INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF OCEAN BEACH FIRE ISLAND, NEW YORK


ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
PUBLIC REHEARING
Variance Application Number BP2022-057


February 3, 2024 11:44 a.m. Boat House Ocean Beach, New York ----------------------------------------------------x

A P P E A R A N C E S: JOEL BURRIS, CHAIRMAN

CRAIG SHERMAN, MEMBER CONSTANTINE KARALIS, MEMBER JEREMY CONWAY, MEMBER via Zoom JACQUELINE RULON, DEPUTY CLERK KENNETH GRAY, ESQ., VILLAGE ATTORNEY via Zoom MIKE MANDARINO, BUILDING INSPECTOR via Zoom

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APPEARANCES:

Steven Bertolino, Esquire Applicant's Attorney 130 West Main Street East Islip, New York 11730

Glenn Graham, Architect
Graham Associates
256 Orinoco Drive Brightwaters, New York 11718

John Ross, Builder Ross Brothers Construction Incorporated 595 North Street
Manorville, New York 11949

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CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Good morning, everybody. I thank those who are in attendance here. I see about four people plus our assistants here. I don't know how many people are online, but thank you for participating.

My name is Joel Burris, Chairman of the Village of Ocean Beach Zoning Board of Appeals. It is Saturday, February 3rd, at 11:45 a.m. and we do have a quorum present.

Joel Burris, present.
MEMBER SHERMAN: Craig Sherman, present.
MEMBER KARALIS: Continue Karalis, present.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: By phone, we have present Jeremy Conway. Jeremy, can you chime in?

MEMBER CONWAY: I'm here on Zoom, yes.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: So we have four people present. Three in person in the Village of Ocean Beach. One is via Zoom. Our other member is Kevin Conway, who regrets that he's not here in person, but he's on an airplane flying, I think, somewhere in Europe and couldn't change his flights. So he is listening on but doesn't qualify as being in attendance.

MR. GRAY: Chairman Burris?

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CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Yes? MR. GRAY: I think you meant Kevin Lowry. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Kevin Lowry. Did I say Kevin Conway?

MR. GRAY: Yes, you did.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I apologize. Kevin
Conway was a member years ago. Kevin Lowry.
We also have Jackie Rulon here for us. And our court reporter whose name, I'm sorry?

COURT REPORTER: Leigh Chapman.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Leigh Chapman. So thank
you, everybody, for being here.
The meeting today is a rehearing of Variance Application Number BP2022-057, which was an application submitted by Bungalow Beach Hut, LLC, care of Kurt Bohlsen, B-O-H-L-S-E-N, with the applicant appearing being Glenn Graham. I see Glenn Graham is here today. Glenn is the architect for the project.

A little bit of history -- I hope I called the meeting to order in the beginning. I think $I$ did. If I didn't, I apologize, since we have a quorum. I call the meeting to order since we have a quorum present.

We are here to review the application by

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Bungalow Beach Hut, LLC, but a little bit of background is important before we proceed.

And the background is that the initial hearing on this matter relates to an application that was submitted to the Village of Ocean Beach on September 9, 2022.

The Village of Ocean Beach Building Inspector issued a denial of the building plans previous to that, which is why they submitted the application for the variance. The plans that was submitted that I have in my possession, and I assume they're the correct plans, were dated May 11th, 2022. My understanding is that there were plans submitted to the Village and to DEC also dated 4/7/2021.

On September 9th, we had the application. On June 30th, 2023, which was a long wait, we had the variance hearing. Now the application submitted that we heard has marked on it "nature of proposed work." On nature of proposed work, there are five columns. Four places where it can be checked off what the work is.

The first is construction of a new building. That was not checked. The second is addition to a building. That was not checked. The third is

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alteration to a building. That was checked. The fourth is other work described. And what is written next to it is "FEMA lift". That was the application that we heard. That is the application that we voted upon and that we agree to give a variance for a FEMA lift and alteration to a building.

The hearing was amenable. Before the hearing, we had a very extensive site visit, where the applicant explained to us exactly what was being done. The FEMA lift, some walls being moved, some new staircase putting on, the roof deck being moved, and the elimination of the ground floor.

At that time there were discussions
regarding how the lift was going to be accomplished. I specifically said, it's going to be difficult to get the steel beams underneath and raise it. And how you gonna do it? I was advised, leave that to us, the engineers. I'm paraphrasing, but it was clear that everybody walking through the site believed that this was a renovation of a house and a lift. That was important for several reasons and we understood because the house was partially in the CEHA

District and being in the CEHA District, it's always been my understanding, if a house is taken down that under current regulations it can't be rebuilt. But that's not our jurisdiction before us. But that made a lot of sense as to why they had to pick up the house.

Everything was fine. We made some changes and on 11:36 p.m. on October 25th, I received a text from --

MR. GRAY: Joel, can $I$ interrupt you for a second?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Yes.
MR. GRAY: I apologize. You used the word "CEHA". I just want everybody to know what that means. $\mathrm{C}-\mathrm{E}-\mathrm{H}-\mathrm{A}, \mathrm{Coastal}$ Erosion Hazard Area; is that correct?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: That's correct, I believe, yes.

MR. GRAY: All right. I just wanted to make the record clear as to what CEHA stood for. I'm sorry, go back to your email.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Ken, I appreciate that and I appreciate you chiming in whenever I'm not clear or when you can add to what I'm saying.

At 11:36 on October 25th, I received a text
from one of the residents in Ocean Beach saying, what's going on here? You approved a lift, and along with the text was a picture.

And the picture I have here, which was taken according to my -- whatever the codes are in pictures, October 23rd, 2023. So I guess it was taken two days earlier and you can see in the picture, which I'll give to the record, two Dumpsters, a Bobcat, some type of crane elevating equipment, and a site that is virtually cleared of everything except the ground floor of the building. Which is the part that they had agreed they were going to remove and then lift the house above that and a little corner of the building, which is placed up on the dunes. I can't tell you the exact size of it, but it's probably 15 by six or something like that with a little platform.

I didn't understand. I don't know if you can you see this. Anybody who wants to see it. (Holding the photo up to Zoom camera.)

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you.
ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: May I object for a moment? My name is Steve Bertolino. I'm attorney for the applicant and we're hearing

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people speak over the computer system, but we have no idea who's speaking. May I suggest to create a proper record, whoever is speaking through the computer needs to identify themselves each and every time they interject and put in their two cents?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Each time somebody speaks and adds to the conversation, I would appreciate it if you do as Steve requested. Which is state your name for the record, and you may have to do it each time so we recognize you when you speak. (Discussion among Board members.)

Craig is right. Better you hold your comments until the end. Unless it's somebody like Ken, who's adding clarification as Counsel.

MEMBER SHERMAN: Or Bunny.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Or Bunny, who I didn't see on there.

I was rather taken aback by the email, and I, at 3:54 a.m., you can see that $I$ wasn't sleeping that night because of it. I sent a text to Mike saying, Mike, what is this? I didn't expect Mike to see it at 3:58 a.m. and I guess I'm glad he didn't.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Excuse me,

Mr. Chairman. Who is Mike?
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Mike Mandarino is the Building Inspector.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Might be best in order to create a clean record, to identify who you're speaking about when you speak. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Thank you, Mr. Bertolino.
The next morning, I spoke to Mike again.
Mike being, whenever I refer to Mike, I'm talking about Mike -- how do I pronounce your last name here? It's Mandarino.

He said that he was aware of the situation and that he, in fact, had been told that there was some rot in the house, that he visited the site, and that house had to be knocked down because of the condition of the house. I responded by saying, my understanding of the law is that when you knock down a structure, that the variance we granted wouldn't be applicable and we would have to give a new variance, if we were inclined to give a new variance, based on the new facts and the new structure. Mike and I agreed to disagree on that, using his language, and I think that was perfectly fine. People can disagree.

