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October 5, 2023

Mayor Ken Kolowski,
Peru City Clerk, and
Aldermen of the City of Peru

RE: Petition of Steven G. Weberski
2611 7th Street, Peru, IL (PIN# 17-17-302-011)

Gentlemen:

Pursuant to legal notice published in the News Tribune in the manner provided by law, the Planning/Zoning Commission of the City of Peru convened for a public hearing on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the City Municipal Building, 1901 Fourth Street, Peru, IL, to consider the Petition of Steven G. Weberski (“Petitioner”) concerning property commonly known as 2611 7th Street in the City of Peru, Illinois, legally described as follows:

LOT FOUR (4) AND LOT FIVE (5) IN BLOCK TWO (2) IN MAPLE LAWN SUBDIVISION, THE SAME BEING A SUBDIVISION IN AND AN ADDITION TO THE CITY OF PERU, COUNTY OF LASALLE AND STATE OF ILLINOIS, EXCEPTING UNDERLYING COAL AND MINING RIGHTS AS HERETOFORE CONVEYED.

PIN #: 17-17-302-002 (“Property”)

Petitioner desires to construct a 40’ x 30’ detached garage on the Property and seeks the following relief under the City’s Zoning Ordinance, to wit:

- (1) A variance to increase the maximum allowable area for all garages and accessory structures from not more than 1,200 sq. ft., as provided in Section 6.01.1(e), to not more than 1,770 sq. ft.;
- (2) A variance to increase the maximum height for a detached private garage from not more than 18’, as provided in Section 6.01.3(b), to not more than 21’- 7”;
- (3) A variance to increase the maximum garage door height from not more than 8’, as provided in Section 6.01.1(f), to not more than 10’;
- (4) A variance to increase the maximum floor area for all detached private garage from not more than 990 sq. ft., as provided in Section 6.01.3(c), to not more than 1,770 sq. ft.; and
- (5) For such other and further relief deemed necessary or appropriate.

The Property is zoned R-3 Single and Two-Family Residence District.

Planning/Zoning Commission Members Kalsto, Grabowski, Brady, and Becker were present at the hearing. Chairman Miller and Members Lucas and Jones were absent. City Corporation Counsel Schweickert chaired the meeting in the absence of Chairman Miller.

Petitioner Steven G. Weberski appeared and was duly sworn. Petitioner testified that the proposed detached garage would be built on the empty lot between Petitioner's residence, and the house to the east that Petitioner also owns. Petitioner stated he has wanted extra garage space for a long time. He plans to construct the garage as far back and east on the lot as he can within the setbacks.

In response to questioning from Member Grabowski, City Director of Engineering and Zoning, Eric Carls, stated that Petitioner had gone through the process of combining the Lots 4 and 5. Attorney Schweickert further clarified that the proposed garage is to be constructed on Lot 5, which is vacant other than a small shed in the northwest corner. Petitioner confirmed that this shed would be taken down for the new garage.

In response to further questioning from Member Grabowski, Petitioner testified that his plan is to construct a driveway to the new garage that branches off from the existing driveway on Lot 4, rather than construct an entirely new driveway from the street (*See "Exhibit A"*). There will not be any new curb break.

Attorney Schweickert asked Engineer Carls if he had any comments with respect to the Petition. Engineer Carls stated he had met with the Petitioner to review his plans for the project. He said the variance requests were not uncommon from what they have seen in the past. Carls noted a detached garage of similar size a few blocks west of the Property on 7th Street was granted a variance to increase maximum square footage. Another detached garage in this neighborhood was recently granted a height variance as well. Engineer Carls stated he had no objection to the relief requested in the Petition.

Attorney Schweickert indicated he had received written comments from Chairman Miller and read them into the record. Chairman Miller wrote:

I do have reservations about constructing a large metal Butler building in an established neighborhood. I realize there is a yard and cornfield behind the property, but I fear the building will outlast the cornfield if there is future development there. Construction looks sound but the structure doesn't seem aesthetically conducive to the surrounding neighborhood. I assume the present garage will come down and maybe the rear yard tree to allow for the extended driveway, but it still consumes a lot of space. I would have liked to know their use intentions. I did not see any testimony from neighbors – either for or against. I would think the neighbor on Herbert Street would have some input.

