Variance Application

Skamania County File # VAR-20-04
251 Lakeside Road, White Salmon, WA
Applicant: Ed and Diane Swick

Hearing before the Hearing Examiner
Monday May 18, 2020 5:30 PM
170 NW Vancouver Avenue, Stevenson, WA

Property Information

- Property Location: 251 Lakeside Drive, White Salmon.
- Property Owner: Ed and Diane Swick
- Property is 2.04 acres in size.
- Zoning: Northwestern Lake Residential 5 (NWLR-5)
- Property bounded by an easement to the east with the White Salmon River beyond, Little Buck Creek to the south and residential properties to the north and northwest. The northern portion of the developed portion of the property lies on a ridge which slopes steeply to the west and southeast.
Application

• The Applicant is requesting a variance to reduce their rear yard setback to 5 feet in order to construct a 24’ by 36’ wood framed structure which would house a tractor shed and art studio.

• Per Skamania County Code 21.66.060 Residential S zone classification (R-5). A rear yard setback of 20 feet from the property line is required.

• The proposed area for the shop was originally designated for the reserve drainfield area for the septic system. The applicant submitted a new site evaluation to move the reserve area to another part of the property north of the house in order to utilize this area as it was more suitable for their shop proposal given access to the existing driveway.

Neighborhood Characteristics

• Rural area adjacent to the White Salmon River on the east side of Skamania County.
• Land Use in the vicinity of the subject property consists of residential or resource production.
• Many of the properties with residences contain out buildings including barns and shops.
• The topography within the surrounding area is comprised of steep slopes. Portions of the area surrounding the property lie within a mapped landslide hazard area. There are rivers and streams which flow through the area including Mill Creek, Little Buck Creek and the White Salmon River. All of these are fish bearing streams and require a minimum 100 foot buffer.
Criteria for Approval

• Because of special circumstances applicable to subject property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of the zoning ordinance is found to deprive subject property of rights and privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zone classification and/or special purpose district;
  • The property likely has 1 acre or less of "developable land" due to steep slopes, a road easement bisecting the parcel and the location of a well, current drainfield and reserve area.
  • The proposed area for the shop has better access to the existing driveway than other areas on the property.
  • The reserve drainfield was additionally moved to accommodate the shop location. Under WAC 246-272a-0210, the drainfield reserve area has a maximum allowable slope of 24 degrees or 45% slope.
  • The majority of the property excluding easements, driveways and existing developed areas contains slopes greater than 40 percent based on the slope percentage map to the right.

Criteria for Approval

• That the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity and zone classification and/or special purpose district in which subject property is situated.
  • The applicant has already completed a site evaluation to move their reserve drainfield area away from the area proposed for their shop.
  • The proposed shop would be located 15 feet in elevation lower than the neighboring property to the north, therefore not obstructing site views.
  • One item to note is the property is located in or near a geologically hazardous area. Planning staff recommends a condition that a geotechnical letter be prepared per 19.07.030 Regulations Section 9
Recommended Conditions

• Planning Staff Recommends approval of the setback variance with the following conditions of approval:
  • The variance shall allow the applicant to encroach on the rear yard setback by 15 feet but no closer than 5 feet to the rear yard property line.
  • The applicant shall submit and obtain a building permit prior to construction of the proposed building.
  • The applicant shall provide a geotechnical letter to the Planning Department in accordance with Skamania County Code 19.07.030 at the time of building permit submittal. Should additional geotechnical investigation requirements be necessary as determined by the qualified professional hired by the applicant, then the applicant shall follow the Design Standards – Landslide Hazard Areas. Described under SCC. 19.07.030 (E)(2 through 4) as necessary and determined by the Community Development Department.

Questions?