1. Call to Order. – Chairman Gerl.

2. Roll Call. – Secretary Panzer.

3. Approval of Minutes. – February 9, 2016.

4. Variance Request by Joe Fonti representing the Marshfield Mall, to increase the maximum building coverage of a lot, to allow a building addition located at 503 East Ives Street. Section 18-35(7) states that the maximum building coverage of a lot for nonresidential uses is 40 percent in properties zoned “CMU” Community Mixed Use. The existing development currently exceeds the maximum lot coverage allowance, approximately covering 47 percent of the lot. The proposed addition will increase the lot coverage by approximately 6 percent. This addition would bring the total lot coverage to roughly 53 percent, which would be an approximate variance of 13 percent.

5. Adjourn.

Posted this 17th day of March, 2016 at 4:00 PM by Lori Panzer, Secretary, Zoning Board of Appeals.

For additional information regarding items on the agenda, please contact Sam Schroeder, Zoning Administrator at 715.486.2077.

Notice

It is possible that members of and possibly a quorum of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above-stated meeting to gather information; no action will be taken by any governmental body at the above-stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice.

Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For additional information or to request this service, contact Deb M. Hall, City Clerk at 630 South Central Avenue or by calling (715) 384-3636.

Publish 1 x on March 12, 2016
Meeting called to order by Chairperson Gerl at 5:02 p.m. in the 1st Floor Conference Room, Suite 108, City Hall Plaza.

**PRESENT:** Ken Bargender, Ed Gerl, Robert Lewerenz, Dean Markwardt and 2nd Alternate Adam Wegner

**EXCUSED:** Richard Kenyon

**ALSO PRESENT:** Zoning Administrator Schroeder, Gregory Collins, Dan O’Connell and Deputy Clerk Panzer

Wegner pointed out a typo in the first paragraph on page 3 of the minutes. The sentence “Harold did is so improperly.” should read “Harold did it so improperly.”

Deputy Clerk Panzer noted a few small changes as well. The word “Luan” on page 3 of the minutes should be capitalized. And the Building Inspector’s notation “See attached estimate” should be removed from the Building Inspector’s Background section on page 1 of the minutes, because the estimate is not included with the minutes.

**ZB16-03** Motion by Bargender, second by Lewerenz to approve the minutes of January 12, 2016 with the above listed corrections. All Ayes.

Motion carried.

Deputy Clerk read the variance request by Gregory Collins representing WHPC-Laurel Gardens-Marshfield, LLC, for an 8 foot variance to the minimum required front yard setback, to allow the existing Laurel Garden apartment located at 620 Laurel Court, Marshfield, WI 54449, to remain as constructed in 1971 with a 17.99’ front setback. Section 18-32 in the existing Zoning Code requires a minimum front setback of 25’, as did the Zoning Code at the time of construction, under Section 13.15 which also required a minimum 25’ setback.

**Background**

The Laurel Garden Apartments located at 620-622 Laurel Court and 617 Laurel Court includes three 20-unit apartment complexes that were all constructed in the early 1970’s. As many investors do, prior to purchasing, the Appellant researched these properties to make sure it is in conformance and to identify any unknowns before purchasing. During this research process the Appellant had a survey done to identify site details including property boundaries, easements, structure locations, and other site improvements.

After the survey was completed, the Appellant requested a Zoning Verification Letter from the City to make sure the properties were in compliance with the Zoning Code. As pointed out by the Appellant and the survey submitted, there are multiple nonconforming situations regarding this existing development. As noted in the zoning verification letter there are multiple nonconforming situations which include not meeting the minimum lot size, not meeting the required setback, extending the parking area into the City ROW, and not officially combining the two properties of 620 and 622 Laurel Court. While there are multiple nonconforming situations to point out, the focus of this variance request is solely on the structure not meeting the required setback making it an illegal nonconforming situation.

The survey shows that this development is setback from the front property line 17.99’. The current zoning code would require a minimum of a 25’ front setback. The Appellant is proposing an 8’ variance
to the property in hopes to bring the existing Laurel Garden apartment complex, at 620 Laurel Court, one step closer to compliance, and to allow this development to remain as constructed and approved in the early 1970’s.

