



**Town of Becket  
Zoning Board of Appeals  
557 Main Street  
Becket, Massachusetts 01223  
Phone (413) 623-8934 Ext. 122**

**Meeting Minutes for September 8, 2020**

**Board Members Present:** Victoria Bleier, Alvin Blake, and Jeffrey Wilkinson

**Board Members Absent:** none

**Administrative Assistant:** Tess Lundberg

**Public Present:** Fred Sears, Thomas Wright

1. **Call to order:** Victoria Bleier calls the meeting to order at 7:11 PM. Ms. Bleier introduces the Board members present Ms. Bleier reads the rules of the meeting.
2. **Minutes Approval:** Mr. Wilkinson makes a motion to approve the minutes of June 2, 2020. Mr. Blake seconds the motion. Ms. Bleier votes to approve. Mr. Blake votes to approve. Mr. Wilkinson votes to approve. **Motion passes.**  
Mr. Wilkinson makes a motion to approve the revised minutes of December 5, 2017, correcting a typo in the date of the header. Mr. Blake seconds the motion. Ms. Bleier votes to approve. Mr. Blake votes to approve. Mr. Wilkinson votes to approve. **Motion passes.**
3. **Board reorganization/nominations:**
  - a. Board discusses the recent resignation of Katherine Warden. Ms. Bleier has contacted the Board of Selectmen about the resignation. Open position will be posted on the town website. Mr. Blake suggests posting the opening in the monthly newsletter posted by the Town Administrator. Ms. Bleier will forward the suggestion to Town Administrator William Caldwell. Ms. Bleier will also investigate if there is a current job description, and any residency or voter registration requirements for eligible candidates.
  - b. Mr. Blake nominates Victoria Bleier as Chairperson. Mr. Wilkinson seconds the motion. Mr. Blake votes to approve. Mr. Wilkinson votes to approve. **Motion passes.**  
Mr. Blake nominates Jeffrey Wilkinson as Vice Chairperson. Ms. Bleier seconds the motion. Ms. Bleier votes to approve. Mr. Blake votes to approve. **Motion passes.**  
Mr. Wilkinson nominates Mr. Blake as Clerk. Ms. Bleier seconds the motion. Ms. Bleier votes to approve. Mr. Wilkinson votes to approve. **Motion passes.**
4. **Old Business:** none
5. **New Business:** 19 Switter Lane application for variance in setback requirement.  
Ms. Bleier advises that she had discussed with Town Administrator William Caldwell the implications vacancies on the board and holding a meeting with three members instead of the full board roster. Mr. Caldwell advised that in order for an application to pass the vote of all three members must be unanimous, and that the applicant has the option to defer the hearing under three members and wait for a full board. If the application does not receive a unanimous vote this evening there would be a two year waiting period before reapplying.  
Mr. Wright opts to proceed with the application this evening.  
Mr. Wright states that the site restrictions created by wetlands, wetlands buffer zones, road setbacks and the cul de sac configuration push the 40 foot setback well into the property.



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The proposed pool/terrace encroaches by 8 feet 9 inches at the furthest projection into the 40 foot setback on the west side. The pool design has been approved by the homeowners' association of Berkshire Lake Estates architecture committee.

Mr. Wright states that Switter Lane is a private lane and cul de sac, used only by abutters, not subject to through traffic. He suggests that in the spirit of the zoning regulation, Switter Lane could be considered more of a side yard that would have a 20 foot setback restriction. If this was the case then no variance would be needed.

Mr. Wright described the amount of encroachment as triangular sections of the pool terrace corners. One corner encroaches by 6 feet 4 inches, the other corner encroaches by 8 feet 9 inches. He described the open terrace as having a guardrail with privacy screening. Mr. Wright indicated that the existing and proposed plants and trees, some of which are evergreens, make it difficult to view the area even in winter. He added that the owner will increase the plantings to afford more privacy. Mr. Wright stated that there would be minimal to negligible impact in terms of neighbors' view of the encroachment.

Mr. Fred Sears, from Hill Engineering, spoke as a representative of the abutters Thomas and Noma Nathan. Mr. Sears confirmed that he had seen a copy of a portion of the proposed plans. Mr. Sears said that Mr. and Mrs. Nathan agree that the visual barrier is not a problem. They are concerned about the location of the proposed well on the 19 Switter Lane property, and the impact that would have on locating a septic system on their adjacent property. Mr. Sears stated that they had a discussion about siting the well with Mark Volk of Foresight Land Services. Mr. Volk agreed to move the location of the proposed well to accommodate the Nathans' concern that it could compromise their ability to build a septic system on their property. Given that discussion, Mr. Sears stated that there were no objections by his clients to the proposed variance.

Mr. Blake asked Mr. Wright if they had considered relocating the pool/terrace. Mr. Wright stated that the site constraints of wetlands buffers and high water table made locating the septic challenging, leaving the current proposed site for the pool/terrace as the only option. Mr. Wright pointed out, as shown on the plans, that the pool is elevated to accommodate the high water table.

Ms. Bleier confirmed with Ms. Lundberg that all fees were paid by the applicant.

No other questions or comments.



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The board discussed the request. Mr. Wilkinson suggests to include as a contingency for approval that there be adequate additional screening with trees or hedges to satisfy the neighbors.

Mr. Blake makes a motion to approve the variance with the condition that they provide screening adequate to the neighbors' satisfaction. Mr. Wilkinson seconds the motion. Ms. Bleier votes to approve. Mr. Blake votes to approve. Mr. Wilkinson votes to approve. **Motion passes.**

**6. Budget:**

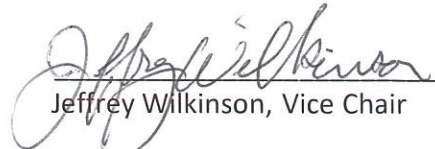
- a. Mr. Blake makes a motion to approve spending \$12 to list in the Becket Federated Church calendar. Mr. Wilkinson seconds the motion. Ms. Bleier votes to approve. Mr. Blake votes to approve. Mr. Wilkinson votes to approve. **Motion passes.**
- b. Ms. Bleier informs the board that an expenditure of \$126 for office supplies that was discussed at the previous meeting was for the purchase of a filing cabinet that is shared with the Planning board.

**7. Public Input:** None.

8. **Any other business to come before the Board:** Ms. Bleier introduced a voting slip design that was adapted from a local board. The board discussed the change and decided to replace the individual voting slips with the new form Dimensional Special Permit Decision 3.4.5. of Zoning By-laws. This form was used to document the approval for 19 Switter Lane.
9. **Adjournment:** Mr. Blake **makes a motion** to adjourn. Mr. Wilkinson seconds the motion. Ms. Bleier votes to approve. Mr. Blake votes to approve. Mr. Wilkinson votes to approve. **Motion passes.** Meeting is adjourned at 8:00 PM.

**Meeting Minutes reviewed and approved on October 6, 2020 by:**

  
Victoria Bleier, Chair

  
Jeffrey Wilkinson, Vice Chair

  
Alvin Blake, Clerk

