

**CITY OF MARQUETTE
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
June 5, 2025**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Marquette City Board of Zoning Appeals was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 5, 2025, located in Room 103 of the Municipal Service Center, 1100 Wright St.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Ms. Dombrowski, Mr. Patrick, Ms. Wright, Vice Chair Ms. Hill, Ms. Klein, and Zoning Official A. Landers.

Absent: Mr. Neumann and Ms. Fetter (both excused).

MINUTES

It was moved by Ms. Wright, seconded by Ms. Hill, and carried 5-0 to approve the minutes of March 6, 2025, as presented.

ADDITIONS TO OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

It was moved by Ms. Klein, seconded by Ms. Hill, and carried 5-0 to approve the agenda with the two pieces of correspondence added to 03-VAR-06-25.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

02-VAR-06-25 – 347 E. Arch St. (PIN: 0170910): David Martin and Steven Godfrey are seeking a 1.83-ft side yard variance and a 1.83-ft side yard variance from the City of Marquette Land Development Code to allow a 15-ft x 24-ft attached garage and attached carport with a wall at 347 E. Arch St.

A. Landers: The Board of Zoning Appeals is being asked to review an application for a 1.83-ft side yard variance and a 1.83-ft side yard variance from the City of Marquette Land Development Code to allow a 15-ft x 24-ft attached garage and attached carport with wall at 347 E. Arch St. She referenced the staff report and attachments, and visuals from the agenda packet were shown. She stated the visuals do not show the proposed future wall for the carport.

Ms. Wright: I own property within 300-ft of this property and received the notice. I do not think I have a conflict of interest, but I wanted to ask the board. The conflict-of-interest items from the BZA bylaws were read, and the board decided there was no conflict of interest.

David Martin and Steven Godfrey, the applicants at 347 E. Arch St., introduced themselves.

Wilbur Jennings, the contractor: The reason for the variance requests is that we did not have much choice but to get the vehicle along that side of the house and to create this parking space and attach it to the house. We played around with options by putting the garage by the back, but they wanted to go to the garage from the house with a roof covering and be able to have two vehicles under a roof. The carport was a nice idea to have a more open feel in the driveway. We are adding good curb appeal. We are not asking for more than what we need for variance

requests to get one vehicle in the garage and one in the carport. The rest of the design meets the Land Development Code.

Steven Godfrey: The carport allows us to have two cars but also maintain continuity between the street, driveway, and backyard.

Mr. Patrick: Have you received a building permit or applied for one?

Wilbur Jennings: We have applied for a building permit and are just waiting on the zoning.

Ms. Dombrowski: To meet the required setbacks, what would that mean for this project?

Wilbur Jennings: You would not be able to drive a car into the garage without setting the garage further back and offsetting the garage. We played around with some ideas of turning the garage and turning it to it but there was not a lot of room for a turnaround either. We would have covered more green space than we wanted to. We would not be able to have an attached garage.

Steven Godfrey: We are trying to preserve our green space.

Chair Dombrowski opened the Public Hearing. No one wished to comment. Chair Dombrowski closed the Public Hearing.

The Board read each item in Section 54.1404(B)(5)(a. through j.) of the Land Development Code.

(a) Special Conditions and Circumstances Unique to the Land, Structure, or Building. *That special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not generally applicable to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district;*

Ms. Hill: Not a lot of places to add; you cannot change where your driveway is located, so it is stuck on that side of the house. If you detach the garage and go into the rear yard, you could be over the allowable impervious or rear yard coverage area requirements, as you would have to extend the driveway. Trying to preserve green space, I would agree with this.

Ms. Dombrowski: This is a narrow lot.

Mr. Patrick: Everyone deserves a garage.

(b) Rights of Similar Properties in the Same Districts. *That literal interpretation of the provisions of this Ordinance would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other similar properties in the same district under the terms of this Ordinance;*

Ms. Hill: Not asking for something special, like Mr. Patrick said, everyone deserves a garage.

Ms. Wright: I agree.

(c) Not a Result of Actions of the Applicant. *That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant;*

Ms. Hill: Not a result of the actions of the applicant.