**Analysis**

In the early 1970’s when this development was reviewed and constructed this property was zoned “B” Residential. “B” Residential required a minimum front yard setback of 25’. In reviewing the original building plans for the Laurel Garden development, the front setback that is on record is approximately 20’. This would lead us to assume one of two things: a) there was a discrepancy as to how the required setback is measured or b) there was a staff error at the time the building permits were approved permitting a 20’ setback when the regulations required a 25’ setback.

Currently a setback is measured as the shortest distance from the property line to the closest point of the structure. See definitions under “Applicable Ordinance Section(s)” below. Staff has firsthand observed where past employees interpreted the setback to be measured as a perpendicular line from the front building façade at closest point of the structure to the point where such perpendicular line intersects with the nearest property line. See Figure below. In this instance, measuring the setback as a perpendicular line, the existing development would meet the required setback.

Reviewing option b) above, even if there was an administrative error in reviewing the building permit application and the staff member at the time knowingly approved a 20’ setback instead of the required 25’ setback, the building was still constructed at a setback of 17.99’ which is even closer to the property line by approximately 2 feet. However, there are a lot of unknowns about what took place at the time of this development because the staff members are no longer employed by the City of Marshfield and the lack of records prior to the 1990’s – 2000’s. In addition to approving the site plan for this development, we also do not know if staff inspected and approved the property in relationship to the setback. Case law has upheld that a Zoning Board may consider an error of local government staff when deciding whether to grant a variance (Accent Developers, LLC v. City of Menomonie BOA and Timber Ridge Homes LLC, 2007 WI Court of Appeals).

Zoning Administrator’s statement of facts regarding the variance request:

1. The Appellant is Greg Collins representing the Owners, WHPC-Laurel Gardens, Marshfield, LLC.
2. The subject property is located at 620 Laurel Court.
3. The existing zoning district classification is “MR-24” Multifamily Residential.
4. The zoning district classification at the time of construction/permit approval was “B” Residential.”
5. The required front setback in the current Zoning Code is 25’ for “MR-24” Multifamily Residential properties.
6. The required setback at the time the permit was issued and the building was constructed was 25’ for “B” Residential properties.
7. The building plan on record with the City shows an approximate setback of 20’.
8. The present structure was built in 1971 and has existed as is for 45 years.
9. The existing building setback per the submitted survey is 17.99’.
10. The requested variance is 8’ (the required setback within current regulations of 25’ minus the existing setback as constructed 17.99”).

Applicable Ordinance Section(s)

   a. Section 18-32(7) of the current Municipal Zoning Code states that the minimum front setback for residential uses is 25 feet.
   b. Setback as defined under the current Municipal Zoning Code under Section 18-12 is “the shortest distance between the exterior of a building or structure and the nearest point on the referenced lot line, excluding permitted intrusions per Section 18-73.”

2. Previous Zoning Code (1947 to 1979)
   a. Section 13.01 Definitions
      i. (23) Setback is defined as “the minimum horizontal distance between the front line of the building, excluding steps and unenclosed porches, and the street line.”
      ii. (26)(e) Front yard is defined as a yard between the front line of the building and the front line of the lot.
   b. Section 13.15(b) requires a setback line of not less than 25’ for buildings erected in the “B” Residential District.

Variance Criteria (Section 18-165(6)(a))
The Zoning Board of Appeals shall review all variance requests against the standards provided under Wisconsin Statutes and applicable case law. To qualify for a variance, an applicant would have the burden of proof to demonstrate that the variance criteria are met. The following are the criteria and the Applicants response:

(How will the variance not be contrary to the public interest?) “The variance will not result in harm to the public interest because permitting the building to remain in its present location does not have any negative impact on the neighborhood or the immediately surrounding properties. Furthermore, the public interest is served by allowing the building to remain because it affords quality housing to low-income families. Having to remove a portion of the building would displace residents.”

(Will substantial justice be done by granting the variance?) By granting the variance “Substantial justice will be done by granting the area variance because low-income families who reside in the building will not be forced out and required to find alternative housing in the area.”

