be created by the granting of the area variance?

No

(2) Can the benefit sought by the applicant be achieved by some method, feasible to the applicant to pursue, other than an area variance?

No

(3) Is the requested area variance substantial?

No

(4) Will the proposed variance have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood?

No

(5) Has the alleged difficulty been self-created?

This information shall be relevant to the decision of the board but shall not necessarily preclude granting of the variance.

No

Area Variances Standards

The state statues define area variances as: "the authorization by the zoning board of appeals for the use of land in a manner which is not allowed by dimensional or physical requirements of the applicable zoning regulations."

General City Law, 81-b(1)

The state statues then go on to provide the zoning board with the standards for granting the area variances;

"(b) In making it's determination, the zoning board shall take into consideration the benefit to the applicant if the variance is granted, as weighed against the detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood or community by such grant. In making such determination the board shall also consider:

(1) whether an undesirable change will be produced in the character of the neighborhood or a detriment to nearby properties will be created by the granting of the area variance;

(2) whether the benefit sought by the applicant can be achieved by some method feasible for the applicant to pursue, other than an area variance;

(3) whether the requested area variance is substantial;

(4) whether the proposed variance will have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental condition in the neighborhood or district; and

(5) whether the alleged difficulty was self-created; which consideration shall be relevant to the decision of the board of appeals, but shall not necessarily preclude the granting of the area variance.

The board of appeals , in the granting of area variances, shall grant the minimum variance that it shall deem necessary and adequate and at the same time preserve and protect the character of the neighborhood and the health, safety and welfare of the community."

General City Law, 81-b(4)

Variations

One of the basic powers given by law to a zoning board of appeals is called the "variance" power. The board has the authority to "vary," or modify, the strict letter of a zoning ordinance or local law in cases where this strict interpretation could cause practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships for an individual.

Appeals boards are frequently confronted with requests for variances. There are two types of requests that come before the board, and the standards by which they are judged differ. A use variance is a request to utilize property for a use or activity which is not permitted by the zoning ordinance, and the applicant must demonstrate "unnecessary hardship." An area variance is a request for relief from dimensional standards contained in the zoning ordinance, and it requires a demonstration of "practical difficulty."

The basic standards for determining unnecessary hardship and practical difficulty have been established and refined by the courts in numerous cases.

Use Variance

An individual who wants to utilize property for a use that is not permitted by the zoning ordinance must apply for a use variance. An applicant for a use variance must demonstrate unnecessary hardship by satisfying each of the following three tests:

1. Uniqueness

The applicant must prove that there are certain features or conditions of the land that are not generally applicable throughout the zone AND that these features make it impossible to earn a reasonable return without some adjustment. If the features or conditions are generally applicable throughout the district, a variance should not be granted. In those situations where the difficulty is shared by others, the relief should be accomplished by an amendment to the zoning ordinance, not a variance.

2. Reasonable Return

The applicant must demonstrate an inability to realize a reasonable return under any of the uses permitted by the zoning ordinance. There must be a "dollars and cents" proof of the applicant's inability to realize reasonable return; speculation or qualitative assessment is inadequate.² Failure to realize the highest return is not considered a hardship.

3. Character

The applicant must prove that the requested modification will not change the character or quality of the neighborhood. In addition, the "spirit" of the ordinance or local law should be preserved.

The applicant for a use variance must meet all three tests before the appeals board may grant relief. A use variance should not be granted if the "unnecessary hardship" was created by the applicant. If the appeals board grants a use variance to an applicant who has failed to meet each of the tests, it runs the risk of assuming the function of the legislative body and making a decision contrary to the legislative intent of the zoning ordinance.

An increasing number of use variance requests is often the sign of an "aged" zoning regulation. The appeals board should not circumvent the legislative process by granting use variances. Instead, the appeals board should advise the governing body of the need to reexamine and amend the zoning ordinance.

Area Variance

In the case of an area variance, the applicant is seeking modification of dimensional standards, such as yard requirements, set-back lines, lot coverage, frontage requirements or density regulations, so that the property may be utilized for one of the uses permitted by the zoning ordinance. The appeals board may grant relief if the applicant can demonstrate that strict compliance with the regulations would cause practical difficulty.