In response to questioning from Attorney Schweickert, Petitioner testified that there was no tree that would need to be removed. He intends to use the garage for vehicle storage and a small woodworking workshop. The Petitioner testified there are two adjacent neighbors. He had spoken to the neighbor living in the brick house to the west and they had no concerns at all. He had not spoken to the neighbor living in the rental property to the east of the proposed garage location.

With respect to the appearance of the metal building (*See "Exhibit B"*), Petitioner testified he understood the concern but believed it would be as attractive as any traditional frame building. He had his own reservations about a metal building, but after designing it with Morton and receiving the drawings, he thinks it will be quite attractive, especially with the small porch on the side.

Attorney Schweickert noted the Zoning Ordinance generally requires that exterior finishing materials on detached garages be consistent with or complimentary to that of the primary structure, and leaves that determination to the City's Building Inspector. In response to questioning from Attorney Schweickert, Engineer Carls, who currently serves as acting Building Inspector, noted the primary residence has a glass dash exterior which is common in the area but generally a thing of the past. Attorney Schweickert added that the proposed garage will tucked far back in the lot nearly 150' from the front setback line, and even further from the street. Engineer Carls agreed and suggested some landscaping could also be added to provide screening and alleviate some of Chairman Miller's concerns about aesthetics.

In response to questioning from Member Grabowski, Petitioner said he went with metal over a conventional building because he thought it offered some benefits and strength and allowed him to add a second story providing additional space. The colors of the new garage are going to be basically the same as those on the existing garage at the end of the driveway, and Petitioner thinks it will fit in well.

In response to further questioning from Member Kalsto, Petitioner said the exterior material on the existing garage is gray Hardie plank siding similar in color to that on the proposed garage. The proposed garage will also have a red colored wainscot bottom to match the brick wainscot on the smaller existing garage. Member Kalsto stated that would make three different looking exterior construction materials on the Property. Kalsto said she shared Chairman Miller's concerns and did not believe it was appropriate to have metal buildings in a residential neighborhood. She believes the garage should be traditional construction with materials that complement the existing garage, at least, because Petitioner would be unable to match those of the house. Member Kalsto said she would not want a large metal building next to her home and voiced opposition to the Petition.

Member Grabowski concurred with Member Kalsto's comments. He said metal buildings are fine in a rural environment, but not in a neighborhood.

Member Brady said he agreed with those concerns with respect to a newer neighborhood but noted that there are similar structures along the street in either direction. Member Brady opined that if Petitioner kept the garage as neat as his house was when he drove by it, he believed it would fit right in with the surrounding neighborhood. It would also be set back a considerable distance from the roadway. If this was a brand-new subdivision, Member Brady said he would oppose it. However, in this case, Brady thought it was fine. Member Kalsto commented that she lives in an older neighborhood, which is why she does not support it. Kalsto is concerned that approving the Petition would open up the floodgates of people wanting to construct large metal buildings in the City. In response to questioning from Attorney Schweickert, Member Becker said he was 50/50.

Attorney Schweickert noted that the minimum number of Members were present at the hearing to make a quorum. It appeared votes were split, and the P/Z Commission would be unable to make a recommendation. Attorney Schweickert discussed the options available to proceed.

In response to Petitioner, Member Grabowski said he had mixed emotions. In response to questioning from Grabowski, Petitioner confirmed the bottom section of the proposed garage would also be metal, just a different color similar to red brick.

There were no public comments or objections.

Member Grabowski moved, and Member Becker seconded, to continue the hearing to the following Wednesday, October 11th, to begin immediately after consideration of the petition previously set for hearing at 5:00 PM. The motion passed unanimously: 4 aye, 0 nay, and 3 Members absent.