(Is the variance needed so that the spirit of the ordinance is observed?) “The property’s lot lines and the existing parking lot that serves the residents preclude the building from being moved. The only way to observe the setback ordinance is to remove a portion of the building.”

(Due to special conditions, will a literal enforcement of the provisions of the zoning ordinance result in unnecessary hardship?) “By enforcing the zoning code the Owner will be forced to remove a portion of the building which will necessitate re-engineering the building and removing several families from the property. This is an unnecessary hardship especially considering the Owner did not cause the problem. Rather, the owner of the property in 1971 caused the problem when the building was constructed.”
Although a hardship is questionable because we do not have detailed records at the time the development was constructed, there are multiple justifications that the other three criteria are met; including that no harm has come to the public in the last 45 years the development has been in use, the existing owner did not cause the issue, there is no certainty as to what caused the issue, and that the spirit of the ordinance should reflect the continuance of existing development that have been constant for as long as this development has.

In addition to the criteria listed above which are stated in our Municipal Zoning Code that reflects Wisconsin State Statute, case law has historically viewed unique property limitations as an additional variance criterion, separate from the hardship requirement. Arguably, the unique property limitation specific to this property could be the shape of the lot. This lot is a trapezoid shape in addition to being located along the bulb of the cul-de-sac which can reduce the amount of usable space within the property.

Markwardt asked about the other possible code violations that were discovered.

Zoning Administrator Schroeder said the other non-conforming situations wouldn’t get resolved through a variance or through the Zoning Board of Appeals and they are taking other routes to bring everything into compliance including a conditional use permit and other clean ups of the property to make sure that that property is conformant with the City’s Zoning Code and in compliance.

Gregory Collins explained that Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corp is a statewide organization that acquires, renovates and preserves properties around the state and in doing so they try to do improvements appropriately and correctly. They try to make improvements as necessary but to do them appropriately and correctly they have surveys done of the properties. A lot of times the properties have little infringements or encroachments. This was a little more significant. They would like to get this property back into compliance by getting the variance so they can move forward making sure this property is rentable.

**ZB16-04**  Motion by Lewerenz, second by Markwardt to grant the variance request from Gregory Collins representing WHPC-Laurel Gardens-Marshfield, LLC, for an 8 foot variance to the minimum required front yard setback, to allow the existing Laurel Garden apartment located at 620 Laurel Court, Marshfield, WI 54449, to remain as constructed in 1971 with a 17.99’ front setback for the following reasons:

- There is no harm to public interest. The building is not on a corner where line of sight for drivers is obstructed and it seems no harm has come to the public in the last 45 years since the building was constructed.
- Having to remove two apartments from one end of the building to move the wall in is an unreasonable thing to do considering low income families would be forced out of their homes and required to find alternative housing.
- Since no one knows why this all happened we should allow business to continue as it is.

**Motion carried**

Zoning Administrator Schroeder summarized the 2015 Zoning Board of Appeals decisions. The Zoning Board of Appeals only made one decision last year, which was on the Ministry Health Care’s appeal.

Motion by Markwardt, second by Lewerenz to adjourn at 5:26 p.m.
**Motion carried**
Lori A. Panzer
Deputy City Clerk
TO: Zoning Board of Appeals  
FROM: Sam Schroeder, Zoning Administrator  
DATE: March 22, 2016  
RE: Variance Request – 503 East Ives Street  

Appellant: Joe Fonti representing the Marshfield Mall  

Request: The Applicant is requesting a variance to increase the maximum building coverage of a lot by approximately 13 percent located at 503 East Ives Street. Section 18-35(7) states that the maximum building coverage of a lot for nonresidential uses is 40 percent in properties zoned “CMU” Community Mixed Use. The proposed addition would approximately increase the lot coverage to roughly 53 percent.

Background

The Marshfield Mall with the address 503 West Ives Street is currently located across three separate parcels: 33-03216BA, 33-03216, and 33-03216C. The exact history of how this structure came to be about at its existing condition being located across three properties is unknown. The ownership of these three properties is made up of multiple parties, which restrict all of the properties from being combined into one lot. Malls 4 U owns the property furthest to the west, parcel 33-03216BA and a group of individuals own the other two parcels, 33-03216 and 33-03216C; however, to add to the confusion Malls 4 U, has a current land lease in place with the group of individuals who own the other two properties giving them rights to the property.