Ms. Dombrowski: The house placement and the size of the lot, and back to (b) again – having general, normal rights to have a garage.

(d) Special Privileges Prohibited. *That granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district;*

Ms. Dombrowski: It would not confer a special privilege.

(e) Comparison to Other Lands, Structures, or Buildings Not a Factor. *That no nonconforming use of neighboring lands, structures, or buildings in the same district and no permitted or nonconforming use of lands, structures, or buildings in other districts shall be considered grounds for the issuance of a variance.*

Ms. Hill: We are not comparing it to other properties.

(f) Strict Compliance is Unnecessarily Burdensome. *That strict compliance with area, setbacks, frontage, height, bulk or density would unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose and would thereby render the conformity unnecessarily burdensome for other than financial reasons;*

Ms. Hill: If they moved the garage to the rear, the board may be looking at a different variance request with larger concrete driveway.

Ms. Wright: If the garage were shorter, you could not fit a vehicle within it.

(g) Substantial Justice. *That a variance would do substantial justice to the applicant, as well as to other property owners in the district (the BZA, however, may determine that a reduced relaxation would give substantial relief and be more just);*

Ms. Hill: This would do justice for them to store their vehicles, preserve green space, and be able to get to their house during the winter, being covered.

(h) Impact. *That the proposed variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or increase the congestion in public streets; that the variance will not increase the hazard of fire or flood or endanger public safety; that the variance will not unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding area; and that the variance will not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.*

Ms. Hill: This request is not going to have a negative impact on light and air; this is not a two-story structure, and the height is lower than some garages that we have seen.

(i) Minimum Variance Necessary. *That the variance is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building, or structure.*

Ms. Hill: This is a minimum request.

Mr. Patrick: I agree.

(j) Purpose and Intent of the Land Development Code. That the granting of the variance, will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this Ordinance.

Ms. Hill: Granting this does align with the Land Development Code.

It was moved by Ms. Wright, seconded by Ms. Hill, and carried 5-0 that after conducting a public hearing and review of the STAFF REPORT/ANALYSIS for 02-VAR-06-25, the Board of Zoning Appeals finds that the request demonstrates the standards found in Section 54.1404(B)(5)(a. through j.) of the Land Development Code and hereby approves 02-VAR-06-25 as presented.

03-VAR-06-25 – 101 S. Front St. (PIN: 0150940): Marquette Vault LLC is seeking a 6% Required Building Line (RBL) length variance from the City of Marquette Land Development Code to allow for the building façade to be built at 69% of the RBL in the General 5 sub-district of the Marquette Downtown Form-Based Code zoning district, whereas the code requires that a building façade must be built to the RBL for at least 75% of the RBL length at 101 S. Front St.

A. Landers: The Board of Zoning Appeals is being asked to review an application for a 6% Required Building Line (RBL) length variance from the City of Marquette Land Development Code to allow for the building façade to be built at 69% of the RBL in the General 5 subdistrict of the Marquette Downtown Form-Based Code zoning district, whereas the code requires that a building façade must be built to the RBL for at least 75% of the RBL length at 101 S. Front St. She referenced the staff report and attachments, and visuals from the agenda packet were shown. Two pieces of correspondence were read into the record. One from Patrick Egan, 107 N. Lakeshore Boulevard, and the other from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which included attachments.

Ms. Hill: The first letter that was read into the record, I am confused about the traffic comment on how that impacts the variance request. That would be reviewed during the site plan review process.

Ms. Wright: What is the difference between the original design and what is being proposed now? Is the Front Street façade/RBL still the same proposal?

A. Landers: They were building up to the E. Washington Street Required Building Line and that is correct, they proposed the same amount as the original proposal along that RBL.