What happened then was I started getting calls from the community. People in the community were outraged. What has the Zoning Board done? Why have you permitted this? This is in the Coastal, CEHA District, Coastal Zone -What is the exact -- Coastal Hazard Erosion Zone. I, then, independently, spoke to the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals, and each one independently said to me, several of them were very, very upset about it. I said, well, there's an easy way to remedy this. The house was knocked down. We have another hearing. They submit revised plans and they can go back and build the home without any delay. I thought that was a pretty good solution. So much so that when I didn't have a response from the Village on it, on October $29 t h$ at $11: 27$ and 21 seconds p.m. -- I love the internet -- I sent an email to each of the trustees of the Village of Ocean Beach, to the Village Superintendent and to the Village Building Inspector. And I did this trying to create an amicable situation and resolve what I saw before me as a very uncomfortable situation that could be worked out well for the Bohlsens, the applicant, et cetera, and I'm going to read

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into the record the email that $I$ sent and I will give you a copy of it so you don't have to -COURT REPORTER: Okay. Thank you. MR. GRAY: Chairman, Ken Gray speaking. I just want to clarify. You said this email you're about to read, you sent it to the Building Superintendent? Kevin Schelling?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: No, to Joe DiFrancisco. MR. GRAY: The Village Administrator? CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Village Administrator, I apologize.

MR. GRAY: Just wanted to clarify.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay.
The subject: "Ocean Beach Zoning Board of Appeals Variance not applicable to new home. Bohlsen house on Bungalow Walk and the Dunes." That is the subject.
"Dear Joe, Mike, Ken, and Members of the Village of Ocean Beach Board of Trustees, "As everyone is aware, this past week there has been a great amount of frustration, agitation, disappointment within the community regarding the demolition of the Bohlsen home on Bungalow Walk and the Beach. Each of the members of the Ocean Beach Zoning Board of Appeals are
also very upset with the situation and the members unanimously feel that a stop work order should immediately be placed upon the property before any further work is performed at the property.
"This past summer, the Zoning Board of Appeals members performed a very careful and lengthy site visit at the Bohlsen property and its surroundings. The site visit was held immediately before the Zoning Board hearing regarding variances desired by the homeowner. Site visits such as the one before the Bohlsen hearing are scheduled and performed to enable the Zoning Board members to further understand and visualize proposed modifications to existing structures that are being proposed by the applicant.
"During the site visit to the Bohlsen home, the owners and their architect toured us through the house and explained each of the modifications that they proposed to make to the then existing structure. It was never mentioned or even suggested during the site visit or the hearing that the existing structure would be demolished and a new home built in its place.

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Notwithstanding, that the contractor found some rotted sections of the house subsequent to the issuance of the variance, this does not cause the variance to be applicable to a new structure. The variance was only applicable for the renovation of the then existing structure. Perhaps this could have included replacing some rotted areas with new wood or beams. But it is not applicable when the home is substantially bulldozed and removed. The fact that one small piece of a wall was apparently salvaged, and, in fact, moved off of its original location and placed on the Dune does not qualify this as being a renovation, as opposed to the construction of a substantially new house.
"The construction of a new home at the site as is being done now is not covered by the variance granted for the renovation of the existing home. If the construction of the new home continues, it is the position of each of the individual members of the Ocean Beach Zoning Board of Appeals, that in the absence of a new variance, the home must be constructed to fully comply with all aspects of the current zoning regulations.

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"In order to enable the owner to timely build their new home and to help avoid unnecessary conflict and delays, I would suggest that a new set of plans for the construction of a new home, which complies with current zoning requirements should be submitted to the Building Department for review.
"Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
Joel Burris, Chairman of the Ocean Beach Zoning Board of Appeals"

Again, that letter was October 29th, 2023. At the time that letter was written, the house had been substantially demolished but for that one wall and piece of a floor that was left remaining on the dunes. I have a picture here from October 31st, 2023, which is very interesting to me. I'm holding it up for everybody to see it, but it shows three pieces of heavy equipment on the site, actually, four, a bulldozer, a Bobcat. I'm not sure what these two cranes are, and it shows full pilings on the side of the property presumably awaiting to be jetted into the ground where the home once stood. Hold

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that up. If you look all the way to the right, you can see the pilings.
(Member Sherman holds photograph up for Zoom camera.)

The calls continued to come in and neighbors were frustrated and, frankly, blaming the Zoning Board for doing something that they shouldn't have done, in their opinions. Neighbors were upset about potential views being blocked. What's happening?

But I believe that the Board of Trustees decided that they would rely upon the building inspector and the building inspector said that the house had been rotted because I guess he had seen pictures of some rot. So he had said to the contractor, yes, you can take it down and construction continued.

I now want to read a letter, well, before I read the letter. On December 2 nd, we had a regularly scheduled $Z B A$ meeting, and at the meeting, it was unanimously voted to rehear the application and that's why we're here today.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Burris, for confirmation, would that be December 2nd, 2023? CHAIRMAN BURRIS: 2023, yes, I apologize.

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Thank you for the correction.
That brings us to today's hearing, which we had been trying to schedule and it was difficult. We had scheduled it at one point and the applicant's representatives couldn't attend because they were out of town, and, obviously, we accommodated them. I think it's very important to note that we are one community. We want to accommodate. We do not want to fight within the community. We just want to do what's right for the community, and that's why we're here today, in my estimation.

We adjourned the meeting that was actually advertised for a previous date at Mr. Bertolino's request, and it was a logical and reasonable request. We then had to pick a date and Mr. Lowry -- we wanted to do it sooner rather than later. Mr. Lowry, unfortunately, couldn't make it today because he's on an airplane, but he did write a five-page statement that he asked me to read into the record so everybody would understand his feelings and what happened. So I'm going to read Kevin Lowry's statement.
"Good morning, everyone,
"I apologize for my absence.

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Chairman Burris worked very hard to schedule this hearing at the most opportune time for all concerned. Unfortunately, I am on a plane at this very moment, and I could not change my plans. However, because I have participated in every level of the process that has brought you here today, I owe it to the applicant, the Board, the community, and myself to offer this statement. You are here today for a hearing to discuss the possible revocation of the variances granted to the applicant in a hearing on June 3rd, 2023. The following is a brief review of the events leading into this moment.
"Sometime prior to September 1, 2022 the applicant applied for a permit to do a significant construction project at 76 Bungalow Walk. It was presumed that the project was to be a renovation. The building inspector denied the application on September 1, 2022 for several reasons. I have quoted part of his denial here and I ask the Chairman to emphasize for effect the words that I have capitalized as he reads. "'The owner proposes to RENOVATE a pre-existing nonconforming house with area ratio of 58.7 percent or 3522 square feet. The

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RENOVATION involves REMOVING the complete lower level including a half bath. The owner proposes RENOVATING two first floor bathrooms in the northwest corner of the first floor into a full bath, modified office and laundry room. The owner proposes RENOVATING the second floor by ADDING a fourth bedroom in the southeast corner by way of a BUMP OUT of approximately 5'4" to the south. The owner proposes BUMPING OUT an EXISTING bedroom in the southeast corner by approximately five feet to the east. The owner proposes relocating a second story bathroom from the north side of the second floor and having two full bathrooms mid structure on the east and west sides of the house. The owner proposes to REBUILD and move the pre-existing 300 square foot roof deck approximately 12'3" to the south from its existing location. The owner proposes to add an additional 375 square feet of second- floor deck and MODIFYING approximately 100 square feet of existing second-floor deck along the south side of the house. The owner proposes to MAINTAIN a front setback of 11 feet. The owner proposes to reduce the floor ratio to 54.48 percent to 3275 square feet.'"

