

MEEKER COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MEETING

April 4, 2023

Audio Available

The Meeker County Board of Adjustment **met at the courthouse on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 5:00pm** to consider the following variance application and other business before the Board. Members present were Kim Hempel, Al Anderson, Galen Nyman and Zoning Administrator Schultz.

5:00pm

Hempel calls the meeting to order.

The Board states their name for voice recognition.

Hempel asks the Board if they have any corrections or additions to the November 22, 2022 meeting minutes. None are noted.

Nyman makes a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

Anderson seconds the motion.

Motion carried 3-0.

5:02pm

Hempel opens the public hearing for Lee and Christina Loew, 65809 216th St, Darwin, MN 55324. Property located at 21694 658th Ave, Darwin, MN 55325. Lot Six (6), Block Two (2), Manuella Heights, Lake Manuella, Ellsworth Township. An application for an Area Variance to construct a shed in variance to the maximum allowed size of 2400 square feet in the R-1 Suburban Residential District and within the Shoreland District.

Lee and Christina Loew are present for this hearing.

Schultz: This property is an approximate 50,667 square foot/1.29-acre R-1 Suburban Residential zoned district parcel. Lot 6, Block 2 of Manuella Heights was created in June 1990 with the lot smaller in width and area than current standards in size, but meeting the size requirements in place for the time in which it was created. Located in Section 4, Township 118, Range 30 of Ellsworth Township, Lake Manuella shoreland district. Lake Manuella is considered a Recreational Development Lake.

This lot currently has a couple of small, under 100 square foot utility sheds on it, created around 1990. No well or septic is known to be on the property currently.

The property owners are requesting a variance to allow for the construction of an accessory building larger than the maximum permitted 2400 square foot area on a lot between 1 and 2.49 acres. The property owner is asking permission to construct a 50' x 90' (4500 square foot) accessory building on this property to allow for storage of outdoor sport vehicles and trailers. Meeker Ordinance in Sec. 13.03.A.2 details the building size allowances for the sized property mentioned above.

The following variance would be required for this project:

A variance to allow an accessory building that is 4500 square feet. The allowable accessory building for this sized property is 2400 square feet without a variance. Therefore a 2100 square foot variance would need to be granted.

Hempel asks if we received any correspondence from the public regarding this variance request. *No*

Lee Loew states that he wants to keep the lot neat and doesn't want to store items outside. He lost his storage when his mom sold her property.

Hempel says that this is an unusual request as it is more than double the allowed size.

Nyman agrees. Next door there was a building that met the size requirements.

Lee says the building would be 50'x88' or 4400 square feet. He measured all the items he wants to put inside and that is 2400 square feet with no space. He has a 40' motor home, 25' camper, pontoon, fish house, 2 older trucks, a golf cart, motorcycle, tractors, etc. and doesn't want the stuff sitting outside.

Anderson says that he understands they have a lot of stuff to store, but this is a big variance over the ordinance limits. He sees it as a want, not as a need.

Christina says that if they don't get the variance, all the items will need to sit outside and won't look good.

Hempel states that this Board is for a lot that is too small or a storm comes through and the homeowner needs to rebuild and according to current regulations, they can't. Or something is just a little over. It is usually for a lot that is already fairly saturated with buildings. In this case, it is not only more than double allowed for the county, it is basically on a bare lot, which means you can comply with county ordinance. Therefore, this does become an issue of a want more than a need. You don't want to put the items outside, which I understand.

Anderson wonders if they would consider a smaller building.

Hempel states that that is a different application.

Nyman says that the board would be setting a precedence if this was approved.

Christina says they need this size to move items around within the shed and to be able to walk around.

Anderson makes a motion to close the public hearing.

Hempel seconds the motion.

Motion carried 3-0.

Hempel says that this is a bare lot.

Christina and Lee both state that they bought the lot for storage.

Hempel says that there are two paramount issues:

1. This is a bare lot.
2. The request is more than double the allotted size.

Hempel is of the opinion that the applicants know what is allowed and it wasn't acceptable to them for size. She feels any size over 2400 square feet would have a substantial change of character to the neighborhood. It seems to be more of a want.

Nyman believes that if we allow this, we would set a precedence for anyone else going forward. It is too large for that lot.

Nyman makes a motion to deny the variance.
Hempel seconds the denial.
Motion carried 3-0.

5:25pm

Anderson makes a motion to adjourn.
Nyman seconds the motion.
Motion carried 3-0.