Barry Polzin, 101 N. Lakeshore Boulevard, and architect for the applicant: We are here just to talk about the RBL variance. As you heard from the letter from the SHPO architect regarding the new building in accordance with the National Park Service standards, we are to defer to the historic building. The savings bank building is the icon of Marquette; it is a historic treasure. As a historic architect, to me, this is a dream project, but the first thing I knew was that we had to really step back. The basis of this design is the public experience of this building. We are turning the building into a hotel, and we are adding onto it to get more rooms, add stairs, elevators, and all of the required things. We tucked that building into the little slot between the buildings; you can see it is sort of the reciprocal of the savings bank. One of the cool features of the savings bank building is that it has an angle which was created by the trains that ran next to it. So, the skinny little back of the building is just as important as the front because it shows you

how skinny that building was. We did come up with a design originally that met the zoning, but did not meet the National Park Service standards, plus our feelings on how we have to preserve this for the community. The addition gets tucked in there, same size, floors all match up, we meet all of the standards that are required by the National Park Service. This project will use historic tax credits, so we have to follow those standards. It also received a substantial grant, which requires us to follow those standards. Plus, downtown Marquette has been designated a historic downtown. We have an obligation to design and construct it per the standards. The RBL is to form the street-space, but in this case, the street-space is still formed by the historic building, and that is an important aspect.

Ms. Wright: Is that going to be a driveway on Washington Street? B. Polzin: Yes, we have gone through Engineering and site plan review, and it does work. It will be primarily valet parking.

Ms. Wright: What is the difference between the height from East Washington and Front Street on that back corner?

B. Polzin: There is about a 10–12-foot drop. The building is not accessible as it stands, so there will be a handicap ramp, which will give us an accessible route into the new building, then into the historic building.

Ms. Dombrowski: Can you explain the change in the plan where you would have met more of it, but it looks like you changed the back portion?

B. Polzin: The drawing to the right shows that we would have to have a two-story building out to the property line, basically the sidewalk line. It would take away the slenderness of it and cover up the materials and detailing. The south wall was common brick that ran parallel to the trains and a simpler façade, and is considered the back, which the standards allow us to add onto.

Chair Dombrowski opened the Public Hearing.

William McDonald, 505 E. Arch Street, and owner of the Harborview building at 115 S Lakeshore Boulevard: This project bears no resemblance to the plans that I last saw that were published publicly, which included the ramp coming off Front Street and accessing the second floor of the new hotel building. When this was described as a stand-alone project, I would be very interested in knowing where the rest of the project is going to end. Right now, the project shows an entrance off Washington Street, and my last recollection was that the entrance was going to be on the south side of the hotel at the top level of the parking lot. They could not have built this and complied with the required property line build-out because they needed an entrance, and that entrance is coming off the street. To get that entrance and use the whole scope of their lot, they cannot meet the requirement. Basically, in my view, the RBL variance makes or breaks this project. I have a couple of other questions about where this lies in conjunction with the easements that are shown, which are, as far as I can tell, run right underneath this building in favor of the City of Marquette in perpetuity. They also seem to extend past, and I am not sure if they are confined to underground utilities or whether they are benefiting other properties along Front St. My third question is that my understanding there is a five-story limitation on building in this zone, where is that five-story limitation measured from? If it is measured from the grade of the lot where the east side of the building is then it looks to me like it is a seven-story building. If you look at the pictures, there are a couple of doors and windows missing. Now, a downgrade and a set of stairs that go to the grade of the parking lot, which is the same grade as Lakeshore Boulevard. I have no clue how traffic is going to get past this valet parking and end up in the parking ramp. As I say, I have no idea how this bears in relation to the plan that I saw, and I am not aware of any other published plan that has been exposed for any public comment.

Ms. Dombrowski: One of the limitations of the Board of Zoning Appeals is that we can only talk about what we have in front of us right now, so right now, we are reviewing the RBL variance request.

A. Landers: To answer your questions about the easements, Engineering reviewed those during the previous submittal for the site plan review. Your question about how the story is measured it would be from S. Front St, and it would meet the five stories.

Dr. Angela Palomaki, 800 E. Orianna Drive, and a dentist in the Savings Bank building: My patients come through to the back area where the new addition is going and the handicap entrance to the building is the back parking lot, where would my patients access it?

A. Landers: I would call whoever you have been dealing with, a property manager, etc., and ask them those questions.

Chair Dombrowski closed the Public Hearing.

The Board read each item in Section 54.1404(B)(5)(a. through j.) of the Land Development Code.