With plans to bring a new tenant into the Mall, the Applicant is currently working on constructing an addition approximately 25,000 square feet near the southeast corner of the Mall site. The location of the addition is proposed to be constructed across two properties, parcels 33-03216 and 33-03216C. In order to meet the standards of the Building Code and the Zoning Code, these two properties must be combined into one lot/tax parcel.

Further reviewing the project, even if the two parcels, 33-03216 and 33-03216C are combined into one lot, the proposed addition would still increase the building lot coverage further past the maximum building lot coverage for the “CMU” Community Mixed Use Zoning District. This leaves the Mall with two options: 1.) Transfer the ownership of all the properties under one party which would allow all three lots to be combined and meet the maximum building lot coverage or 2.) Get a variance to grant a waiver from the maximum building lot coverage requirement.
Analysis

Discussing these options described above, the Applicant has explained that option 1 is simply not possible or at all feasible because they cannot force a group of owners to sell them their property. This leaves us with the second option of requesting a variance to allow the project to move forward.

Section 18-35(7) states that the maximum building coverage of a lot for nonresidential uses is 40 percent in properties zoned “CMU” Community Mixed Use. Viewing the parcels, 33-03216 and 33-03216C, as one lot, the existing development currently exceeds the maximum lot coverage allowance by approximately 7 percent, covering 47 percent of the lot. This makes the existing lot a legal nonconforming situation. The proposed addition would increase the lot coverage by approximately 6 percent, bringing the final lot coverage to roughly 53 percent, which is approximately a 13 percent variance.

Although the proposed development simply cannot meet the zoning code requirements, it can be taken into account that the Marshfield Mall is one site and functions as one development. If we were to take into account the third parcel, 33-03216BA, even though it is technically located on a separate lot, the existing development and proposed development would meet the minimum lot coverage. Using the information provided by the Assessor Department the total area of all three lots is 861,515 square feet. The existing building footprint of the Mall is 282,454 square feet. The proposed addition, per the state approval and the plan set is 25,584 square feet, for a total proposed square footage of 308,038 square feet. Using these figures the Mall site, including all three parcels, has a building coverage of 35.8 percent, which is under the maximum allowable building coverage of 40 percent.
Statement of Facts

1. The subject property is 503 East Ives Street.
2. The Marshfield Mall is currently located across three separate parcels: 33-03216BA, 33-03216, and 33-03216C.
3. The Appellant is Joe Fonti, part owner of Malls4U representing the Marshfield Mall.
4. Malls4U, LLC is the property owner of parcel 33-03216BA.
5. The property owners of parcels 33-03216 and 33-03216C are a group of individuals including:
   a. Ted and Shirley Cichonski – 50%
   b. Anderson Connor – 10%
   c. Thelma Connor – 10%
   d. Kathryn Kent Connor – 10%
   e. Daniel Rupar – 10%
   f. Anderson Connor, Jr. – 10%
6. To meet building and zoning code requirements, parcels 33-03216 and 33-03216C are required to be combined.
7. The existing development already exceeds the 40 percent maximum building lot coverage by approximately 7 percent.
8. The proposed addition will increase the building coverage for this lot by approximately 6 percent, for a total building coverage of 53 percent.

Applicable Ordinance Section(s)

1. Section 18-35(7) requires a maximum building coverage of a lot for nonresidential uses in the “CMU” Community Mixed Use zoning district is 40 percent.

Variance Criteria (Section 18-165(6)(a))

The Zoning Board of Appeals shall review all variance requests against the standards provided under Wisconsin Statutes and applicable case law. To qualify for a variance, an applicant would have the burden of proof to demonstrate that the variance criteria are met. The following are the criteria and the Applicants response:

(How will the variance not be contrary to the public interest?) “The variance will not harm the public, in fact the variance will serve the best interest of the people of Marshfield. The variance will result in promoting economic growth in the City of Marshfield by adding a national retailer in the Mall.”

