



**Village of South Russell  
5205 Chillicothe Road  
South Russell, Ohio 44022  
440-338-6700  
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
MEETING MINUTES**

**May 15, 2024 - 7:00 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Andy Hitchcock, Chairman, John Buda, Martin O'Toole, Cindy Matejcik

**Member Absent:** Mike Mulloy

**Other Officials:** Todd Hicks, Solicitor; Dave Hocevar, Building Official; Mayor William Koons; Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary

**Visitors:** Frederick Ritt, 406 Hazelwood Drive; Kevin Takacs, 16250 Snyder Road

Mr. Hitchcock called the meeting to order at 7:04pm. Ms. Griswold conducted roll call.

**Mr. Hitchcock asked the board members if they had any questions or comments after reviewing the minutes from January 17, 2024. There were none. Mr. Hitchcock motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Buda seconded. On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Hitchcock asked the solicitor to swear in anyone who may speak. Mr. Hicks swore in the applicant and Mr. Hocevar.

**AGENDA ITEM 1: BZA CASE #24-02:** Frederick Ritt, applicant for and owner of the property located at 406 Hazelwood Drive, is seeking a front yard setback variance of 7', as applicant shows front porch and awning addition to be 28' from the front property line, and per the 1947 South Russell Village Zoning Code, Article 111, Section 6, the front yard setback must be at least 35'.

Mr. Hitchcock asked the applicant to begin his presentation. Mr. Ritt said he would like to add a front awning to his house, and replace the front walkway. The proposed awning would have a reverse gable with a shed slope on the front, roughly 21' in length, and extend from the driveway to the edge of the front door. He said the new walkway would be paved and pitched so as to eliminate

the current step into the house. Presently, there is nothing there to protect him from the elements, and there are times he can't use the front door. Mr. Ritt said he also feels that this improvement will enhance the look of the house.

Mr. Hitchcock asked board members if they had any questions for the applicant.

Mr. Buda said Mr. Ritt was kind enough to give him a tour while explaining his intended project. He referred to the plan on the media screen, and said the homeowner and he had discussed the intent to improve access to the home by making the height of the new walkway the same the level of his existing step to the door, while also being level at the driveway. Mr. Buda asked Mr. Hocevar if there was anything in the drawings that indicated the patio would be the same height as the driveway where they meet. Mr. Hocevar said he didn't think so, but the main concern of the board would be the encroachment of the overhang. Mr. Buda said since the main reason for the project is accessibility, and the step is being eliminated at the front door, it wouldn't make sense for a step to remain at the driveway. Mr. Hitchcock asked Mr. Buda if his concerns were that the drawings do not show the slope. Mr. Buda said yes, that is correct. Mr. Ritt said the length is 21' and 9' out, and it will be floated. It will be less than an inch every 2', so the slope won't even be noticeable.

Mr. Buda said as he drove through the neighborhood and looked at similar houses, he didn't see any properties that had close to a 9' sidewalk width, and most seemed to be about 3-4'. He said the proposed 9' makes it more of a patio with the awning. He would be amenable to a smaller distance, which would result in a smaller variance. He said he was thinking maybe 5' because the bay window comes out a foot, and the beautiful posts are roughly a foot, which would still allow about 3' of clear access.

Mr. Hitchcock asked the applicant how he decided on the 9' sidewalk width. Mr. Ritt said that is basically where his current walkway ends, and he just wanted to cover the existing walkway. He said some of his neighbors definitely have sidewalks wider than 3', and some people even have decks on the front of their house. If the sidewalk were only 3', there would be no room to walk past a chair. He said if there were an issue, he would consider going to 7', but anything less wouldn't make sense.

Ms. Matejcik asked Mr. Ritt if he was proposing to extend 7' out from the walkway. Mr. Ritt said yes, that is correct. Ms. Matejcik said she agrees with Mr. Buda, and that it would be very close to the road as opposed to some of the other houses in the area. In addition, it would not leave much yard area for his children. Mr. Ritt said his children are all grown, and that it should be taken into consideration that his proposal is for an open porch, and the walkway is still the same distance from the road, it would simply have a roof over it.

Mr. O'Toole said if he is understanding correctly, the current walkway is 9' from the house and the proposed replacement area would not go past the current walkway. Mr. Ritt said that is correct. Mr. Buda said the roof would come out. Mr. Ritt said correct, but no wall is being extended, just the roof. Mr. O'Toole said he feels like the space between the sidewalk and the house doesn't have much utility now. Mr. Ritt said that is true. Mr. Buda said he feels the size of the proposed roof is substantial and much bigger than what he saw in the rest of the neighborhood.

Mr. Hitchcock asked Mr. Ritt if he was part of the Country Estates HOA. Mr. Ritt said no, his property is the first house that is not in their HOA. Mr. Hitchcock asked Mr. Hocevar if that was why he referenced the 1947 Zoning Code. Mr. Hocevar said yes, that was part of the reason. Mr. Hitchcock said when driving up Hazelwood towards Country Estates, there is a noticeable difference, once you pass Laurel, when heading into Country Estates. He feels the proposed improvements to Mr. Ritt's house would bring it closer to the architectural styles in his neighborhood, even though he is on the border of Country Estates. He feels the proposed porch roof will be a welcome addition to the house, as well as conforming with the neighborhood. Mr. Ritt agreed and said it would definitely add to the curb appeal.

Mr. Hitchcock asked Mr. Hocevar if the Architectural Review Board would weigh in on this project. Mr. Hocevar said yes.

Mr. Hitchcock asked Mr. Ritt why he chose to add the covering to the front door and not the side. Mr. Ritt said there would not be enough room, since the side of his house is all driveway. The fence across his drive is only opened to cut the grass.

Mr. O'Toole asked if there was any reason to think any of the neighbors would be unhappy about this addition. Mr. Ritt said no, he talked to them and showed them the drawings. Ms. Griswold said neighboring properties were notified and no communication was received back.

Mr. Hitchcock asked board members and the applicant if they had any further comments or questions. There were none.

**Mr. Hitchcock said regarding BZA Case #24-02, for the property located at 406 Hazelwood Drive, he makes a motion to approve a front yard setback variance of 7' to allow an addition to be 28' from the front property line, subject to the South Russell Village Architectural Review Board approval. Mr. Hitchcock asked if there were any questions on the motion. Hearing none, he asked for a second. Mr. O'Toole seconded. On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Ritt thanked the board.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** Mayor Koons introduced Kevin Takacs of Snyder Road as a potential future alternate for the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Takacs said he is looking forward to the opportunity to serve his community.

There being no further business, Mr. Hitchcock adjourned the meeting at 7:22pm.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Andy Hitchcock, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date