

August 21, 2008

Mr. William J. Mueller,
Village President, and
Board of Trustees
Village of Lombard

Subject: PC 08-21; Text Amendments to the Lombard Zoning Ordinance

Dear President and Trustees:

Your Plan Commission transmits for your consideration its recommendation regarding the above-referenced petition. The petitioner is requesting text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to add provisions regulating the size of attached garages and add provisions regulating average front yard setbacks.

Michael Toth, Planner I, and representing the Village of Lombard, 255 E. Wilson Avenue presented the petition. Mr. Toth stated that as part of the Village Board of Trustees' 2007 – 2008 Strategic Plan, the Board directed staff to pursue actions to institute better residential design review for residential development. Potential code changes were explored as they relate to redevelopment, teardowns, building additions; setback requirements comparing averages with a specific limit and restrictions on attached garages in the front of a house.

Under the Board's direction, the residential redevelopment items were first introduced to the Plan Commission during the February 18, 2008 Plan Commission workshop. More specific items were then later brought back to the Plan Commission during the June 16, 2008 Plan Commission workshop, which included the proposed text amendments.

Under the direction of both the Village Board and Plan Commission, the Village of Lombard is proposing text amendments to the pertinent sections of the Zoning Ordinance as it relates to attached garages and residential front yard setbacks. The proposed amendments will place a cap on the maximum allowable size of garage doors, require a de facto square foot setback for attached garages and require average setbacks for all detached single family homes.

Absolute setbacks can also have negative implications in established neighborhoods. Staff recognizes the need for absolute setbacks for side, rear, and corner yards; however the front setback requirements for single-family homes

should be more closely examined, as they were part of the focus group discussions. Because the current Zoning Ordinance utilizes absolute setbacks as opposed to relative setbacks, certain factors are not taken into consideration, such as the positioning of the neighboring homes or the mean (average) setback for all homes on the block. Referring to an exhibit, Mr. Toth stated that the Village currently has no tools in place to limit how close or far back a house can be located from the lot line. He added that some property once had restrictive covenants that imposed a greater setback on them whereas new homes could come in at 30 feet.

The proposed text amendments will require relative setbacks for all detached single family residences, which is modeled after Wheaton's zoning ordinance. The intent of the proposed relative setback text is to maintain the character of existing neighborhoods and to establish status quo for any new developments. The proposed text utilizes certain methods of application that addresses front setbacks in a relational manner, as follows:

- The proposed text will be supplementary to the existing thirty (30) foot minimum front yard requirement and shall be applied to all detached single family residences.
- In no case shall the front yard setback of any new attached single family residence be less than thirty (30) feet, while no greater than fifty (50) feet.
- A minimum setback will be established for any new home constructed based upon the mean of the existing homes on the adjacent lots.
- To address corner lots, the proposed text states that in no case shall the front yard setback be less than the setback of the building on the abutting developed lot. If the subject lot abuts a reverse corner lot or any other lot used in a manner other than attached single family residence (e.g. parks, schools, commercial businesses), the default thirty (30) foot setback line shall be used to determine the mean.
- If a lot abuts a developed lot on one side and a vacant lot on the other side, the front yard setback would be determined by taking the mean of the setback of the building on the abutting developed lot and the setback of the building on the lot immediately adjacent to the vacant lot.

Another important provision being proposed as part of the relative setback initiative would be the establishing of a 'build-to' line. Under the current Zoning Ordinance, a minimum setback of thirty (30) feet exists; however, the only other provision that would prevent an attached single family residence from building to an extreme depth (within the lot) would be the rear setback provision. As an example, the R2 – Single Family Residence District has a rear yard setback requirement of thirty-five (35) feet. If someone wanted to construct a new attached single family residence deep into the lot, the only limitation would be the thirty-five (35) foot rear yard setback requirement. Establishing a maximum front yard setback will help maintain neighborhood homogeneity by over time creating consistent front yard setback parameters.

During the February 18, 2008 Plan Commission workshop, staff presented a number of tools that could possibly accomplish the desired goal of reducing the visual impact of attached garages. Lot width, setback requirements, number of garage doors, and elevation frontage requirements were some of the tools examined during the workshop. After exploring a number of resources, such as other municipal ordinances, staff has drafted amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed text addresses attached garages with corresponding provisions pertaining to side/rear entry garages, and garages on corner lots.

