



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

Planning and Community Development Department

AGENDA ITEM

Case No: VAR 22-16
Proposal: Reduce side setback from 9' to 2.5'
Applicant: Michelle Mahoney
Owner: Sitkans Against Family Violence (SAFV)
Location: 207 Seward Street
Legal: Portions of Lot 4 and Lot 5, Block 7 U.S. Survey 1474, Track A Sitka Town Site
Zone: R-2 - Multifamily Residential District
Size: 13,115 SF
Parcel ID: 1-0720-000
Existing Use: Women's shelter
Adjacent Use: Residential
Utilities: Existing
Access: Seward Street

KEY POINTS AND CONCERNS

- Proposal is to reduce side setback requirements to facilitate placement of a 60 sq ft bike/stroller shed.
- Applicants would like to place the shed near the front entrance ramp, which would require placement inside the setback.
- Potential negative impacts are minimal.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Aerial
Attachment B: Site Plan
Attachment C: Shed Design
Attachment D: Photos
Attachment E: Applicant Materials

BACKGROUND/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Sitkans Against Family Violence (SAFV) is having Sitka High School build a 60 sq ft storage shed to house bikes and strollers. This variance would allow the shed to be placed on a concrete pad near the entry door adjacent to the access ramp. To utilize that space, the back of the shed would be 2.5 ft from the property line and in the side setback. The property line has a fence dividing their lot and the neighboring property.

ANALYSIS

Setback requirements

The Sitka General Code requires 14-foot front setbacks, 5/9-foot side setbacks, 8-foot rear setbacks in the R-2 zone¹.

22.20.040 Yards and setbacks.

A. Projections into Required Yards. Where yards are required as setbacks, they shall be open and unobstructed by any structure or portion of a structure from thirty inches above the general ground level of the graded lot upward.

Alaska Statute 29.40.040(b)(3) states that a variance may not be granted solely to relieve financial hardship or inconvenience. A required finding for variances involving minor structures or expansions in the Sitka General Code is “the granting of the variance is not injurious to nearby properties or improvements”.

Potential Impacts

The granting of the variance does not increase traffic, density, or other impacts beyond that of normal, allowable residential use. Therefore, staff believes potential adverse impacts to neighborhood harmony and public health and safety are minimal, and the proposal is consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

Comprehensive Plan Guidance

The comprehensive plan recognizes the value that non-profit organizations such as SAFV provide the community in terms of social services and addressing under-housing. Additional amenities on the site help to provide secured and dry storage of bikes and strollers necessary for resident transportation. Further, the comprehensive plan also recognizes the value in Sitka’s status as a bike friendly community.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the side setback reduction at 207 Seward Street for the placement of a bike shed.

¹ SGC Table 22.20-1

MOTIONS TO APPROVE THE ZONING VARIANCE

- 1) **I move to approve the zoning variance for a reduction to the side setback at 207 Seward Street in the R-2 Multifamily Residential District subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property is also known as Portions of Lots 4 and 5, Block 7, U.S. Survey 1474, Tract A, Sitka Townsite. The request is filed by Michelle Mahoney. The owner of record is Sitkans Against Family Violence.**

Conditions of Approval:

- a. The side setback will be decreased from 9 feet to 2.5' for placement of a bike shed. There shall be no encroachments over the property line.
- b. Building plans shall remain consistent with the narrative and plans provided by the applicant for this request. Any major changes (as determined by staff) to the plan will require additional Planning Commission review.
- c. Substantial construction progress must be made on the project within one year of the date of the variance approval or the approval becomes void. In the event it can be documented that other substantial progress has been made, a one-year extension may be granted by the Planning Director if a request is filed within eleven months of the initial approval.

- 2) **I move to adopt and approve the required findings for variances involving minor structures or expansions as listed in the staff report.**

Before any variance is granted, it shall be shown²:

- a. The municipality finds that the necessary threshold for granting this variance should be lower than thresholds for variances involving major structures or major expansions;
- b. The granting of the variance is not injurious to nearby properties or improvements;
- c. The granting of the variance furthers an appropriate use of the property.

² Section 22.30.160(D)(2)—Required Findings for Minor Expansions, Small Structures, Fences, and Signs.