The determination of practical difficulty is a three-step process.³

1. First, the applicant must demonstrate that the application of the zoning ordinance to his property causes significant economic injury.
2. Once the applicant has demonstrated economic injury, then the municipality must show that the regulation in question is reasonably related to a legitimate exercise of the police power.
3. Last, assuming the municipality has met its burden of proof, the applicant must demonstrate that the restrictions, as strictly applied in his case, are unrelated to the public health, safety or welfare of the community and that granting the variance will not adversely affect the community.

In making a determination of practical difficulty, the appeals board may consider:⁴

1. How substantial the variation is in relation to the requirement;
2. The potential effect of increased density on available municipal, county and state facilities and services;
3. Whether the variance will cause a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood;
4. Whether the difficulty can feasibly be mitigated by some other method; or
5. Whether the interests of justice will be served in granting the variance.

The appeals board should grant the minimum relief necessary to allow reasonable use of the land in question. Not every applicant for an area variance is automatically entitled to receive relief. Each application should be carefully considered against the requirement for proof of practical difficulty.

Summary

The major difference between a use variance and an area variance involves the use of the property. An area variance results in a modification of physical restrictions so that an allowable use may be established on the property. By contrast, a use variance permits the establishment of a use which is prohibited by the zoning ordinance and the zoning map. It is for this reason that the standards for a use variance are more stringent than the standards established for an area variance.

Frequently, the appeals board is encouraged to make legislative decisions under the guise of use variance requests. The appeals board should exercise caution when confronted with a request for a use variance and only grant those which meet the tests established for determining unnecessary hardship. The appeals board should resist the inclination to correct deficiencies in the zoning ordinance through the exercise of its variance power. If particular provisions of the zoning ordinance are inappropriate or unjust, the appeals board should recommend that the legislative body (City Council, Town Board, Board of Trustees) take the necessary steps to amend the ordinance or local law.

¹Otto v. Steinhilber, 282 NY 71 (1939); Village of Bronxville v. Francis, 150 NYS 2d 906 (1956); Jayne Estates v. Raynor, 22 NY 2d 417 (1968); Douglaston Civic Association, Inc. v. Klein, 51 NY 2d 963 (1980).

²Fayetteville v. Jarrold, 53 NY 2d 254 (1981).

³Fulling v. Palumbo, 21 NY 2d 30 (1967); National Merrit, Inc. v. Werst, 41 NY 2d 438 (1977).

⁴Weschsberger v. Michalls, 19 Misc 2d 909 (1959).

Department of Planning



Note:

This Tech Memo was prepared by the publication for municipal governments.

Department of Planning as an informational It is not intended to be a legal opinion.

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Appendix B
Short Environmental Assessment Form

Instructions for Completing

Part 1 - Project Information. The applicant or project sponsor is responsible for the completion of Part 1. Responses become part of the application for approval or funding, are subject to public review, and may be subject to further verification. Complete Part 1 based on information currently available. If additional research or investigation would be needed to fully respond to any item, please answer as thoroughly as possible based on current information.

Complete all items in Part 1. You may also provide any additional information which you believe will be needed by or useful to the lead agency; attach additional pages as necessary to supplement any item.

Part 1 - Project and Sponsor Information			
Name of Action or Project: Fence			
Project Location (describe, and attach a location map): 162 Broad St Plattsburgh NY			
Brief Description of Proposed Action: (16') start 4' chainlink fence on Broad St from the existing west end of the vinyl fence. proceed in a westerly direction along sidewalk on Broad St, stopping and turning 90° and heading toward sidewalk on West Court St stopping 30' from sidewalk on W. Court St. Then fence would proceed E on property towards SE corner of garage.			
Name of Applicant or Sponsor: CTE Fencing		Telephone: 518 563 5540	
Address: 4 Meadowdale RD		E-Mail: fencingemerys@gmail.com	
City/PO: Plattsburgh NY 12901		State:	Zip Code:
1. Does the proposed action only involve the legislative adoption of a plan, local law, ordinance, administrative rule, or regulation? If Yes, attach a narrative description of the intent of the proposed action and the environmental resources that may be affected in the municipality and proceed to Part 2. If no, continue to question 2.			NO <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does the proposed action require a permit, approval or funding from any other governmental Agency? If Yes, list agency(s) name and permit or approval: need variance need building permit			YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.a. Total acreage of the site of the proposed action?		1/4 acres	
b. Total acreage to be physically disturbed?		none acres	
c. Total acreage (project site and any contiguous properties) owned or controlled by the applicant or project sponsor?		1/4 acres	
4. Check all land uses that occur on, adjoining and near the proposed action.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural (non-agriculture) <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential (suburban)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Forest <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> Parkland			