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"The building inspector, using the emphasized words, painted a picture of a renovation and drew clear distinctions between what was to be modified and what was to be demolished. The application was denied based on area ratio, front setback, fourth bathroom and roof deck. The applicant applied for variances on each of these.
"On June 3, 2023 a hearing was conducted on the application. At that hearing, the applicant and his agents presented their case in support of the variances. They did not dispute the building inspector's interpretation of the project as per his letter of September 1, 2022 part of which was read into the record here by Chairman Burris. In fact, in his presentation, the applicant's counsel, Mr. Bertolino, used distinct and specific words to describe various parts of the project including; relocated, modification, maintain, demolished, et cetera. Everyone on the board came away with the impression that this was to be a renovation.
"There was no discussion or mention of a complete demolition of the entire structure. The board then approved the application with certain
stipulations. Those stipulations were agreed to by the applicant. Construction began in the fall of 2023, and the applicant approached the building inspector requesting approval to demolish and re-build the entire house. That request was granted and the house was demolished.
"This was not discussed with the ZBA. Construction was then begun on a brand new home incorporating into one wall a veritable splinter saved from the former structure. I believe I speak for the Board, although they can obviously speak for themselves, when I say that it would have been more prudent for the building inspector to have denied the request for demolition and referred the applicant back to the $Z B A$ to rehear the variance applications based on the monumental change of circumstances.
"If we, the ZBA had known that the structure was to be completely demolished, it is very possible that some or all of the variance applications might have been denied. Based on that fact and giving the applicant the benefit of every doubt, this event caused an appearance of possible impropriety. Therefore, on December 2, 2023 at a regular scheduled meeting of the ZBA,
on a motion made by me, we voted unanimously to conduct today's hearing to decide whether or not to revoke any or all of the applicant's variances. I assure you all that the enormity of this issue is not lost on any of us and any such action can be taken only by unanimous vote of the Board members present today.
"I ask the applicant first to explain to the Board and the community of Ocean Beach how this happened. Did we misunderstand the scope of the project at the original hearing in June? Was the complete demolition of the home part of the plan from the beginning? I also want to mention that I have heard some people say that because the Village ordinances do not define the term "renovation" that the incorporation of a scintilla of the original structure into the new building qualifies the new building as a renovation. I hope that the applicant does not insult the intelligence of everyone present by floating this preposterous argument. Generally accepted principals of law dictate that a term which is undefined will be given its normal interpretation.
"Obviously, the normal interpretation of

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renovation will not include what has taken place here.
"My last point on this topic is to advise the public that we, the ZBA will be precluded by law from revoking any variance if the applicant demonstrates that the actions he has taken to date were taken in reliance upon the permissions granted by the Village and that he will suffer irreparable harm if the variance or variances are revoked. This is called "detrimental reliance". I must also remind the applicant that said reliance must have been reasonable. I ask my fellow Board members to carefully scrutinize both the reasonableness of reliance and the magnitude of any detriment should you decide that revocation might be in order.
"The second issue I would ask the applicant to explain concerns the construction plans. The approved plans in the Village Office incorporate the stipulations agreed upon at the June 2023 hearing, yet they are dated sometime in 2022. This cannot be possible. Hopefully, the applicant can explain this. I also ask the Board to recommend this issue be corrected by the submission of a corrected set of plans to avoid

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future misinterpretation of the chronology of this matter. In fact, $I$ would suggest that both the original proposed plans and the final approved plans be included in the Village file.
"Upon completion of the applicant's presentation, and any questions from the Board, the public will be given an opportunity to be heard before the Board makes its determination. I thank all of those in attendance for your time and attention.
"Kevin Lowry, Journalist Fire Island News"
And his telephone number is in there
(516) 578-0791.

Okay.
MEMBER SHERMAN: To make it clear, Kevin is a member of the ZBA.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Do any of the Board members want to make a statement? Or should we ask the applicant questions?

Would the applicant -- I think it might be helpful if the applicant would make a presentation and perhaps they can then explain some of the issues asked by Kevin in his letter. Mr. Bertolino?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Yes. Good morning or

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afternoon, I'm not sure what the time is.
Mr. Chairman, members of the Board, my name is Steve Bertolino, 130 West Main Street, East Islip, New York for the applicant.

The first thing I want to say, Mr. Chairman, is I believe you are an attorney-at-law as well; is that not correct? CHAIRMAN BURRIS: That is correct, sir. ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Okay. And you know I was here at the hearing back in June of 2023. You recall that? CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I recall that and I recall going through the minutes of the meeting and the statements between us. ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: And yet, you sent a letter to the Village expressing your concerns that would obviously affect my client and yet you did not include me on that communication. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: That letter was not sent in the capacity as being an attorney at all. That letter was sent as it is signed, "Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals". If you're trying to attack my credibility and my ethics , I think you will find it is high above reproach. If you are upset that it didn't
go to you, I suppose I apologize to you, but by no means was $I$ acting as an attorney at that point. I was acting in my official capacity as Chairman of the Zoning Board. Next question. ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Chairman, I am neither upset nor am I accusing you of any reproachable event.

In any event, was the letter, was any communication sent from you or any member of this Board to the applicant's representative, either myself or Glenn Graham, expressing concerns back in October of 2023?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: There was no --
MR. GRAY: I'm sorry. Ken Gray here. May I interrupt for a second?

MEMBER SHERMAN: Please.
MR. GRAY: Mr. Bertolino, the Board is not here to be cross examined by you. This is a rehearing. If you have a presentation you would like to make and respond to any comments that were made by Zoning Board members or the letter from Kevin Lowry, please do so. But this is not a cross-examination of my Zoning Board members. Thank you.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Understood, Mr. Gray.

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I'm just trying to establish for record, and I can do it another way.

Let the record reflect that neither myself nor the applicant nor Glenn Graham as architect of the applicant received any communication from the Chairman of the Zoning Board, from any member of the Zoning Board, nor from any official within the Village of Ocean Beach with respect to either concerns or claims that either the Zoning Board or any member of the Village in any capacity or any homeowner in the Village of any capacity. Let the record reflect that, please.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Mr. Bertolino, thank you, but I have to correct you on that. It is my understanding that Bunny from the Village Office did have communication with Glenn Graham, who was the applicant on the application and that he was aware that there were problems and that to some homeowners, he even said friends of his, I'm tired of hearing all the complaints about this. So there was no way that the applicant wasn't aware. If the applicant didn't let you know about it, I apologize. I would have expected that to have been the case, and the Village Attorney was fully involved.

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Excuse me. The letter that I read that I sent to the Village, the Village Attorney who represents the Board was also copied on it and I may have failed to mention that. That he was in the --

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Burris, --
MEMBER SHERMAN: Excuse me. The email that was sent --

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Would you read it in, please?

MEMBER SHERMAN: -- the email that was sent by the Village Clerk, Jonneigh, was directed to Glenn Graham on October 26th at 2:16 p.m.
"Glenn, what the heck is going on at the Bohlsen house? Looks to be a complete demo. Not what we had approved. Joel Burris is upset and we've had a couple of complaints. You can expect a stop work order and a DEC complaint."

It was signed by Jonneigh, in her capacity as the Village Clerk. Mr. Graham did respond.

His response was: "The house was severely damaged with unforeseen rot. We had shared pictures with Mike Mandarino while he was in Florida and obtained his approval before proceeding."

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And Mr. Graham had attached several pictures of rot in the lower portion of the building, which is what we're going to call the basement. The area which was to be removed below the first floor.

MR. GRAY: Ken Gray speaking. Just a point of clarification. If everybody doesn't know, the Village Clerk is Jonneigh Adrion, also known as Bunny as a nickname. If you hear the name "Bunny" and you hear the name "Jonneigh", they are the same person. They are the Village Clerk, for a point of clarification.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Mr. Bertolino, with due respect, would you like to withdraw that the applicant was notified?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: No. That's not what I meant and what $I$ said is incorrect. I wasn't saying we were unaware. What I was saying was we were not given the letter that you sent and the concerns that you had. That letter was never provided to me or to the applicant. I agree, the architect was notified that there were concerns. We were never notified about the extent of the concerns that you read today, that you expressed in your opening statement. That

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was my presentation. If there's a miscommunication here, I apologize to you.

But, in the end, there was something that was said about the communication back and forth and the detriment to the applicant and I just want to point out, as the applicant's Counsel and as the representative making the presentation to the Board, somebody from the Village should have reached out to myself as well. Whether that was the Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals, whether that was somebody else in the Village that needed to do that, somebody should have reached out to my office and said something there and that was not done.