(Will substantial justice be done by granting the variance?) “The granting of the variance will promote substantial justice. Marshfield citizens look at the Mall land and buildings as one shopping complex, the fact that the land is owned by different property owners should not impinge on the best use of this land to increase the square feet of buildings at this Mall complex. The overall Mall complex building currently occupy 30.4% of the land area of the Mall complex and with the proposed 25,000 square foot addition, the buildings would total 33.3% of the land area.”

(Is the variance needed so that the spirit of the ordinance is observed?) “The Mall buildings are in an unusual placement in relation to the land that is owned by Malls 4 U, LLC and the Ground Lessor’s, the Connor’s and Cichonski’s. This same building
configuration has existed since 1979 and since 1979 the Connor’s and Cichonski’s have owned 11 acres of the Mall complex and various Mall owners have owned the 8.78 acres that make up tax parcel 33-03216BA.”

(Due to special conditions, will a literal enforcement of the provisions of the zoning ordinance result in unnecessary hardship?) “The ordinance does result in undue hardship to the Mall property owners and will result in land locking the Mall from any further development of the Mall property. The Mall which comprises almost 20 acres could not bring the proposed national retailer that would greatly benefit the Mall and the other stores in the mall. The Mall is viewed as an entire complex and only 33.3% of the land that comprises the Mall complex would be occupied by buildings

Although making a determination to grant a variance is based on whether it meets all the criteria described under our local ordinance, state statutes, and case law, there are multiple justifications as why the criterion is met: no harm to public interest, viewing the lot as one site meets the intent of the code, the unique property boundaries splitting the building with multiple owners was existing, and there is no reasonable additional uses without such approval.

In addition to the criteria listed above which are stated in our Municipal Zoning Code that reflects Wisconsin State Statute, case law has historically viewed unique property limitations as an additional variance criterion, separate from the hardship requirement. As described above being an existing property splitting the current building with multiple interests could arguably be a unique property limitation specific to this property.

Zoning Board of Appeals Options

The Zoning Board can make one of the following determinations and must include the grounds of the determination:

1. Affirm the Zoning Administrator's decision, with any exceptions, conditions, or modifications, based on findings and justification of the Zoning Board.
2. Reverse the decision of the Zoning Administrator, based in findings and justification of the Zoning Board.
3. Table the request for further study.

Attachments

1. Variance Application
2. Location Map
3. Addition Plans
Office Use Only

Date Received: Fee Receipt Number: Zoning District: Parcel #:

Terms of Ordinance (requirement and Section #): Section 18-35 (7). Maximum building coverage of 40% of land.

Site Information

Site Address: Lot Area (sq. ft.): Lot Dimensions (ft.):
503 E. Ives Street, Marshfield, WI 54449 25,000 213 x 117 feet

Present Land Use: Vacant Land

Legal Description: See attached legal description.

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: Malls 4U, LLC
Phone #: 715-218-7355
Email Address: joe.fonti@bostoninc.net

Address, City, State, Zip: 503 E. Ives Street, Marshfield, WI 54449

The Applicant is the ☒ Owner ☐ Authorized Representative/Other (Describe):

Owner Information (if different than Applicant Information)

Owner Name: Joe Fonti
Owner Phone #: 715-218-7355
Owner Email Address: joe.fonti@bostoninc.net

Owner Address, City, State, Zip: 2917 Business Park Drive, Stevens Point, WI 54482

Requested Variance Narrative (Please provide additional pages if necessary)

We are seeking a variance from the maximum lot coverage of 40% on tax parcels 33-03216BA, 33-03216 and 33-03216C. We believe that the variance should be granted because it will serve the public interest by promoting economic development in the City of Marshfield and bring to Marshfield one of the top national retailers in the U.S. The variance should also be granted because without the variance the property owners would have an unnecessary hardship that would result in land locking the Mall from any additions to the Mall. The configuration of the buildings that comprise the Mall have an unusual placement in the relation to the land that is owned by Malls 4U, LLC (Tax parcel 33-03216BA and the land owned by Anderson Connor, Thelma Connor and Shirley Cichonksi (Tax parcels 33-03216 and 33-03216C). The Connor's and Cichonski's entered into a ground lease with the original Mall developers. This same building configuration has existed since 1979 and since 1979 the Connor's and Cichonski's have owned the same tax parcels and various Mall owners have owned tax parcel 33-03216BA. The Mall property comprises 19.78 acres and the Mall buildings currently total 262,000 sq. ft. (building comprises 30.4% of land area of Mall property). There is sufficient land at the Mall to add an additional 25,000 square feet.