18. Does the proposed action include construction or other activities that result in the impoundment of water or other liquids (e.g. retention pond, waste lagoon, dam)? If Yes, explain purpose and size: _____	NO	YES
_____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the location of an active or closed solid waste management facility? If Yes, describe: _____	NO	YES
_____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the subject of remediation (ongoing or completed) for hazardous waste? If Yes, describe: _____	NO	YES
_____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I AFFIRM THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE		
Applicant/sponsor name: <u>Jamie Rabideau</u>	Date: <u>8/18/2021</u>	
Signature: <u>Jamie Rabideau</u>		

Zoning Board to Fill out. Applicant does not fill out Part 2.

Part 2 - Impact Assessment. The Lead Agency is responsible for the completion of Part 2. Answer all of the following questions in Part 2 using the information contained in Part 1 and other materials submitted by the project sponsor or otherwise available to the reviewer. When answering the questions the reviewer should be guided by the concept "Have my responses been reasonable considering the scale and context of the proposed action?"

	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
1. Will the proposed action create a material conflict with an adopted land use plan or zoning regulations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Will the proposed action result in a change in the use or intensity of use of land?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Will the proposed action impair the character or quality of the existing community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Will the proposed action have an impact on the environmental characteristics that caused the establishment of a Critical Environmental Area (CEA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Will the proposed action result in an adverse change in the existing level of traffic or affect existing infrastructure for mass transit, biking or walkway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Will the proposed action cause an increase in the use of energy and it fails to incorporate reasonably available energy conservation or renewable energy opportunities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Will the proposed action impact existing:		
a. public / private water supplies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. public / private wastewater treatment utilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Will the proposed action impair the character or quality of important historic, archaeological, architectural or aesthetic resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Will the proposed action result in an adverse change to natural resources (e.g., wetlands, waterbodies, groundwater, air quality, flora and fauna)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
10. Will the proposed action result in an increase in the potential for erosion, flooding or drainage problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Will the proposed action create a hazard to environmental resources or human health?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 3 - Determination of significance. The Lead Agency is responsible for the completion of Part 3. For every question in Part 2 that was answered "moderate to large impact may occur", or if there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action may or will not result in a significant adverse environmental impact, please complete Part 3. Part 3 should, in sufficient detail, identify the impact, including any measures or design elements that have been included by the project sponsor to avoid or reduce impacts. Part 3 should also explain how the lead agency determined that the impact may or will not be significant. Each potential impact should be assessed considering its setting, probability of occurring, duration, irreversibility, geographic scope and magnitude. Also consider the potential for short-term, long-term and cumulative impacts.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Check this box if you have determined, based on the information and analysis above, and any supporting documentation, that the proposed action may result in one or more potentially large or significant adverse impacts and an environmental impact statement is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check this box if you have determined, based on the information and analysis above, and any supporting documentation, that the proposed action will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.
_____	_____
Name of Lead Agency	Date
_____	_____
Print or Type Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency	Title of Responsible Officer
_____	_____
Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency	Signature of Preparer (if different from Responsible Officer)

PRINT

17' to SIDEWALK

Trees + brush

20' from SIDEWALK

Garage

48'

53

16'