I admit, the email that was just read into the record by Mr. Sherman was received by Mr. Graham. Mr. Graham was dealing with the Village at that point in time. That is not in dispute. As the attorney of the applicant, I was not notified, whether it was proper notification or not, I was not notified.

MR. GRAY: Ken Gray speaking, again. Can I chime in? Can we all agree and stipulate that a stop work order was never issued on this property? ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: So stipulated by the applicant. MR. GRAY: Mr. Burris? CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Yes, stipulated. MR. GRAY: Mr. Mandarino, are you on the call?
(No verbal response given.) MEMBER SHERMAN: I don't see him on there. MR. GRAY: Mike Mandarino?
(No verbal response given.)
Well, as Counsel to the Village and Counsel to the Zoning Board of Appeals, I will stipulate that a stop work order was never issued on this project during this cycle of events, for lack of a better word.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Mr. Bertolino, we are trying to work with you. I don't think anybody should dig a hole here.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Burris, I'm not trying to dig a hole; I'm trying to create a record. As you so eloquently did by reading a five-page letter as opposed to submitting it, I'm entitled to say what $I$ believe should be set forth as well.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: You're correct.

I also wanted to state one other thing because I assume this is bothering you. You sent a letter to the Village Office directed to me, and you did not receive a response from me. You received a response from the Village Clerk. So I want to make sure that you understand there was a response.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Is that regarding the adjournment?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: That was regarding the adjournment, yes.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: And my letter
requesting the adjournment was only because I received a copy of an email that said there was going to be a rehearing. Which, again, for the record, the rehearing doesn't say anything about a revocation. Although, I fully understand that that's within the purview of a rehearing and didn't highlight what the purpose was for.

Having come here today and hearing first hand what some of the concerns are, I will attempt to address them, hopefully, in a way that the Board understands.

So as was just expressed, Mike Mandarino, who I understand is the Building Inspector here,
was contacted on October $23 r d$ and $I$ would like to hand up to the Board the text messages, which I believe was from Glenn Graham, to Mr. Mike Mandarino, who was, I suspect, out of town at the time. The gist of those emails indicate that the rot was very extensive that was found on the house. That some of the portions that were previously expected to be reused were not salvageable in any way, shape, or form. I have several photographs that I can hand to the Board to show them the condition of the wood. This was not wood that was, how should we say, soft. This was wood that was deteriorated to the point where there were gaping holes and it was virtually paper.

That being said, the logical thing to do for the applicant and the architect is to reach out to the building inspector, who it is my understanding at that point, had issued a building permit and had control over the site and the construction that was going on at the site. It's my understanding that the purview of the building inspector is to make a determination as to whether or not we needed to continue or some other avenue needed to be pursued.

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We received permission from the building inspector to continue with the renovations and alterations. Now, we can differ as to what the definition of an alteration or renovation is and the extent of those alterations and renovations.

I would like to point out to the Board that, with respect to the plans, the plans that were submitted in '21 and which were updated several times throughout this process, clearly show multiple pages of new walls being installed and multiple pages where walls were being removed. Many of those walls were exterior walls. In addition, and I believe it's page two or three of the submitted and approved plans also indicate a majority of new floor joists and new girders because there were no new girders on the existing structure. So when the piles went in, the new girders went in, and on top of the girders went new floor joists. All as proposed and set forth on the plans.

Now one can argue whether or not the saving of one wall or a partial wall is a scintilla of a house, but, ultimately, the applicant and the architect relied upon the building inspector who said, yes, I understand. I can see. I verify in

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some way, shape, or form that the construction materials existing within that dwelling structure were no longer able to be used in any way, shape, or form. You can continue and replace, or I should start with remove and replace as necessary.

The project continued. The project continued, again, as stipulated, without a stop work order and continued with inspections multiple times from the building inspector in various stages.

That being said, the applicant did nothing deliberately to quote "demolish a house." Although, as we all know from living on the beach, when one has to lift a house, which was clearly in the plans submitted, the house gets picked up and moved to a different location on the lot and sometimes even to the neighboring lot next door. That was done in this case. The poles were driven and what structural components of the residential dwelling that could be salvaged, were salvaged and were incorporated into the alteration and renovation as approved. With respect to Mr. Lowry's concerns as to demolition and rebuild the house, it was never

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the intention of the applicant at the start, and I certainly don't think that the Chairman or the Board wants to cast dispersion upon myself or Mr. Graham as being party to such a ruse against the Board or the Village. Certainly, when Mr. Graham was engaged, he submitted plans or drafted plans and then submitted them clearly showing an alteration and renovation and as I pointed out those renovations and alterations did show removal of existing walls and adding new walls on the interior and exterior. When we came before the Board, after the passage of time, I stood here in front of the Board and made the presentation as best we could as to the current conditions then existing as well as to the plans submitted by the building department.

Indeed, I was present when many of the Board members and Mr. Gray, for a brief period I believe, went to the site and looked at the house. I do not recall one person in that group looking at the structure that we all could see in front of our own eyes, no one to my recollection said, oh, my gosh, this wall is unsalvageable. Isn't this going to be a demolition? The reason

I point that out is because we all saw the same thing. This was rot that accumulated over many, many decades. This was rot that was not poking a finger through but was literally paper thin and not existent in some places. Unknown and unseen to the naked eye, including those naked eyes of the Board members who spent an hour or two going through the home. Had any Board member at that point in time seen the extensive damage that they saw here today, I would like to think that they would have said, hey, wait a minute. This doesn't look like it's doable.

I highlight that because we all saw the same thing. The applicant, Kurt Bohlsen, he was living at that house. He had his children in that house. He had his family members in that house, not only in 2021 and 2022 but also in 2023. Had he known that the condition of those walls would have been about to fall down and would not pass inspection from any building inspector in any municipality, I doubt very much that Mr. Bohlsen would have hosted any kind of weekend get togethers with his friends and family in that home. That is because the extent of that damage was beyond the naked eye's reach. We

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didn't know; we couldn't see. So hopefully, that addresses Mr. Lowry's concerns that there was some kind of ruse, and I don't think he used that word, but he said the appearance of, and I quote, "the appearance of impropriety." So let's put that to bed and set forth for the record and in front of this Board that there were no shenanigans going on. There was no impropriety. This is what happens when you build. Sometimes when you're doing an alteration, you encounter things that you didn't see before that you didn't anticipate. The normal course in that situation is to do exactly what the applicant did. You reach out to the municipal agency in charge and specifically to the building inspector, which is what we did. The building inspector from Village of Ocean Beach, who had, in my view, had control over that site and had the sole ability to make a determination as to whether we could go forward or not, gave us permission to do so. With that permission and relying on that permission, the work continued. As Mr. Gray pointed out, in the absence of a stop work order, which could not be issued by the Zoning Board Of Appeals and only
issued by the building inspector, with the absence of that, the applicant continued.

It is my understanding that as of today, the house is fully posted. The girders are all strapped down. The framing is done. The windows are in. The roof is on. The mechanicals on the inside, such as plumbing, heating, and electric have begun. And certainly I would argue, the applicant would have a severe economic and detrimental condition on his hands if this Board saw fit to revoke the application.

With respect to what was built, my recollection from back in 2023, was that some of the Board members had concerns being related to them from community members about the angle of the house, the height of house, the location of the house, and we went back and forth on site and in this room with respect to what was there. We haven't changed any of that. We haven't changed the footprint area. We haven't changed the size. What we did change in the plans, which were approved, was that chamfer wall. For those who don't know what that is, it was just like a diagonal wall on the southeast corner and if you recall, we actually stood on a neighbor's deck

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to the east. We looked across. Somebody stood on the rooftop of the subject property and they positioned themselves into such a way so that we could tell whether or not the resident or neighbor to the east would have a view or not. And it was all agreed, I believe by the neighbor as well that, yeah, that location would be sufficient. We took some ballpark measurements. The architect revised the plans. He altered that champer wall, which is that diagonal on the southeast corner of the building, and that was done as well.

