

**Village of South Blooming Grove
Zoning Board of Appeals
Special Meeting - July 25, 2024**

Members Present:

Chairman Yehoshua Bittman
Chaim Goldstein
Sholem Lieberman

Members Absent:

Shmaya Spitzer

Also present:

Tad Barone, ZBA Attorney

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Bittman at 8:00 PM and followed by a pledge to the flag.

Variations Application of Cong. Yetev Lev D'Satmar for House of Worship at 1 Roanoke Drive

Attorney Barone noted the public hearing on this application had been closed on July 11, 2024. He also reviewed the variations originally requested. These included a front yard reduction to 12.5 feet, a side yard reduction to 13.5 feet, a combined side yard reduction to 42.2', a reduction in parking to 29 spaces and a maximum height increase to three stories and 42 feet - 2 inches.

He further noted the applicant had made its original variance requests based on the mistaken impression the property was in a RR District rather than the RB District in which the property is actually located. Based on this, he stated the applicant had withdrawn all variance requests other than to increase the building height from two to three stories and from 35 feet to 42 feet - 2 inches. It was also explained that the previously proposed SEQRA findings needed to be corrected to state the requested height was 42 feet - 2 inches. Likewise, the resolution should have indicated the proposed use as a shul was a permitted one.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Lieberman, seconded by Bittman, and unanimously carried to declare the proposed use as an Unlisted Action not requiring coordinated review.

Attorney Barone then reviewed Part 2 of the EAF in detail, noting the Village Engineer and Village Planner recommended "No or Small Impact" answers. The Board concurred on each answer. A motion was made by Bittman, seconded by Goldstein, and unanimously carried to adopt the resulting Part 2. A second motion was made by Bittman, seconded by Lieberman, and unanimously carried to adopt Part 3 of the EAF making a Negative Declaration as to any significant environmental impacts from the variance requested.

A proposed resolution granting the requested building height variations was also reviewed in detail by Attorney Barone, who asked Board members various questions relating to variance standards, the answers to which supported granting of the variance. He also noted Federal religious protection standards applied along with Village of South Blooming Grove and New York State Village Law standards. A motion was then made by Bittman, seconded by Goldstein, and unanimously carried to adopt the resolution attached hereto and made a part of these minutes.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Bittman, seconded by Lieberman and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 PM.

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NAME OF APPLICANT: CONGREGATION YETEV LEV D'SATMAR
SITE ADDRESS: 1 ROANOKE DRIVE
ZONING DISTRICT: RB RESIDENCE B
SECTION-BLOCK-LOT: 211-3-16
VARIANCES REQUESTED:

1. **FRONT YARD:** Reduce from 45 feet to 12.5 feet.
 2. **SIDE YARD:** Reduce from 30 feet to 13.5 feet.
 3. **BOTH SIDE YARDS:** Reduce from 80 feet to 42.2 feet.
 4. **MAXIMUM HEIGHT:** Increase from 35 feet to 42 feet - 2 inches and from 2 stories to 3 stories.
 5. **PARKING:** Reduce from 73 spaceB to 29 spaces,
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WHEREAS, an application was submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) by the above identified Applicant for the variances indicated above on the assumption RR District yard and coverage requirements would ordinarily apply as the default standards for the RB District; and

WHEREAS, the variances sought to develop a House of Worship, as shown on a site plan prepared by its engineer, was reviewed by Fusco Engineering as well as by its planning consultant, Shepstone Management Company; and

WHEREAS, the ZBA determined the application was reasonably complete and, following public notice, held a public hearing thereon on July 11, 2024; and

WHEREAS, a review of the application by the Village Planner and Village Engineer determined RR District standards do not apply as the default standards for the RB District; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has referred this application to the ZBA, which has the authority to grant variances to front yard, side yard and building height standards in the RB District, and

WHEREAS, the Applicant has modified its variance requests to create conformance with zoning standards; and

WHEREAS, the ZBA has duly considered public comments received; and

WHEREAS, the ZBA has determined, for the purpose of review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), that granting of area variances constitutes an Unlisted Action, and

WHEREAS, the ZBA has, of this same date and as Lead Agency, declared that granting of the requested maximum height variances will not have a significant adverse environmental impact on the environment, and

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WHEREAS, in considering whether to grant or deny each of the requested variances, the ZBA engaged in a balancing test, weighing the proposed benefit to the Applicant against the possible detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the community, as well as consider the five statutory factors enumerated in the applicable law; and

WHEREAS, the ZBA herein has addressed the requisite statutory factors in approving the each proposed variance after a review of the recommendation and advice of its planning and engineering consultants, the ZBA members' knowledge of the location of the site and the relevant surrounding areas and also such material and relevant public input as received; and

WHEREAS, the ZBA considered whether the requested height variances were substantial when compared to the nearby buildings, would improve the physical and environmental condition and character of the neighborhood, and whether the requested variances were the minimum variances required to promote the legitimate interests of the Applicant in due regard to the interests of the general public; and

WHEREAS, the ZBA believes the substantial evidence in the record supports the rationale for the ZBA's determination to grant the requested Variance;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the ZBA of the Village of South Blooming Grove finds the Applicant has submitted all required materials, and met all applicable requirements as set forth in the Zoning Code and applicable law for the granting of the requested variances, subject to conditions set forth herein and/or limitations imposed by applicable law, based upon the following findings and determinations:

1. **Whether undesirable change would be produced in character of neighborhood or a detriment to nearby properties:**

Determination: No

Reason: This is a proposed religious use that is appropriate to the area. It is, in fact, a permitted use, by Village Board Special Permit, in all Village of South Blooming Grove zoning districts, indicating it has been determined to be in general harmony with all other uses.

