

ORDINANCE NO. 15 - 110316

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA AMENDING "SECTION 90-36 VARIANCES"; SPECIFICALLY AMENDING "90-36.1 GENERAL VARIANCES" TO MODIFY THE CODE TO PROVIDE FOR A PRACTICAL DIFFICULTY VARIANCE; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Town Code limits lot coverage to 40%; and

WHEREAS, lot coverage is defined as the percentage of the total area of a lot that, when viewed from above, would be covered by all principal and accessory buildings and structures, or portions thereof; provided however that allowable exclusions, as described under "floor area," shall not be included in determining the building area; and

WHEREAS, at the October 14, 2014 Town Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to consider the option of prohibiting an expansion of the second story if a homeowner takes advantage of a maximum lot coverage of 50% on the first story; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 2014 the Town Commission directed staff to offer a method whereby the Town Commission could approve a request to allow lot coverage greater than 40% on a case by case basis; and

WHEREAS, staff after research has determined that variance standards may differ between an "unnecessary hardship" and a "practical difficulty" and in the case of a variance, a practical difficulty is a standard which is similar to but less rigorous than the unnecessary and undue hardship standard; and

WHEREAS, practical difficulty variances were discussed at the January 29, 2015 Planning and Zoning Board meeting and the Board recommended adding landscaping requirements to any approval of additional lot coverage under a practical difficulty standard; and

WHEREAS, the Town Commission held its first public hearing on May 12, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Board, as the local planning agency for the Town, held its hearing on the proposed amendments on May 28, 2015 with due public notice and input; and

WHEREAS, the Town Commission shall have conducted a second duly noticed public hearing on these regulations as required by law on June 9, 2015; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA:

Section 1. Recitals. The foregoing “WHEREAS” clauses are ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are made a specific part of this Ordinance.

Section 2. Code Amendment. The Code of Ordinances of the Town of Surfside, Section 90-36. Variances is hereby amended as follows:

90-36.1 General variances.

(1) Purpose, definition, scope and limitations.

- a. Unnecessary and undue hardship variance. An unnecessary and undue hardship variance is a relaxation of the terms or provisions of the Zoning Code of the Town of Surfside (zoning code) where such action will not be contrary to the public interest and where, owing to conditions peculiar to the property and not the result of actions of the applicant, a literal enforcement of the zoning code would result in unnecessary and undue hardship on the property. As used in this section, a variance is authorized only for lot coverage, dimensions of yards, setbacks, other open spaces, building spacing, parking, or loading requirements.
- b. Practical difficulty variance. A practical difficulty variance is a relaxation of the terms or provisions of the Zoning Code which is less rigorous than the unnecessary and undue hardship standard. Practical difficulty variances shall only be applicable to lot coverage for single family homes located on single platted lots in the H30B zoning district. If a practical difficulty variance is granted, the maximum lot coverage afforded shall be 50%. Any property granted additional lot coverage by a practical difficulty variance shall not increase the square footage permitted on the second story. Further, any square footage added by the practical difficulty variance on the first floor, shall be considered a reduction in the available square footage be added to the second floor. A practical difficulty variance shall only be granted by the Town one time per property. The standard provides for a variance where a literal enforcement of a zoning regulation will create a practical difficulty in the use of the parcel of land for the purpose or in the manner for which it is zoned, considering various factors set forth in paragraph (9) below.

(2) Uses and height of structures not subject to variance. A variance is authorized only as set out in subsection (1).

- a. Under no circumstances shall the town commission grant a variance that would allow a use of property that is not allowed within the zoning district under the Town of Surfside Comprehensive Plan and the zoning code.
- b. Under no circumstances shall the town commission grant a variance that would allow height of development and structures within the Town of Surfside that exceeds the maximum building heights that are set out in the Town of Surfside Comprehensive Plan or the zoning code, whichever provisions are more restrictive.

(3) Nonconforming uses and structures not grounds for granting variance. Nonconforming use of neighboring lands, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district, and permitted use of

lands, structures or buildings in any other district, shall not be considered grounds for granting a variance.

(4) *Town manager not authorized to vary terms of section.* The town manager or designee has no authority to relax the terms of this section. Authority to grant variances is lodged solely with the town commission.

(5) *Application requirements.* An application for a general variance shall be filed by the owner of the property upon which the variance is requested or the owners designated representative. The following shall, at minimum, be required to support a variance application:

a. Statements of ownership and control of the property, executed and sworn to by the owner or owners of 100 percent of the property described in the application, or by tenant or tenants with the owners' written, sworn consent, or by duly authorized agents evidenced by a written power of attorney if the agent is not a member of the Florida Bar.

b. The written consent of all utilities and/or easement holders if the proposed work encroaches into any easements.

c. Survey less than one year old (including owner's affidavit that no changes have occurred since the date of the survey). A survey over one year is sufficient as long as the property has not changed ownership and the owner provides an affidavit that no changes change occurred since the date of the survey.

d. Site plan indicating the existing and proposed structures.

e. A map indicating the general location of the property.

