



CITY OF WAUWATOSA

MEMORIAL CIVIC CENTER
7725 WEST NORTH AVENUE
Telephone: (414) 479-8917
Fax: (414) 479-8989

MINUTES MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS & APPEALS Friday, March 12, 2010

PRESENT: R. Bachman, R. Lex, P. Nook, J. Price, D. Wheaton – 5

EXCUSED: S. Jung, C. Millimann, R. Ornst

ALSO PRESENT: Asst. Fire Chief M. Carberry

Mr. Lex as Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

9200 W. Wisconsin Avenue

Mr. Curtis Baer has requested a variance to locate wall mounted fire alarm appliances 168 inches above a finished floor whereas the maximum height allowed above finished floor is 96 inches. Reference NFPA 72-2002:7.5.4.

Present in favor: Curt Baer, Zimmerman Architecture, 5106 N. Port Washington Road, Glendale
Neil Jensen, Froedtert Hospital, 9200 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee

Mr. Wheaton commented that the proceeding was an informal hearing as there was no one present in opposition of the request. The Board of Examiners and Appeals is a quasi-judicial board and as such can make decisions and impose contingencies. Mr. Lex explained that he is employed by a firm that works closely with Zimmerman Architecture. While he can still act as chair, he will be voting present on the variance.

Mr. Baer pointed out that the project they are doing is a re-roof, but they are also completely remodeling the gardens. He described the illustration and the proposed location of the fire alarms. If they were held to a 96 inch maximum height they would have to mount the fire alarms on glass in some cases. This is a difficult construction situation and unless they can obtain a variance, the fire alarms will block entrances and exits out of the building.

Asst. Fire Chief Carberry commented that he toured the first and second floor courtyards. The glass walls adjoin offices. He discussed with the applicants raising the fire alarms up on a soffit about 6 feet above the maximum height. He also discussed installing six devices and syncing them with the hospital's alarm system. They talked about the growth of the trees in the courtyard and the alarm sound levels. Those two aspects are difficult to gauge at this time. He noted that he was in favor of the variance that he supported the variance because of the higher candela rating and the fact that the applicants are installing more devices than needed.

Asst. Chief Carberry stressed that normally the fire alarms installed would have a50 or 60 candela rating; however, the applicants are installing about 177 candelas which are more than needed. The sound levels are supposed to be 15 decibels, but the situation of sound in the courtyard at this time is difficult to determine. The visual alarms are more than is needed; the decibels will be tested later.

Mr. Price asked if a person in the area would be warned if they are seeing or hearing impaired. Asst. Chief Carberry answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Lex noted that increasing to six alarms from two would be an enhancement. Mr. Jensen stressed that at this time there are no fire alarms in the area. Mr. Wheaton added that existing construction prohibits a normal installation.

Moved by Mr. Bachman, seconded by Mr. Nook to approve the variance contingent upon: 1) installing 6 fire alarms instead of two to increase sound; and 2) increasing from 50/60 to 177 candela to increase visibility. The board finds beyond a reasonable doubt that: 1) a practical difficulty or hardship exists in that the existing construction prohibits mounting the fire alarms at the required height due to the fenestration and plantings in the location; 2) the variance will not create a special detriment nor adversely affect property values; and 3) that an equivalent degree of safety is maintained by providing better visibility and sound with the installation of six fire alarms rather than two with increased candela and increased audible – 4-0-1

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

David M. Wheaton, Secretary

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