VILLAGE OF CROTON-ON-HUDSON
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
DRAFT MINUTES OF TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2026

PRESENT: James Tuman, Chairman
Doug Olcott
Bill Goldsmith
Patrick Turner

ALSO PRESENT: Ron Wegner, Assistant Village Engineer, PE

ABSENT: Ethan Lewis

1. CALL TO ORDER at 7:02

2. OLD BUSINESS

a) Snilsberg, Thor, owner-- 98 Hastings Ave.—Located in a RA-5 Residence District and designated on the Tax Maps of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson as Section 79.13 Block 3 Lot 5. Request for the re-approval of a side yard variance and total side yard variance from Village Zoning Code Section 230-33A for a proposed extension of a front porch. Request for side yard and rear yard variances from Village Zoning Code 230-40(A)(1)(b) for alterations to an existing non-conforming accessory structure (detached garage) as well as a variance request from Village Code Section 230-164E for up to a 2-year period to commence work.

PRESENT: Thor Snilsberg, owner
Christa Blatchford, owner

Chairman Tuman opened the meeting by noting that the application had been discussed at the previous meeting held on September 15, 2026 and that Board members had subsequently conducted a site visit on September 19, 2026 to evaluate the proposed improvements.

Chairman Tuman then invited the applicant, Thor Snilsberg to address the Board. The applicant thanked the members for conducting the site visit and introduced his wife to the Board.

Mr. Turner confirmed that he had not attended the site visit but had reviewed the application materials and believed sufficient information had been provided for him to proceed with voting on the application. Chairman Tuman then re-opened the public hearing regarding the application. Hearing no comment, the public hearing was then closed and the Board proceeded with its deliberations.

The Board reviewed the proposed improvements, which included the renewal of previously approved variances for a front porch addition and new area variances associated with alterations to the existing detached garage.

The Board acknowledged that letters of support had been received from neighboring property owners.
The Board broke the application down into 3 areas to review:
The Board began with reviewing the proposed garage alterations.

Mr. Snilsberg requested area variances in connection with modifications to the existing non-conforming garage. The proposed alterations were for the roof only however the requested variances included a 2.0-foot rear yard setback variance, a 1.9-foot side yard setback variance. The Board discussed the existing nonconforming location of the garage and the proposed alterations. During the discussion, Mr. Snilsberg clarified that the existing rear garage wall would remain in its current location and that the proposed work would not move the structure closer to the property line. The Board also reviewed the survey and noted that neighboring garages appeared to have similar rear yard setbacks.
The Board then reviewed the 5 Factors:

The Board discussed and agreed that the proposed garage alterations would not produce an undesirable change in the character of the neighborhood or create a detriment to nearby properties. In support of this, the Board considered the existing location of the garage, the proposed scope of work, and the fact that the existing rear garage wall would remain in its current location without moving closer to the property line. The Board also considered the survey, which indicated that neighboring garages appeared to have similar rear yard setbacks.

With respect to whether the benefit sought could be achieved by another feasible method, the Board discussed the existing nonconforming condition of the garage and the limitations associated with modifying the structure without the requested variances. The Board generally agreed that the proposed improvements could not reasonably be accomplished as designed without the requested relief.

The Board further determined that the requested variances were not substantial, noting that the rear yard setback variance was 2.0 feet and the side yard setback variance was 1.9 feet. In considering whether the variances would have an adverse effect on physical or environmental conditions, the Board agreed that the proposed alterations would not negatively affect the physical or environmental conditions of the neighborhood or district. Regarding whether the alleged difficulty was self-created, the Board acknowledged that the existing nonconforming conditions predated the current application, while the proposed modifications were initiated by the applicant. The Board recognized that the requested improvements were, at least in part, self-created.

The Board determined the 5 Factors for the garage alterations:

1. No undesirable change in the character of the neighborhood nor detriment to nearby properties will be produced by the granting of the variance.

2. The benefit sought by the applicant cannot be achieved by a method other than the requested variance;

3. The requested variance is not substantial;

4. The proposed variance will not have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood or district;

5. The difficulty alleged by the applicant was self-created.

MOTION: Mr. Olcott made a motion to grant a side yard variance of 1'ft and total side yard variance of 2.2'ft for a proposed extension of a front porch. Seconded by Mr. Goldsmith. All in favor. 4-0. Roll Call: Mr. Olcott, yes, Mr. Goldsmith, yes, Chairman Tuman, yes. Mr. Turner, yes, (Mr. Lewis, absent).