When drafting the proposed attached garage text amendments, staff utilized a number of techniques to reduce the visually dominating feature that attached garages have become. Instead of looking directly at the size of the lot, staff examined the size of the garage door itself. Under the proposed amendment, a forty-two percent (42%) width cap would be placed on the actual garage door, as it relates to the street-facing façade. However, all properties would be allowed a sixteen (16) foot door width. The rationale behind those numbers lies in the required size and space of a two-car garage, with sixteen (16) feet being the minimum garage door width for a two-car garage.

The forty-two percent (42%) garage door cap is intended to ensure that the garage door does not comprise more than one-half of the front elevation on a typical sixty (60) foot wide lot. Assuming a 60-foot wide lot, with the residence building up to the interior property lines (i.e., a 48 foot wide house), the 42% figure would allow for up to a twenty (20) foot garage door (excluding supporting garage walls). As the lot size and/or house size is reduced, the allowable size of a garage door is simultaneously reduced with the front elevation. But in all cases, the house could still include a sixteen foot wide (16') garage door.

In addition to reviewing the percentage or width of a garage door, staff also considered the overall square footage of attached garages located in the front of the residence. Instead of establishing a required lineal setback for attached garages, the (500) foot maximum allowable square footage acts as a de facto setback. The rationale behind the (500) foot maximum lies again with the minimum size necessary for a two-car garage, which is (480) square feet (24' X 20'). Under this provision, two-car side-entry garages could still be constructed, but a three-car side-entry garage could not.

The same standards discussed above shall pertain to attached single family residences on corner lots and side/rear entry garages. Side-entry garages can be aesthetically beneficial if viewed in the same context as a standard front-entry garage. Even though garage doors on a side-entry garage do not directly face the street, they can still present a visual impact when viewed from a diagonal point of view from the street. As the same standards for front-entry garages apply to side-entry garages, the maximum allowable square footage of any garage extending beyond the remainder of the street-facing façade shall be limited to (500) feet.

Referring to the standards for text amendments, Mr. Toth highlighted the following items:

- The proposed amendments would be uniformly applied to all residential properties in the Village that are developed with detached single family residences.
- Without the proposed text amendments, staff has no means to regulate front yard setbacks as it applies to the entire neighborhood or block.
- The proposed amendment would create non-conforming situations for the neighboring detached single family residences if they were developed in manner that does not reflect the letter of the proposed text amendments.
- The proposed amendment will not make the ordinance permissive in regards to building applications; however, the amendments will allow the Village to have the regulatory tools in place to better manage neighborhood uniformity and aesthetics.
- A general goal of the Comprehensive plan is to *Improve and maintain the attractive appearance of all areas of the Village*. As the proposed text amendments promote enhanced aesthetics and improved neighborhood uniformity, the amendments would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Village has a history of amending its Zoning Ordinance to address evolving circumstances presented by petition or to clarify the intent of the Ordinance provisions. The proposed amendments are consistent with established Village policy in this regard.

Concluding, Mr. Toth stated that staff recommended approval of the petition.

Chairperson Ryan then opened the meeting for public comment. There was no one present to speak in favor or against the petition.

Chairperson Ryan then opened the meeting for comment among the Commissioners.

Commissioner Nelson asked if staff knew how many residences would be in violation. Mr. Toth replied that when he was conducting research of homes built over the past three to four years, it was a split between properties that would be conforming or become non-conforming.

Commissioner Nelson asked if existing homes are not subject to this ordinance. Mr. Toth stated that a home would be considered legal non-conforming if it did not meet the new code and could not be rebuilt to that specification if destroyed beyond 50 percent.

Commissioner Olbrysh asked if under these proposed text amendments would three car garages be prohibited. Mr. Toth replied that it relates to lot size. If a lot is less than seventy feet wide, you could not do a three car garage attached to the house, according to the formula.

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Commissioner Burke asked if it would be permissible to have a three car garage if it's attached and street facing. William Heniff, Senior Planner, responded that is why there are two sets of rules – it's not street facing, 500' foot de facto.

Commissioner Burke then confirmed that a three car garage in the back of the property would be permissible. Mr. Heniff answered yes – that is what this text amendment is attempting to accomplish.

Concluding, Mr. Heniff requested that should the Commissioners approve the petition, that they amend the motion directing staff and Village counsel to review the final language of the text amendment as well as to ensure compliance with other sections of the Code with regard to clarity, consistency and grammar.

On an amended motion by Commissioner Olbrysh and seconded Commissioner Burke, the Plan Commission recommended approval of the petition with a 4-0 vote.

Respectfully,

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD

Donald F. Ryan
Lombard Plan Commission

c. Petitioner
Lombard Plan Commission