Beyond that, there were no changes to the plans submitted to the Village. There were no changes to the plans, to my belief, that this Board should have had in front of them at the time they reviewed the application, at the time they approved the application, and the only change that the Board may not have seen would have been that chamfer wall, which was done at the request of the Board and the neighbor. So as far as reviewing the plans, Mr. Chairman, I am sorry if perhaps the Board's view of the plans they reviewed were one level of alteration, when the actuality of what was

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happening was a different level of alteration. We can argue alteration, renovation, what is the percentage? I'm doing this a long time. I'm sure some of these Board members and the building inspector has been doing this a long time. It was old adage, save one wall, in the building world, if you will, in the trades. You save one wall, you can rebuild that as there. Obviously, in this case we tried to save as much as we can. I spoke to the actual builder, John Ross from Ross Brothers Construction, who is here today. I asked him, did you use everything that you could? He said, yes. Did you use some of the floor joists? He said, yes. The plans clearly show that we anticipated replacing many of the floor joists because they were rotted or insufficient to carry the load to today's standards.

So I suggest that the Board look at the plans closely, today, now, take a break. Call us back, and if you have questions as to what you think we changed or what was modified, we'd be more than happy to answer.

I have here today John Ross, the builder from Ross Brothers Construction to answer direct

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questions if the Board wants to inquire of Mr . Ross as to what he encountered and what he did about that. I have here with me today Mr. Glenn Graham, the architect, who submitted and drew the plans from the very inception of this project. And I don't need to make their statements for them. We have nothing to hide. If this Board wants to inquire of them, I fully support that because, like you said Mr. Burris, we're all here as part of the Ocean Beach, Fire Island community to work together and live together. But I want to be clear that we did not put forth a renovation and an alteration when, in fact, we meant to do a demolish and rebuild. This was never the intent. That was not something we tried to get past the Board but things happen.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Do you know at what point that happened? At what point the decision was made to knock down the house?

MR. GRAHAM: Glenn Graham speaking.
If you see my text that we printed out, that is the very second I learned from John Ross that the house had that damage and I was shocked at, right there (indicating), what you're holding there. That is a print out of my text message to

Mike Mandarino in Florida describing, "Hi, Mike, there's been unforeseen rot that nobody could see."

And, jeez, none of us could see it. We all walked through that house and Mike, excuse me, John Ross pulled off the siding and those photos are showing three quarters of the wall was disintegrated.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: So the text was
October 23rd.
MR. GRAHAM: Yep.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: This is what was given to me dated October 23rd (holding a photo). Were these pictures of this?

MR. GRAHAM: But I'd also like to --
ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Glenn, Glenn, excuse me. Let the record reflect that the Chairman has handed Mr. Graham a photograph that the Chairman was referring to earlier showing the containers and some pieces of equipment.

MEMBER SHERMAN: And the house
substantially demolished.
MR. GRAHAM: That is correct, but if you read the text --

MEMBER CONWAY: Mr. Chairman?

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Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman? Jeremy Conway. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Jeremy, one second. MR. GRAHAM: If you read the text that was sent to Mike, Mike acknowledges that John Ross had already spoken to him last week and that he told him to leave a wall. So I was notified a week, well, a couple days after and a week after John had already had Mike Mandarino on site looking at the building. I then go on to apologize to Mike for interrupting his vacation. "Sorry to bother you. I was not aware." CHAIRMAN BURRIS: So what you're saying is the discussion had already occurred between John Ross and Mike and the date that these were sent to him is not really relevant.

MR. GRAHAM: It was the first day that I was notified, which was a week after Mike had been on site and maybe John Ross can clarify the conversation he had, and, John, why don't you tell them --

MR. GRAY: Mr. Burris, Ken Gray here. Can I chime in for a second?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Sure.
MR. GRAY: Mr. Graham, I just want to clarify an issue. Either from the statement
from Mr. Burris or the letter that was read from Member Kevin Lowry, I believe there was a statement that the plans that were originally submitted and dated by you were dated sometime in 2022, maybe September, and then at the, I believe it was the June 2023 Zoning Board hearing, there was a request for the modification of the angle of the wall, on the southwest wall. And then you modified the plans to comply with the agreement or condition, whatever word you want to use, concerning that and you submitted those revised plans.

MR. GRAHAM: That is correct.
MR. GRAY: But those documents, I just want to ask you this. That document was still dated September 2022. Is it simply clerical error that your office maybe failed to indicate, you know, September '22, revised July 2023?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I think that Mr. Graham would probably tell us that he just forgot to redate it.

MR. GRAY: Joel, Joel, Joel, that's what I'm asking Mr. Graham, not you. MR. GRAHAM: I agree. Yes, I have five people in my office drafting and if we were

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going to list every revision, I started this project in 2021 and it took as a year and a half to work with the DEC to get their approval. There was probably 75 iterations of this plan. So we didn't --

MR. GRAY: No, no, no. It wasn't a criticism. Trust me, it was not a criticism. I just wanted to point out that that happens sometimes. You do revisions and this one, when you resubmitted as per the stipulation and agreement between the applicant and Zoning Board, you did it in compliance with that agreement, consistent with that agreement. You just failed to, you know, whatever, it didn't note that it was a revision.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Gray, there would be a record of that submission online because we filed these plans electronically. So the date they went in would be recorded. Mike Mandarino or the clerk would have that date of the filing. Once they're deemed acceptable, we then print out four hard copies and mail them to the Village. Then they are approved. When the application fee is paid, a permit is issued. So, yes, the revision was a clerical miss, but
the plans should be recorded when received.
MR. GRAY: Very good. Thank you,
Mr. Graham.

MEMBER CONWAY: Mr. Chairman?
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Yes, Jeremy?
MEMBER CONWAY: I just wanted to ask a point of clarification. The owner's representative made mention of a large amount of drawings submitted to the Village for the project. But what I would like to clarify is that for the June 3rd hearing, if I'm not wrong, there were six pages of drawings submitted for review at that hearing. It was a site plan, three ground plans, or four ground plans and an elevation. So that would have been the documents that were in front of us for the hearing, correct?

MR. GRAHAM: I believe that to be incorrect. I have a -- no, the email. I'm going to read an email to Jonneigh Adrion from September 9th, 2022.

MEMBER CONWAY: No, no, I'm just talking about the documents that were provided to the Zoning Board members for review for the hearing on June 3rd, which I received as a packet and it

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was six sheets of drawings. I just want to make that record because you've made a record that there were substantial drawings available for review to the Board.

MEMBER KARALIS: This is Constantine Karalis. I want to clarify that the drawings that we're talking about were the drawings issued to the DEC and they were actually dated, six sheets of documents there. And I heard several comments about some of the issues that are being discussed --

MEMBER CONWAY: Can I just finish this?
Because I want to be clear. At the original hearing, it's the responsibility of the applicant to bring forth all documents for the Board to review during that hearing.

So the point I'm making is that it's my belief that there were six sheets of drawings presented by the applicant at that time for the hearing and that that's the correct number of drawings that the Board used for their consideration.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Jeremy, I believe what you're referring to are the DEC documents that we were given. Let's make sure we agree. And
they say on them "Project Description FEMA Lift and Addition." Is that right; in the bottom right?

MEMBER CONWAY: Yes, but those were the documents that were supplied for the hearing. MR. GRAHAM: I'd like to clarify that when we started this project and made our application --

MEMBER CONWAY: I just need an answer to the question.

MR. GRAHAM: I don't know what you received. I know what was sent to the town.

MEMBER CONWAY: Well, I know what's a matter of record of the Board having in their receipt.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Wait, wait. Jeremy, we didn't receive anything other than these. That, I think, the Board members would agree. What the question really is, was there more submitted than this?

MR. GRAHAM: I'd like to answer it. When we started this application, I did not believe that a variance was needed. So the full set of construction plans were filed to Mr. Mandarino for what I thought was gonna be a permit and
then ultimately denied. So from day one, the town had the full construction set. Whether or not they weren't shared with the members of the Board, this goes back seven, eight months prior to the hearing. We had already filed a full set of plans and I have, going back to September 9th, 2022, I have an email to Jonneigh Adrion thanking her about getting the hearing date.

