

City of Arden Hills Community Development Department

1245 Highway 96 W Arden Hills, MN 55112

Letter of Intent Variance for: Ahmed Ali and NawalHirsi 3588 Ridgewood, Arden Hills, Minnesota 55112

ZONING: R1 PARCEL ID#: 34 30 23 22 0033

Letter of Intent for Zoning Variances

Dear Planning & Mayor and City Council Members,

We thank you for this opportunity collaborate with the City on the purchase and development of the City's unused land at 3588 Ridgewood Road. Our family will be very happy when we build our beautiful dream home on this lot.

After we signed the purchase agreement with the city, we brought at least 10 different contractors to the lot to determine how to best use the land for a home with orientation being a primary concern. The proposal before the City reflects the fact that a Ridgewood Rd entrance would not be safe, especially in the winter, because of the significant elevation difference between the available building pad and the road (20 feet). Instead, multiple contractors identified the configuration we have put forward with an entrance off of Snelling as the best way to address all concerns and be in character with the surrounding area. The home directly to the north of this parcel at 3583 faced similar challenges and implemented similar solutions. We are simply proposing to do the same on this parcel.

To implement this solution, we are requesting variances in relief of the required front and rear yard setbacks, required lot dimensions, and the standard required access point from Snelling rather than the adjacent local roadway. The proposed variances will allow us to build a new house that would be in character with the surrounding homes along Snelling Avenue, and will help the City to meet its goal of providing more long-term opportunities for new housing to support the ongoing vitality of the community.

Concerning the variance criteria, here are our responses:

1. The shape, elevation, and topography of this lot and surrounding area make it impossible to put this land to a reasonable use (i.e. construction of a home) without requesting some form of variances.
2. We were not responsible for the original configuration of this property, which is driving the need for the requested variances.
3. A primary goal of the zoning ordinance is to ensure consistent and compatible development throughout the City. Our proposed home will be the same distance away from Ridgewood Drive as the home directly to the north, and our proposed access to Snelling will be for the same reasons that driveway also accesses Snelling. In short, we believe our proposed home will fit very nicely on this lot and within this neighborhood.
4. This area is guided and zoned for single-family housing. Our proposed home is permitted in this zone.

5. This area of the City is guided and zoned for single-family home development. Construction of a brand new home on a parcel that meets minimum size requirements will be fully within the character of the area as a single-family neighborhood.
6. The variances would not be granted for economic reasons alone. We recognize the City as a whole will profit through the sale and development of this land, but the City would also be granting the variances to accomplish its Comprehensive Plan goals for creating high-quality housing and well thought out infill development.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Ahmed Ali and Nawal Hirsi

CRITERIA FOR REVIEW:

The variance procedure in the Arden Hills Zoning Code (Section 1355.04 Subd 4) and Minnesota Statutes 462.357 Subd. 6, requires the City to consider six matters when evaluating Zoning Code variance applications:

1. The property in question cannot be put to a reasonable use if used under conditions allowed by the official controls; This is true. Due to the site elevations and grades, we are asking for accommodations to make a standard house footprint buildable on this parcel.
2. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner; This is true. We are attempting to work with the existing conditions, not created by us.
3. The deviation from the Ordinance with any attached conditions will still be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Ordinance; This is true, in that we are asking build a home in a residential area.
4. The variance will not create a land use not permitted in the zone; This is true, as our proposed project is consistent with the neighboring homes and use guidance of land for single family home
5. The variance will not alter the essential character of the City; This is true, as our proposed use is consistent with the neighborhood.
6. The variance is not for economic reasons alone;- The request is not for economic reasons, it is to simply make it feasible to build on this parcel.