Statement of Hardship

A variance can only be approved if the request meets all four criteria listed in Section 18-165(6)(a) of the Zoning Code, which includes a hardship. A hardship can be described as a specific issue with to the property that prevents compliance with zoning regulations. A hardship is created by a physical condition of the property such as a steep slope, irregular lot lines, or the unusual placement of an existing structure. The desire for an exception to zoning regulations as a matter of personal preference or convenience is not considered a hardship.

Continue to Page 2
**VARIANCE CRITERIA**

Address the variance criteria described in the Zoning Ordinance, Section 18-165(6)(a), by answering the following questions:
(attached additional pages if necessary)

1) **Will the variance result in harm to the public interest?**

The variance will not harm the public, in fact the variance will serve the best interests of the people in Marshfield. The variance will result in promoting economic growth in the City of Marshfield by adding a national retailer in the Mall.

2) **Will substantial justice be done by granting the variance?**

The granting of the variance will promote substantial justice. Marshfield citizens look at the Mall land and buildings as one shopping complex, the fact that the land is owned by different property owners should not impinge on the best use of this land to increase the square feet of buildings at this Mall complex. The overall Mall complex buildings currently occupy 30.4% of the land area of the Mall complex and with the proposed 25,000 square foot addition, the buildings would total 33.3% of the land area.

3) **Are there unique property limitations that limit the ability to observe the spirit of the ordinance?**

The Mall buildings are in an unusual placement in relation to the land that is owned by Malls 4U, LLC and the Ground Lessor's, the Connors's and Cichonski's. This same building configuration has existed since 1979 and since 1979 the Connors's and Cichonski's have owned 11 acres of the Mall complex and various Mall owners have owned the 8.78 acres that make up tax parcel 33-032168A.

4) **Will literal enforcement of the provisions of the zoning ordinance result on unnecessary hardship and create no reasonable use of the property?**

The ordinance does result in undue hardship to the Mall property owners and will result in land locking the Mall from any further development of the Mall property. The Mall which comprises almost 20 acres could not bring the proposed national retailer that would greatly benefit the Mall and the other stores in the mall. The Mall is viewed as an entire complex and only 33.3% of the land that comprises the Mall complex would be occupied by buildings.

**DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED**

- [ ] Site Plan (Required)  - [ ] Survey  - [ ] Photographs  - [ ] Filing Fee $250.00  - [ ] Other:

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**APPLICANT (OR SOMEONE REPRESENTING APPLICANT) IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED TO BE PRESENT AT THE PUBLIC HEARING**

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**NOTE:** The Zoning Board of Appeals' review of this application is a quasi-judicial proceeding. You will have an opportunity to present information to the Board in favor of your application at a public hearing. It is not appropriate to contact individual Board members in advance regarding a pending decision. Please file any written communication about your application with the Zoning Administrator and direct additional copies to Board members and other persons who have registered an interest in your application.

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**APPEAL OF BOARD DECISIONS:** A decision of the Board may be appealed to Wood or Marathon County Circuit Court within 30 days after the decision. Applicants commencing construction prior to expiration of the 30-day appeal period assume any risk of having the Board decision overturned.

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**AUTHORIZATION**

The undersigned hereby certifies that this application has been made with the consent of the property owner(s) and that all information submitted with this application is complete and accurate to the best of knowledge. This application also authorizes City representatives and members of the Zoning Board of Appeals to visit and photograph the property in order to process the application.

Applicant Signature:  

Date: March 24, 2016
Variance: Marshfield Mall - 503 E Ives St
City of Marshfield - Zoning Board of Appeals
Meeting Date: March 22, 2016

ATTENTION: The representation of data presented herein is intended for reference purposes only; the City of Marshfield assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information provided. Any duplication without consent is prohibited.