She says, "I believe Mike spoke to Joel already on this date. Attached is a PDF of the plans."

The attachment says "construction set" and it says, "Thanks again for your help. Have a nice weekend."

So what was given to the Board and ultimately reviewed. There was a construction set submitted months earlier, and I believe I had a construction set in my possession the day we all went to the site.

MEMBER CONWAY: My question was really directed to what was presented to the Board for consideration at the June, for the hearing because that's really what the Board is working with.

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ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Conway, Steve Bertolino for the applicant. Just to add to what Mr. Graham said. It is common practice for the architect to submit the full set of plans to the building department or for the denial letter for the Zoning Board then to review. What the building department or clerk's office shares with the Zoning Board that's already been on file is beyond the control of the applicant.

When we presented our application in '23 before this Board, I don't recall any Board member or, how shall I say, community member that was present asking to see the full set of construction drawings on site with the Village. And to take it a step further, I believe they didn't ask for it because everything you need to see, primarily, is on those first six or seven pages of the plans. Although, plans sometimes contain 20 or 30 pages, many of them have mundane details as to what size nails to use. What type of strapping, and how should we say, cutaways or details as to lumber or things of that nature. They're not necessarily going to indicate to the Board how the position of the dwelling will be or the height. I believe all the pertinent
information that we submitted is the information that the Board had, at least at their fingertips, and the information the Board would need. Additionally, I don't think anything that occurred in October of 2023 is changed by the remaining pages of the filed plans that the Board may or may not have reviewed outside of the hearing.

MEMBER CONWAY: Okay. I appreciate that. Just for the record, I just wanted to make sure, as you want to make sure for the record, that it's a matter of what drawings the Board had before it for the hearing on June 3rd because that's relevant to the decisions that the Board makes on June 3rd. I believe it's the onus of the applicant, not anybody else, to make sure that the Board is presented with all the applicable information that they need to rely on when they make a determination. So I just want that to be a matter of record. MEMBER SHERMAN: I just want to point out that the public was provided at that meeting with copies of plans upon entry into the meeting area, which was at the Boat House, and that there was nobody from the applicant who looked

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at those plans and said these were incorrect either.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Agreed.
MEMBER CONWAY: Thank you.
MEMBER SHERMAN: So based on that, is the assumption to be made that the plans that the Board saw that day, which we have copies of, those were the plans that would have been provided to the ZBA if the applicant had come forth and said these are the plans for the review of the variance application?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: It is our position that the full set of plans upon which the denial was based should be part of the record as part of the application for the building permit, which then triggers the denial. Those plans were on file with the Village. That should be part of the record that the Broad reviews. Whether they do so at the hearing or prior, that is not up to me.

With respect to the plans that were submitted for the hearing, if you had the six pages that were for the DEC, there is nothing on those plans that are different from the plans that were on file and approved. Except that

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chamfer wall, again, the southeast wall. That may not have been depicted on the plans that the Board saw back in June of ' 23 because that is what was agreed to at that hearing date. So those plans would have been revised. They would have been filed with the Village, which they were, and on file for all to see.

Again, we can disagree whether or not the Board had the full set of plans, and I would say even if the Board did not have, quote, a full set of construction plans in front of them, the relevant issues were all on the pages of the documents that the Board had. The other pages, if you want we can pull them up, have mundane details to meet New York State Code and as long as I've been doing variance applications for 28 years has never been anyone's concern what size nail, what type of strapping, what type of two by four we're using. Most people are concerned with the footprint, the elevation, and things of that nature. What it's gonna look like.

MEMBER CONWAY: But any drawings, I'm sorry to interrupt, any drawings that show a determination for demolition might be relevant.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: There were none.

There were no plans submitted for demolition. MEMBER KARALIS: This is Constantine Karalis. I need to, please let me clarify a couple of things.

First of all, on the issue of the chamfered wall on the southeast corner of the second floor, and for the record, I must say I have three sets of plans in front of me. One is the set of six pages that was submitted to the Board for the original hearing for the variance that was granted.

On sheet marked DEC 5, there is a proposed second-floor plan on the bottom left of the page that shows that corner to be a full corner, 90 degrees. Now I have two sets of plans in front of me, which may or may not be the full construction plans, but one set that I have is, bears the signature of the Building Inspector, Mr. Mandarino. The other one does not. The one that bears no signature continues to show a corner, full 90-degree corner. The other set of plans that was signed and approved by Mr. Mandarino does show a chamfered corner. Interestingly enough, all these three plans are dated 4/7/21. So I just want to say that for

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the record because there is questions about when was anything done and revisions and so on and on. The chamfered corner was already in the plans back then.

The second point I would like to make is in the construction plans, there's a section, sorry. Sheet A6.0, again, dated 4/27/21. So this plan is now what? Like three years old?

MR. GRAHAM: Constantine, may I say one thing?

MEMBER KARALIS: Yes, sir.
MR. GRAHAM: The construction plans
Revision 1 are dated 4/7/21, but you'll see at the bottom, in my plan it says there's been 12 revisions. The newest one being July 7th, 2023.

MEMBER KARALIS: You might want to see what I'm looking at. I'm looking at plans that bear the approval for construction by Mike Mandarino. MR. GRAHAM: Yeah. See Revision 12, 7/7/23? As the job progressed we revised -MR. KARALIS: This is what I'm referring to (indicating).

MR. GRAHAM: Revised plans per owner and Revision 11, revised plans as per Zoning Board of Appeals.

MEMBER KARALIS: Right. Okay. But what I'm saying is that didn't really need to be revised because it was already in the drawings from 2021.

MR. GRAHAM: Revision 11 says, "Revised plans as per Zoning Board of Appeals June 19, 2023."

MR. KARALIS: Yes, but the plan is dated --
MR. GRAHAM: We don't change that. We change the revision date. Regardless -- I don't know what the point is of this.

MEMBER KARALIS: Well, the major point is actually on the same section, it shows new construction of the roof and of the floor plane between the first and the second floor. So these plans, essentially, had the demolition of the whole house back then. We've been talking here about moving walls around, including exterior walls. But the plans themselves since 2021 show that, in fact, the whole house was taken down. Except for part of the first floor, and I would totally agree with you that that part really needed to go because we all saw what it looked like.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: That was never in

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question.
MEMBER SHERMAN: That was the basement area.
(Multiple conversations at once.)
MEMBER KARALIS: No, no, the basement is down here. The basement is below that.

MEMBER SHERMAN: One second. This section right here (indicating) is on the bottom here?

MR. ROSS: No, that's the second floor.
MEMBER SHERMAN: Well, it's on the sand.
If you look at the picture here, and you can see --

MR. ROSS: That's the grounded wall that comes down --

MEMBER SHERMAN: Correct. So this is really the foundation of the home, which we're referring to as the basement area because it's ground floor and it's on, I believe, this is the north, yeah, the north side of the house.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Is this rot in this portion?

MR. ROSS: No. This is the second floor -oh, this is the basement. This is the second floor (indicating).

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: So where is this rot,

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down here (indicating)?
MR. ROSS: That rot was over here
(indicating).
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Here (indicating)?
MR. ROSS: No. More west.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: It was a little bit west, so it was this level.

MR. ROSS: Well, not necessarily, no. It was the second floor that came down. That was not a foundation, that was just a skirting wall. MEMBER SHERMAN: Correct. This is the skirting wall of the basement level or the ground-floor level. This is nonstructural. MR. ROSS: Right. MEMBER SHERMAN: You can see from, you know, from the studs. This clearly wasn't a whole house. This was a facade, basically, that was on the other side.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: If it were holding up the house, it's the plywood that's rotted, not the beams.

MR. ROSS: But it was the picture before that that was holding up the house. MEMBER SHERMAN: Just out of curiosity, had the applicant engaged, and I know Mr. Graham

> you're the architect, had engaged an engineer to determine whether any of the property was salvageable? Were you able to do any way, shape, or form to try to save the structure? Once it was going to be raised, certain members would have been replaced anyway. It doesn't appear, from anything that we saw, that the house was substantially rotted. A lot of these pictures are very small areas that don't give us much in the way of definition.
> chalRMAN BURRIS: If you look at the property, it seems like at some point you leveled it. When this was taken, this was lower.

