



H APP. EXHIBIT# 1
CASE: 2025-0005-V
DATE: 3/11/25

Case No. 2025-0005-V response to neighbor's objection

1 message

Angela Ryan <cruiserryan@ameritech.net>
To: "zhcolb22@aacounty.org" <zhcolb22@aacounty.org>
Cc: Bill McWhirter <wrmcwhi@aol.com>

Mon, Mar 10, 2025 at 4:17 PM

March 10, 2025

Ms. Holly Colby
Office Manager
Office of Administrative Hearings
Arundel Center, PO Box 2700
Annapolis, MD 21404-2700

Dear Ms. Colby,

This letter is in regard to Case No. 2025-0005-V, a request for a variance at 1515 Farlow Avenue, Crofton, MD, to add a sunroom at the rear of the house. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the submission on this case that you received from Mr. Richard Trebelhorn opposing our request for a variance.

We have never seen or met Mr. Trebelhorn, so we were surprised yesterday to learn from your website that he had submitted a statement and attachments to encourage denial of our variance request. He starts with a history of Crofton, a time when the community was gated and membership in the Crofton Country Club was a requirement for homeownership in the community. The gates are long gone, as is the country club membership requirement. We're certain that many variances to the original plans have been granted over the decades since Crofton was originally developed.

The list of housing data provided by Mr. Trebelhorn shows that just about every house in the nearby community is larger than ours. Only one house on the entire list is smaller. We shouldn't be penalized by the fact that the original developer made our lot smaller than others.

We know that a variance was granted in 2023 to the Weadon family at [1617 Crofton Parkway](#) for the addition of an enclosed porch on the back of their house. The variance was for 11 feet, and the porch is now 9 feet from their fence. That house is also a one-story home. At Mr. Weadon's hearing, he presented information about a number of houses that he'd identified in the community with structures close to their lot lines and for which variances had been granted.

Regarding the oak tree, Mr. McWhirter has spoken to a certified arborist at Bartlett Tree Experts who has advised that it's his expert opinion that the placement of the sunroom would have minimal impact on the oak tree.

The addition, if approved, would not be in the southwest corner of the property where Mr. Trebelhorn thinks water collects from his and other yards. That corner has been landscaped in such a way that we've never had water pooling there. We have an annual contract with a landscaper who ensures such things do not occur.

The Findings and Recommendation from Anne Arundel County's Office of Planning and Zoning states that the minimum distance from the rear lot line is 20', requiring a variance of 7', which is less than Mr. Trebelhorn's belief that a 13' variance is needed.

Mr. Trebelhorn expressed a concern about his privacy, citing that he has a "too-clear view of the family room" (which is actually the living room). There are at least 10 trees on the fence line facing our living room, including the previously-mentioned 60-year-old oak tree and a group of 9 or more other trees clustered together. Even at this time of year, they serve to block the view between the two houses. Our house has essentially a wall of glass at the end of the living room. His house has a standard door and windows. While he may be able to see into our house, it is nearly impossible to see inside his house. His deck currently has just a grill on it, so it's unlikely that we would observe much activity from his deck, if we chose to look that way. I've attached two photos to show the view of his house from ours. As you can see, even with the few leaves on the trees in March, his house is barely visible. His privacy should not be impacted by the granting of this variance.

Mr. Trebelhorn stated that the sunroom addition would have "an adverse impact on property values." When we were house hunting in 2022-23, we worked with two realtors. I spoke to one of them today, Chris Gress with Re/Max Leading Edge, concerning this issue. Mr. Gress has lived in Crofton since 1999, and he has been a realtor for 19 years. He said that he has never seen an instance where a homeowner added square footage to a home, and it reduced the property value. He also mentioned that if our house increases in value, that will have a positive effect on home values in the neighborhood.

In our home search, we looked at new or nearly new properties in Two Rivers in addition to homes in Crofton. Mr. Gress pointed out that the houses in Two Rivers are built with just 8-10' between the houses. That's not at the lot line but literally from one house to the other. In comparison, 13' to our lot line plus the distance from that line to Mr. Trebelhorn's house is considerably farther than 8-10', which is evidently today's acceptable allowance.

Our request for the variance is due to medical reasons that prevent us from enjoying our backyard as it is. Both of us are mosquito magnets, and we both have strong allergic reactions to mosquito bites. Both of us are prone to sunburn. Mr. McWhirter has already had a melanoma. These two conditions make it difficult to spend time in the backyard.

Our living room has no windows. Opening the door that currently faces the backyard doesn't provide for cross ventilation. We want to be able to open windows in a sunroom to enjoy the outdoors. We would like to bring the backyard into our lives with the addition of this small space. We plan for this to be a 4-season room, so we would be able to use the sunroom to enjoy the outdoors even in the coldest or most inclement weather.

We would access the sunroom from the existing doorway, thus needing no added steps. Many other homes in Crofton have similar structures. The house was built close to the existing 20' restriction line so any enclosed improvement to the back of the house would require this variance. If approved, the sunroom would be close to the footprint of our existing patio.

We hope you will consider this information and choose to grant the variance request. Thank you for your consideration of our petition.

Sincerely,

Angela Ryan and William McWhirter



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