(6) *Staff review.* The town manager or designee shall review the application to determine whether the proposed variance complies with the general purpose and standards set forth herein. The town manager or designee shall compile a written staff report summarizing the facts regarding the application, including all relevant documents. The complete staff report shall be transmitted to the planning and zoning board and to the town commission.

(7) *Review by planning and zoning board and by the town commission.* The town manager or designee shall schedule the general variance application for a meeting of the planning and zoning board. The planning and zoning board shall conduct one public hearing on the general variance application, review the application, and make recommendations to the town commission for final action. The town manager or designee shall then schedule the variance application, including the recommendation of the planning and zoning board, for a meeting of the town commission.

a. *Public hearing.* The town commission shall hold one public hearing on the variance application.

b. *Action by the town commission.* In considering whether to approve or deny the application, the town commission shall review the application, the purposes and standards set forth in this section, the staff report, the recommendation of the planning and zoning board, and relevant evidence, including oral and written comments received at the public hearing. No variance shall be granted except upon the affirmative vote of at least four members of the town commission.

(8) *Standards of review for an unnecessary and undue hardship variance.* The town commission shall approve an unnecessary and undue hardship variance only if the variance applicant demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that all of the following are met and satisfied:

- a. Special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved, and which are not applicable to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district;
- b. The special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant or a prior owner of the property;
- c. Literal interpretation of the provisions of the zoning code deprives the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the zoning code and results in unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant;
- d. The hardship has not been deliberately or knowingly created or suffered to establish a use or structure which is not otherwise consistent with the town comprehensive plan or the zoning code;
- e. An applicant's desire or ability to achieve greater financial return or maximum financial return from his property does not constitute hardship;
- f. Granting the variance application conveys the same treatment to the applicant as to the owner of other lands, buildings, or structures in the same zoning district;
- g. The requested variance is the minimum variance that makes possible the reasonable use of the land, building, or structure; and
- h. The requested variance is in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the town comprehensive plan and the zoning code, is not injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public safety and welfare, is compatible with the neighborhood, and will not substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood.

(9) Standards of review for a practical difficulty variance. The town commission shall approve a practical difficulty variance if it finds, based on substantial competent evidence, that following factors demonstrate that a practical difficulty exists:

- a. How substantial the variance is in relation to the requirement sought to be varied;
- b. Whether an adverse change will be produced in the character of the neighborhood;
- c. Whether the difficulty can be obviated by some method feasible for the applicant to pursue other than by a variance; and
- d. Whether, in view of the manner in which the difficulty arose, the interest of justice will be served by allowing the variance.

(9) (10) Conditions and restrictions. The town commission may impose such conditions and restrictions upon the premises benefited by any variance as may be necessary to comply with the standards set out in this Section, and to prevent or minimize adverse effects on other property in the neighborhood. Violation of such conditions and restrictions, when made a part of the terms under which any variance is granted, shall be deemed a violation of the zoning code, and shall constitute grounds for revocation of the variance.

- a. A condition of granting a practical difficulty variance shall be for the property to meet or exceed the landscape requirements in Chapter 90, Article VIII of the Town's Code of Ordinances.

~~(10)~~(11) *Expiration of approval.* The approval of any variance shall be void if the applicant does not obtain a building permit or other development order to implement the variance within 24 months after the granting of the variance. An applicant who has obtained approval of a variance may request an extension of this time period within the original approval period. The town commission may grant one or more extensions for a period of up to a total of six months for good cause shown by the applicant.

~~(11)~~ (12) *Amendments and alterations to approved variances.* Any expansion to an approved variance and any addition to or expansion of an existing variance shall require the same application, review, and approval as required under this Section for the original variance.

Section 3. Severability. If any section, subsection, clause or provision of this Ordinance is declared invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder shall not be affected by such invalidity.

Section 4. Conflict. All sections or parts of sections of the Town of Surfside Code of Ordinances in conflict herewith are intended to be repealed to the extent of such conflict.

Section 5. Inclusion in the Code of Ordinances. It is the intention of the Town Commission, and it is hereby ordained that the provisions of this Ordinance shall become and made a part of the Town of Surfside Code of Ordinances, that the sections of this Ordinance may be renumbered or relettered to accomplish such intentions; and the word "Ordinance" may be changed to "Section" or other appropriate word.

Section 6. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be effective upon final adoption on second reading.

PASSED and ADOPTED on first reading this 12th day of May, 2015.

PASSED and ADOPTED on second reading this 9th day of June, 2015


Daniel Dietch, Mayor

ATTEST:


Sandra Novoa, CMC, Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY FOR THE USE
AND BENEFIT OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE ONLY:


Linda Miller, Town Attorney

On Final Reading Moved by: Vice Mayor Tourgeman

On Final Reading Seconded by: Commissioner Cohen

VOTE ON ADOPTION:

Commissioner Barry R. Cohen	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Michael Karukin	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Marta Olchyk	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vice Mayor Eli Tourgeman	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mayor Daniel Dietch	yes	<u>ABSENT</u>		