MEMBER SHERMAN: The north side had a facade wall.
(Multiple conversations at once.)
MR. ROSS: But the other pictures show, clearly, the other pictures on the bottom there, show the floor joist there.

MR. GRAY: Joel, can you speak one at a time? Let people finish their sentences so that Leigh can get a complete record here, please? We seem to be talking over each other. Thank you.

MEMBER SHERMAN: Can we potentially get the answer to if the applicant had engaged an engineer to review the structure before the determination was made to present Mr. Mandarino with the idea of demoing the entire structure? MR. GRAHAM: We did not hire a structural engineer. Nor did I visit the site. I was given those pictures, as I said, after that was down. But John Ross had Mike Mandarino, I believe, on site.

MR. ROSS: He visually inspected it.
MEMBER SHERMAN: Do you know when Mr. Mandarino, because what it looks like is -MR. ROSS: Beginning of October.

MEMBER SHERMAN: -- what it looks like from those text messages that Mr. Mandarino was in Florida.

MR. ROSS: No, he visually inspected it prior to that.

MR. GRAHAM: That's when I found out, prior to that.

MR. MANDARINO: Hey, can $I$ chime in, please?

MEMBER SHERMAN: Mike, is that you on the line?

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MR. MANDARINO: Yes, that's me.
MR. GRAY: Mike, identify yourself, please. MR. MANDARINO: Mike Mandarino, Building Inspector.

All right, so I been listening to this whole meeting. I worked there five days, five, six days, every two weeks. And since that project began, I was at that project every day that I worked there. In fact, I ride the whole Village every day that I worked there. So I saw every day of the demolition that $I$ was working there and, basically, you didn't need an engineer to make a decision of what was going on there. That house was like a sponge. You could put your finger through the wood.

John Ross did, on one of my visits there, he came to me with plans and said, Mike, before I do this -- John is a person who doesn't ask for forgiveness; he asks for permission. I went to the site and I was there many times and I looked at the sponge-like wood. It was like paper mache. It crumbled in your hand. I said, John, it's going from a partial renovation to a total renovation.

You can dissect it any way you want. Call
it whatever you want, and I might be getting ahead of myself, but there is no guidance in our code as to define what you need to do relative to a substantial renovation or a demolition. In this Village, we allow you to basically renovate what you have, if you had nonconforming structures. I'm getting a little bit more over the top here, but as far as the structure, the integrity of the structure at the time, it was so conspicuous you didn't need an engineer to approve it.

MEMBER SHERMAN: Mike, Craig Sherman. Can I just ask you a question? Also at the time where you had approved, or sounds like recommended a demolition, did you, I think you reached out to the DEC to advise them as well?

MR. MANDARINO: Oh, yes, absolutely. That was my first concern because, listen, I been there five years and I know the code pretty well and it's a pretty wide open code. It gives me a lot of discretion. My biggest concern was if this was okay with the DEC. I ran it through Eric Starr (phonetic) and he had no problem with it. I told him that this is going to end up being a whole demo, basically a total

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renovation. He had no problem with it. He ran it through his chain of command. They had no problem with it. If the DEC had no problem with it; I had no problem with it. The structure that the Zoning Board approved was ultimately the exact structure that is there now. How it got there should not be a concern to anyone. Especially since there's no guidance in our code to give me the opportunity to make any other decision as to whether the variances should stand or not stand.

MEMBER SHERMAN: Mike, one other question. Is there any State code that should have been followed here, you know, for substantial improvement?

MR. MANDARINO: There's no State code for substantial improvement as far as I know, and I think that was brought up by one of the Board members and I did look at it. There's no State code. That's usually a local thing, and there are local municipalities that define substantial renovation and then consider it as a demolition. Or there are sets of rules but not in our code and there's nothing in the State code. Though it was suggested that there was, there is not.

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CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay. So, I was probably the one because I had dinner one night with a group of architects and they thought the State building code, not zoning code, somewhere defines the definition of renovation versus new construction. And they may have been wrong. So you're saying, to your knowledge, it's not there.

MR. MANDARINO: No. It's not there, no. MEMBER KARALIS: I just want to make a clarification. This is Constantine Karalis again. I just want to make sure that we are all understanding the same conditions. That the plans that were approved, again, when we're talking about demolition, total demolition, but the total demolition was not caused totally by the condition of the lower part of the house. The total demolition was amplified by the fact that the drawings themselves called for the removal of the roof and the floor between the two levels. So let's not just simply say, oh, well, you know, the thing had to go because it was rotten. The important part was rotten. The reason $I$ bring this up is that this was not brought forth to the Zoning Board at the time.

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The six sheets that we talked about before marked DEC, when they were issued, moving walls around did not indicate at all the fact that the actual construction plans showed that the roof and the floor between the two levels would be removed. Not because of rot, but because of the way that the architect decided to move on with the house. After all, if you take out that many walls and move them around, the floors cannot stand there waiting for something to happen. So I understand fully why this was done, but the Zoning Board did not know that at the time that we voted to approve those variances. MEMBER SHERMAN: Just a point of clarification. Sorry. I just want the record to show that the plans that the ZBA received on the date of the hearing for the variances was, according to Mr. Graham's revisions, would be Revision 9, dated February 8th, 2022. If there were any plans that were created after that date the Board didn't have the benefit of seeing those.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Mr. Ross, can I ask you a question?

MR. ROSS: Yes.

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CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Let me show you the picture again that we looked at. This was October 31st. This was the portion of the house (indicating) that you intended to remove. I know I had discussions with Mike Mandarino and he said, look, we don't define what percentage of the house has to be retained.

MR. ROSS: (Inaudible).
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: That's what I wanted to ask. What $I$ was sent was that this was (indicating) what was retained. MR. ROSS: Correct. That wall was always --

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: But it's not the wall. It's remaining two by fours; am I wrong? MR. ROSS: But this is what it ultimately would have looked like when it was rebuilt because those walls would be taller in the plans that were submitted.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: But we were told that the house was only going to be two feet higher than it was now after the lift. That's not really accurate then, is it? Several times we were told two feet. MR. ROSS: I can't speculate on that.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Because this must be two feet alone without even the lift of the house. MR. GRAHAM: Let me clarify. The house that's standing down on the ocean today is exactly what this Board approved variances for. There is nothing different than what was on those plans to the construction drawings. That house matches footprint, height, everything to the T that this Board granted variances for. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: We were told that, and it was discussed in the minutes several times, that it was a two-foot difference. Is that the two feet?

MR. GRAHAM: The two feet difference is the elevation and height to meet FEMA. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: FEMA, okay, so was it two feet plus that? This is the old two by fours.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Burris, you're pointing to one photograph and asking if the two feet is the extension of the two by four in that picture. That's not what the two-foot elevation change was we requested. We're talking the end product. The end product of the project would have been a raised elevation that

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was two feet higher.
What you're trying to do, if I'm hearing you correctly, is say, well, it looks like in this picture of a few two by fours of some framing, is that the two feet? That's not how it works. It's the finished product that dictates -MEMBER SHERMAN: Mr. Ross has already said that the walls are taller. So Mr. Ross has said that the current walls are taller. These appear to be the new framing studs here (indicating) with some of the old, and there's also some rot in here. Like, you know, pieces from the wall that was set aside for the house. So Mr. Burris' question is pretty simple. Is there any frame of reference here that where you put in the old framing into the new framing, does this have any significance for height? In other words, is this the old height of the former structure and here above it is the taller wall or two feet on top?

The way I understand it is that the house was being raised to FEMA height so that the pilings would be two feet higher. So the lowest member of the floor joist would be elevated two feet above where it is now on new pilings. The
house would be lifted and raised two feet, but I don't believe that we were presented with information that would say that the walls were going to be taller in structure.

MR. GRAHAM: We didn't request a height variance.