Existing vinyl fence

161 Broad

159 Broad

157 Broad

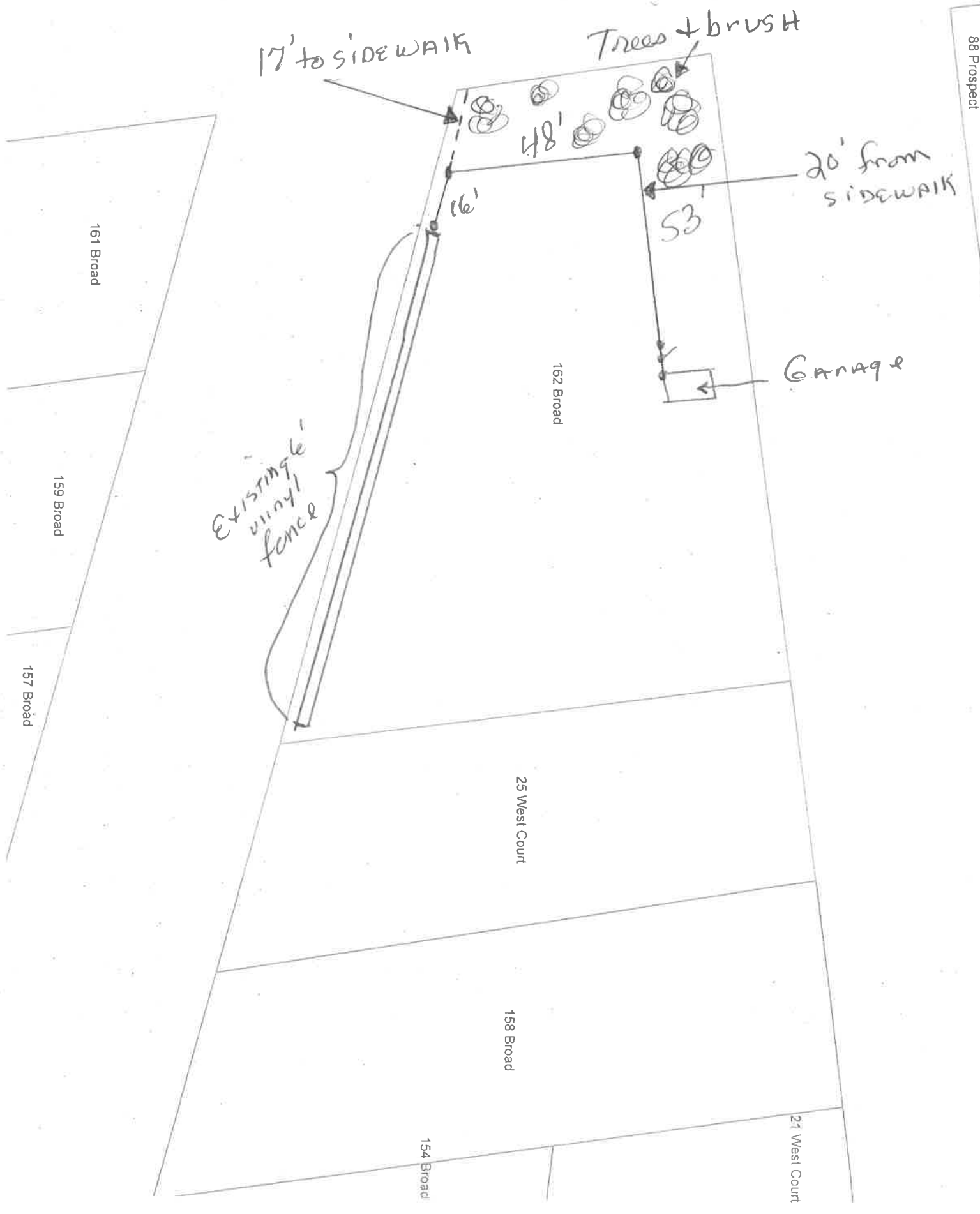
162 Broad

25 West Court

158 Broad

154 Broad

21 West Court





22 West Court

24 West Court

26 West Court

28 West Court

38 Prospect

19 West Court

21 West Court

168 Broad

162 West Court

162 Broad

157 Broad

155 Broad

163 Broad