Next, the Board considered the renewal of the previously approved area variances for the proposed front porch addition. The requested variances included a 1.0-foot side yard setback variance and a 2.2-foot total side yard setback variance. The Board noted that the front porch proposal had been reviewed and approved previously and that the current application sought renewal of that approval. The Board described the proposed porch as a relatively small addition that would complement the existing residence.

The Board also discussed the location of the existing home and noted that its placement relative to the front yard setback limited the ability to construct the proposed porch without zoning relief.
The Board then reviewed the 5 Factors.

The Board discussed and agreed that the proposed porch would not adversely affect the character of the neighborhood or create a detriment to nearby properties. In support of this, the Board agreed that the addition would improve the appearance of the property and complement the existing residence.

Regarding whether the benefit sought could be achieved by another feasible method, the Board discussed the placement and configuration of the existing residence and concluded that the proposed porch could not reasonably be constructed as designed without the requested variances.

The Board also determined that the requested variances were not substantial, noting that the side yard setback variance was 1.0 foot and the total side yard setback variance was 2.2 feet. In considering the potential impact on physical or environmental conditions, the Board determined that the proposed porch would not adversely affect the physical or environmental conditions of the neighborhood or district. With respect to whether the alleged difficulty was self-created, the Board discussed the existing configuration of the residence and the proposed porch, acknowledging the constraints imposed by the existing structure.

The Board determined the 5 Factors for the renewal of the porch variances:

1. No undesirable change in the character of the neighborhood nor detriment to nearby properties will be produced by the granting of the variance.

2. The benefit sought by the applicant cannot be achieved by a method other than the requested variance;

3. The requested variance is not substantial;

4. The proposed variance will not have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood or district;

5. The difficulty alleged by the applicant was self-created.

MOTION: Mr. Olcott made a motion to grant a side yard variance of 1.9 ft and a rear yard variance of 2' ft for alterations to an existing non-conforming accessory structure (detached garage) Seconded by Mr. Goldsmith. All in favor. 4-0. Roll Call: Mr. Olcott, yes, Chairman Tuman, yes. Mr. Turner, yes., Mr. Goldsmith, yes (Mr. Lewis, absent).

The Board then moved to discussion of the request for a two-year variance period.
The Board separately considered the applicant's request for a two-year period in which to commence construction, rather than the standard one-year period.

Mr. Snilsberg explained that the longer period had been requested to accommodate potential unforeseen circumstances, financial considerations, and scheduling delays. He referenced previous home improvement projects that had been postponed because of other household projects.

Chairman Tuman clarified that the requested two-year period would apply to the commencement of construction, rather than its completion.

The Board discussed the distinction between the period allowed to commence work under a variance and the duration of a building permit.

Several members expressed concern that granting an extended commencement period without a compelling justification could establish an undesirable precedent for future applications.

It was noted that a two-year commencement period was an available option on the application form, although Board members differed in their recollections of whether such requests had previously been granted.

The applicant indicated that he intended to begin the work within one year and would accept the standard commencement period.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to consider the two-year extension separately from the requested area variances.

MOTION: Mr. Olcott made a motion to approve the applicant's request for a two-year period to commence construction under the granted variances. Seconded by Mr. Goldsmith.

Chairman Tuman called for a vote. With a vote of 1 Ayes (Mr. Turner) and 3 Nays (Chairman Tuman, Mr. Olcott, Mr. Goldsmith), the variance to allow for up to a 2-year period to commence work be denied.

The Board did not approve the requested two-year commencement period.
Accordingly, the standard one-year period to commence construction applies to the approved variances.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Olcott made a motion to approve the Minutes of September 15, 2026. Seconded by Chairman Tuman. All in favor (3-0). Roll Call: Chairman Tuman, yes, Mr. Goldsmith, yes, Mr. Olcott, yes. (Mr. Lewis, absent, Mr. Turner, recused).

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:19pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Stefanie Correale
Secretary to the Zoning Board of Appeals