

5.02: Consider Request for a Variance to Building Setbacks to the Ordinary High Watermark at 15637 Juniper Ridge Drive (Project No. 19-114); Case of Andy Gilbertson

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the City has received an application from Andy Gilbertson for a variance to building setbacks to the ordinary high watermark (OHW) on the property located at 15637 Juniper Ridge Drive. The applicant is proposing to construct a 24 foot by 28-foot detached accessory building within the required setback from the OHW of the Rum River.

Board Member Fetterley commented that the pictures helped to justify the request. She stated that this seems to be the logical placement for the building with minimal disruption to the landscaping. She suggested requesting a tree to be replanted in place of the tree that would be removed.

Board Member Moore stated that she would recommend a few more trees on the bluff area to ensure that area is shielded.

Chairperson Valentine stated that he agrees with the comments from Board Members Fetterley and Moore. He asked for the input of staff on the additional tree cover that would be recommended.

City Planner Anderson stated that he does not have a specific recommendation on a number of trees and would support working with the applicant with the goal of planting a few additional native trees. He explained that this proposed location attempts to consider the available screening of the building, noting that this proposed location would be the most screened area on the lot.

Chairperson Valentine asked if there are thoughts or expectations on input that will be provided from the DNR.

City Planner Anderson stated that he did not think any absolute concerns would be identified by the DNR related to this request. He stated that perhaps a comment would be made to offset the building with additional plantings, which is already recommended by staff. He noted that the City has not yet received input from the DNR but is basing his comments on past experience from the DNR with similar requests.

Councilmember Shryock asked if there should be a consideration of requesting an evergreen planting between the new building and the neighboring property.

Board Member Moore stated that she would be concerned with adding additional plantings in the bluff area, because of the existing tree locations. She stated that perhaps the applicant could work with a Master Gardener from Anoka County to determine if additional plantings would be appropriate or harmful to the river. She stated that she does support the request for an additional evergreen planting between the building and neighboring property.

Chairperson Valentine stated that perhaps there should be a more professional input regarding the request for additional plantings.

City Planner Anderson stated that personally he does not see a concern with space between the building and the existing tree line, however, the recommendation could be to fill in more of the gap along the shoreline to provide additional screening of structures in general. He believed that in-house there are resources and capabilities to visit the site and determine if there is sufficient space for trees to survive. He stated that if there is not sufficient space for a tree to survive, he would then not support adding trees in that location.

Motion by Board Member Fetterley and seconded by Board Member Hiatt to recommend the Planning Commission approve the requested variance contingent upon the applicant planting additional native trees between the accessory building and the river if there is space as determined by a site visit by Staff.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Valentine, Board Member Fetterley, Hiatt, Bernard, and Moore. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Member Covart and Madison.