Respectfully submitted,

CARY MILLER, Chairman of the
Planning/Zoning Commission

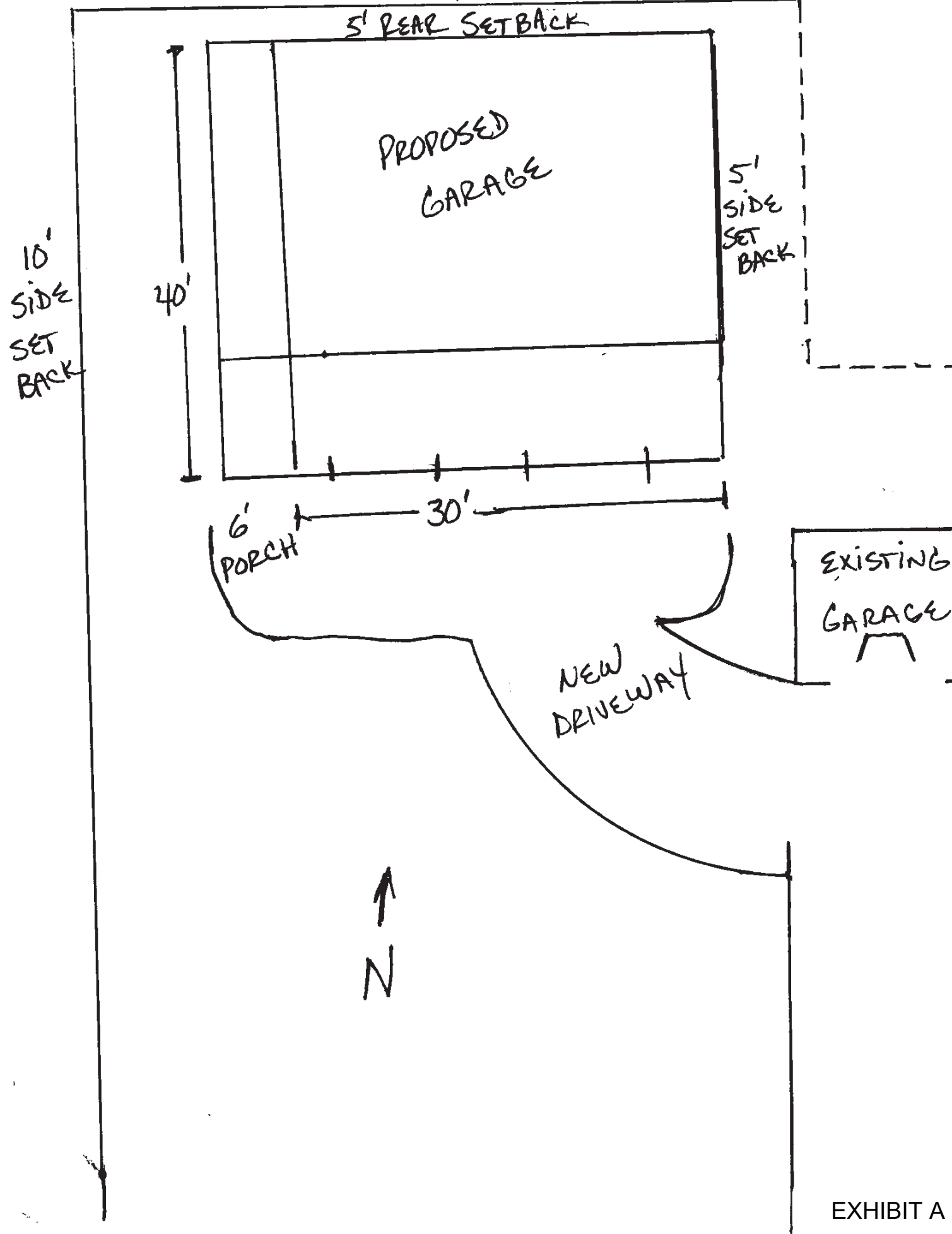


EXHIBIT A