2. **Whether benefit sought by applicant can be achieved by a feasible alternative to the variances:**

Determination: No

Reason: The House of Worship must be located within this residential neighborhood to serve the large Jewish population and to allow for members to be able to walk to it during days of worship.

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3. Whether the requested variances are substantial:

Determination: No

Reason: The building height increase from 35' to 40 feet and two stories to three'' is not substantial. A larger footprint with a reduced height has been developed to have less of an impact on the neighborhood, in fact.

4. Would the variances have an adverse impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood:

Determination: No

Reason: Many members will walk to the House of Worship thereby minimizing traffic. The water & sewer use for a House of Worship is often less than a residential dwelling.

5. Whether the alleged difficulty was self-created:

Determination: No

Reason: The pre- existing dimensions of the lots in this neighborhood make it difficult to design a modest size House of Worship without any area variances.

6. Whether the variances will comply with other Village variance criteria.

Determination: Yes

Reason: The Village Board regulates religious uses and is obligated to apply the standards of the U.S. Religious Land Use And Institutionalized Persons Act, which ensures the interests of justice will be served by allowing the variances. The variances requested will simply establish, for the record and enforcement purposes, the standard that will be applicable. It will also have no impact on population density and generate no significant traffic or other adverse impacts.

DETERMINATION OF ZBA BASED ON THE ABOVE FACTORS:

Upon the foregoing reasons and evidence in the record of the proceedings before the ZBA, the ZBA further finds that the foregoing variances are the minimum variance that should be granted to preserve and protect the character of the neighborhood and the health, safety and welfare of the community. The ZBA, therefore, hereby makes the following findings in connection with its granting the variances set forth above:

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1. That the variances are not substantial in relation to the requirement and to other factors set forth herein and otherwise made applicable by relevant law.
2. That the effect of any increased population density which may thus be produced upon available services and facilities is not significant.
3. That a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood or a substantial detriment to adjoining properties will not be created.
4. That the difficulties cannot be alleviated by some method feasible for the applicant to pursue other than variances or that lesser variances cannot alleviate the difficulty.
5. That, in view of the manner in which the difficulties arose and considering all of the above factors, the interests of justice will be served by allowing the variances.
6. That the variances will not cause adverse aesthetic, environmental or ecological impacts on the property or on surrounding areas and will not harm the general health, safety or welfare.
7. The difficulty addressed by the variances are not self-created,

The ZBA did not identify any detriment that would result to the neighborhood or community by reason of allowing the land to be developed with the variances requested. Moreover, the ZBA, taking into consideration the above factors, finds that the benefit to the Applicant outweighs any potential detriment to the neighborhood or community, and, therefore the requested variances are hereby granted. Nonetheless, the granting of the requested variances shall not relieve the Applicant from obtaining any other necessary approvals, permits, etc. for the use and development of the site.

DETERMINATION AS TO ALTERNATIVES PURSUANT TO RELIGIOUS LAND USE AND INSTITUTIONALIZED PERSONS ACT:

Upon the foregoing reasons and evidence in the record of the proceedings before the ZBA, the ZBA further finds as follows in response to questions posed by interpretation the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA):

1. **Is the building proposed the minimum size of the facility that is reasonably tailored to satisfy the Applicant's present and reasonable future needs?**

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Finding: All the proposed rooms are required for the proper religious operation of this congregation, which prevents the removal of any rooms or the reduction in room size.

2. **Are other building lots available in close proximity to 1 Roanoke Drive, which are more suitable to development into a reasonably tailored House of Worship suitable for the applicant present and reasonable future needs?**

Finding: This was the only property the applicant owns and within the financial means of the congregation. This location provides for a site that is within walking distance to the members of the congregation.

3. **As to each such building lot, will any of these lots fill the Applicant's needs without requiring as substantial relief from the Village's bulk zoning code as required to build a reasonably tailored House of Worship on 1 Roanoke Drive?**

Finding: This location provides for a site that is within walking distance to the members of the congregation and no other lots are available in the neighborhood under any different conditions.

4. **As to each other building lot that will satisfy the Applicant's needs are available, are any of these lots economically feasible for the Applicant to acquire and develop?**

Finding: This location provides for a site that is within walking distance to the members of the congregation and no other lots are available in the neighborhood under any different conditions.

5. **If there are no such lots that are available, then which of the zoning restrictions are incidental to compelling interest in imposing the burden on the Applicant's religious exercise in this particular proposal?**

Finding: As noted above, the proposed rooms are required for the proper religious operation of this congregation which prevents the removal of any rooms or the reduction in room size. All the rooms and room sizes are necessary for religious functions.

6. **Does the action, notwithstanding the relief a religious user is entitled to under RLUIPA, comply with NYS-DEC Stormwater Regulation?**

Finding: The site will disturb less than 1-acre of soil which exempts the applicant from completing a Stormwater Prevention Pollution Plan (SWPPP) with post

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construction controls. An Erosion & Sediment Control Plan is all that is required for this project. One has been prepared and will be followed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

On a motion by Yehoshua Bittman, seconded by Chaim Goldstein and carried by a vote of three Ayes, no Naes, with one member being absent, that the Zoning Board of Appeals makes the foregoing findings and determinations, and it hereby grants the requested variances of building height standards, which are subject to such standards as the Village Engineer shall impose.

The above does not relieve the Applicant from obtaining any other permit, approval, and/or license required in connection with the proposed use of the site.

Dated: July 25, 2024

Zoning Board of Appeals
Village of South Blooming Grove

Hon. Yehoshua Bittman, Chairman