(a) Special Conditions and Circumstances Unique to the Land, Structure, or Building. *That special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not generally applicable to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district;*

Ms. Dombrowski: This one was different to me, as you must build up to the lot line.

Ms. Wright: So, the 6% variance is 11 ft 8 in linear façade distance. A. Landers stated yes.

Ms. Hill: This request is unique because it is a historic building, and you do need to meet the National Park Service requirements, and to comply with that, it would not meet the zoning requirements. If you do not build anything, then you are left with this empty hole.

Ms. Wright: If you put the building addition in the back where it shows, then it would be two stories covering up the existing building, which would take away from the historic building.

(b) Rights of Similar Properties in the Same Districts. *That literal interpretation of the provisions of this Ordinance would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other similar properties in the same district under the terms of this Ordinance;*

Ms. Dombrowski: If someone else added onto a historic building they would run into the same problems. It matters to me also how it is situated with the property next to it; not everybody is right up on the edge there.

Ms. Hill: Like every other property, they are allowed to alter or add onto it.

(c) Not a Result of Actions of the Applicant. *That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant;*

Ms. Wright: This request is the action of the National Park Service.

(d) Special Privileges Prohibited. *That granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district;*

Ms. Dombrowski: It does not grant any special privileges to not build to the Required Building Line.

(e) Comparison to Other Lands, Structures, or Buildings Not a Factor. *That no nonconforming use of neighboring lands, structures, or buildings in the same district and no permitted or nonconforming use of lands, structures, or buildings in other districts shall be considered grounds for the issuance of a variance.*

Ms. Dombrowski: We are not comparing it to any other structures.

(f) Strict Compliance is Unnecessarily Burdensome. *That strict compliance with area, setbacks, frontage, height, bulk or density would unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose and would thereby render the conformity unnecessarily burdensome for other than financial reasons;*

Ms. Dombrowski: The strict compliance becomes burdensome when you are working with historic preservation.

Ms. Hill: I did a short internship with the National Park Service, and with historic preservation, they do allow additions. The intent with historic preservation is that they do not want buildings to be so preserved that they cannot be anything, and then they become vacant. I know it is used now, as I have been in it, but because it is a unique shape, it is a bit hard to use a lot of the spaces.

Ms. Wright: Yes, it is quite odd to be in.

Ms. Hill: The National Park Service, while they are strict, they do understand that buildings need to stay occupied for them to stay maintained.

(g) Substantial Justice. *That a variance would do substantial justice to the applicant, as well as to other property owners in the district (the BZA, however, may determine that a reduced relaxation would give substantial relief and be more just);*

Ms. Dombrowski: It does substantial justice to the applicant, as they can work within the grant requirements and all of the other qualifications, they have to meet to use that building and add onto it.

(h) Impact. *That the proposed variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or increase the congestion in public streets; that the variance will not increase the hazard of fire or flood or endanger public safety; that the variance will not unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding area; and that the variance will not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.*

Ms. Dombrowski: It is almost less of an impact on the area because you are not going all the way up to the lot line.

(i) Minimum Variance Necessary. *That the variance is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building, or structure.*

Ms. Dombrowski: I think this is a minimum variance request in the scope of the entire project.

(j) Purpose and Intent of the Land Development Code. *That the granting of the variance, will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this Ordinance.*

Ms. Dombrowski: The purpose and intent of the Land Development Code is to create a community that people want to be in and revitalize the downtown.

Ms. Wright: I think it will look better as proposed than going all the way up to the street, and the proposal will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Land Development Code.

Ms. Dombrowski: I agree, one might have opinions about all kinds of factors of the project, but what we are looking at tonight is the variance for the RBL.

It was moved by Mr. Patrick, seconded by Ms. Wright, and carried 5-0 that after conducting a public hearing and review of the STAFF REPORT/ANALYSIS for 03-VAR-06-25, the Board of Zoning Appeals finds that the request demonstrates the standards found in Section 54.1404(B)(5)(a. through j.) of the Land Development Code and hereby approves 03-VAR-06-25 as presented.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation to the City Commission

The Board reviewed the presentation and made its changes.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Andrea Landers
Zoning Official
Community Development Department,
For the Board of Zoning Appeals