MEMBER SHERMAN: Well, the point we're trying to get at is did you need one?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: We did not. We do not as it sits there today. I think we're about two inches under what the submitted and approved plans call for.

Mr. Chairman, I do understand what you're getting at and you and I seem to be on the same page. Except I'm looking at it as though you're trying to dissect at what point of construction can I call out two feet, and I'm saying that's not the purview of the Board. The Board looks at it and says, when you are done, how high is this going to be? Not necessarily am I putting an 18-inch piece wood in or am I putting a 36-inch piece of wood in?

MEMBER SHERMAN: It was for reference for the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: You're correct on that.

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However, what we're looking at is a deck on top and part of the variance was permitting you to have a deck on top. Whereas, if this had been a new house, it wouldn't have been approved.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: But, Mr. Burris, the same argument applies. You approved an existing deck that was there. You approved it at a certain height and when this project is done, it will have what was approved. Nothing in the plans and nothing that was done changes that finished final product.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: The finished product, you're correct, isn't changed. But what is changed is the reason we gave a variance for that finished product was because the structure itself was there and being elevated.

MR. ROSS: May I say something?
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Yes.
MR. ROSS: The second floor was never to remain. It was all new floor joists on the second floor. So the whole house was to be demoed. All the walls were to be demoed except for one wall downstairs, two or three walls downstairs.

MEMBER SHERMAN: That's our issue. The

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plans that we saw were these that are dated, as I said, February 8th, 2022. There were revisions of the plans that were made after that. There were revisions of the plans that were made up to, I think, just prior to the initial ZBA review, hearing on the variances and this Board wasn't afforded the opportunity to look at those plans.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Sherman, if I may. What may have been submitted in those revised plans may not be within the purview of the Board. I would submit to the Board if something that was changing in the plans, such as, we want to build a bigger deck. We want to build two more feet higher. That 100 percent should have come back before the Board. But saying whether or not I'm going to use an eight-foot two by four or a 10-foot two by four or 10-inch floor joists versus eight-inch floor joists is not necessarily in the purview of the Zoning Board but more in the purview of the building department and the building inspector.

MEMBER SHERMAN: I agree with you. The difference here is that if we would have seen the construction plans and we saw that the
floors and roof were being moved, there may have been other questions prior to us approving the variances. Those questions could have led to the decisions being different and that's why we're here.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: And I understand that. So let me put it to you in the simple way that I'm looking at it, right? You've approved a footprint, a square footed footprint meaning setbacks, what we're doing and an overall height and saying, yes, even with respect to the elevation, not the same height. Elevation is, well, what does it look like, right? And that's the chamfered wall. That's what was before the Board. That's what the Board approves. What, in my view, was never before the Board is how we do it.

If we choose to take the second floor off and move it to the side and then put all new floor joists back and then bring the second floor back and put it on the new floor joists, that's up to us. If we choose to use a two by six versus a two by eight in a wet wall, that's between us and the building department.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: We don't disagree.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: To Mr. Karalis' point of this is what $I$ see in the plans, we have always submitted that we want to get to this point and we plan on accomplishing that goal by doing it this way. But none of those scenarios, to me, is in the purview of the Board. I don't think the Board gets to look and say, well, if you're going to rebuild, you can't replace the second-floor joists. Right? You're not allowed to do that. That would be up to building inspector to say, hey, look, if I've got a first floor and a second floor and we don't believe that the second floor is properly supported as to today's code, we're gonna take the second floor up a foot. We're going to put new floor joists in and put it back. I don't think that that's what the Board looks at. The Board looks at it and says, when you're done with all that building and inspections by the building inspector, what's it going to look like, how does it meet the code, area variances, or use variances if there are any. And that's why we're splitting hairs over how we got to the point of what the Board approved.

MEMBER SHERMAN: It's just important to us
to have that clarification, how we got to that point because we believe that given other information and that other decisions may have been made. Again, the only way we could ever determine that is by rehearing this. Looking at all the information. Looking at all the sets of plans, as opposed to the ones dated February 2022.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: What I would like to do is open it up to the community at large. One of the reasons I want to do that is because I recall when we had the meeting, one of neighbors was upset about possibly losing their view. Actually, both the neighbors were upset about that. And in the record I saw they were told, no, it will go up two feet and only two feet. It didn't only go up two feet. It went up more than two feet between the FEMA lift and the new structure.

MR. GRAHAM: I totally disagree.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay. If I'm wrong, I'm wrong.

MR. GRAHAM: Otherwise, we would have had to request a height variance.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: No, no, no. I'm not
saying you violated height restrictions. I'm saying that it went up more two feet.

MR. GRAHAM: I do not believe that to be the case at all.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Here's the play on words, Mr. Burris. Saying something is going up two feet, as we all know, we have seen houses lift up and down for the last ten years, right? You lift up, put aside, you rebuild, you put back, and you put down. Us going up two feet, the presentation to the Board and now is saying, our current top elevation is ten and when we're done, we're going to be at 12. That's the definition in our view of we're raising two feet.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Wait. Are you saying
your top elevation from the floor plate?
ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: From what was
existing, the top elevation, to what is now existing. So preexisting versus what's sitting there now --

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Two feet in total. ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Two feet in total. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: And whether that two feet is comprised of the poles being two feet longer

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or the ceiling heights being two feet longer, you're saying this house is only two feet higher than it was before? ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Yes. Whether we do it by the pole, but, of course, we have to comply with FEMA first-floor elevations and then what we do to get to the finished height as far as construction materials, whether it's a two by eight and a two by ten or anything else. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I'm talking about the neighbor nextdoor. From their roof deck now, you're looking at a wall and a house. MR. GRAHAM: I would like to clarify that. David Scharf is my dentist. I sat in his dentist chair and talked about this application for months, prior, with my mouth open and getting probed. Not only did I talk to him about the project, I shared the construction drawings with him, so the neighbor was well aware of what was going on. MR. SCHARF: This is David Scharf. Can I speak?

MEMBER SHERMAN: Please. MR. SCHARF: David Scharf, 72 Bungalow Walk. I'm the neighbor to the south, to the

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north rather.
Glenn met with me in my office. Do you remember the date, Glenn? It was sometime in June or May. I specifically asked you how much the house was going up, and you said 18 to 24 inches. You went so far as to say that we're going to move the rooftop deck to the south so it doesn't block my view as much. And you said that if I want a cable railing or a glass railing that you would put that in so as not to obstruct the view. You were very clear that it went up 18 to 24 inches.

Now what $I$ hear you saying is that it's going up 18 to 24 inches from the new first-floor elevation, which is substantially higher than it was. So can you clarify exactly what you meant because you said that to us on two separate occasions.

MR. GRAHAM: We did not raise this house any more than we had to to meet FEMA, which is somewhere in the two, two-and-a-half feet range. We do recall and thank you, you came and supported us at the application that day, and we're not building anything different than what was originally approved. This all started
because it was unforeseen rot in the house. I mean, we are building the exact same house that was approved by this Board.

MR. SCHARF: You're answering the question in a round about way. So let me be very clear. Before construction, if we picked a fixed reference point on the ground that was immovable and then after construction, is the highest member of this house, the top of the railing only going to be 18 to 24 inches higher than the measurement from that fixed reference point before we started?

MR. GRAHAM: Yes, I believe that to be true. My plans call out, the plans that were approved by the building department, a maximum height of this house at 24 feet from the finished floor elevation, which is the Village code. We are not exceeding that. That height is from the lowest floor level to the top of the handrail that is on the roof deck.

MR. SCHARF: I'm not talking about the lowest floor level. I'm talking about a fixed reference point on the ground because if you're saying it would only be 24 inches from the lowest floor level and you're moving the floor

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level then what you told me was not accurate.
MR. POLLACK: And me as well. No one ever told us it going to raised nine feet high.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Please announce your name.

MR. POLLACK: Mitch Pollack. No one ever said at the last meeting that it was going to be nine feet off the ground for the first floor.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: If I can,
Mr. Chairman.
Mr. Chairman, I understand there's confusion, misunderstanding with surrounding members. However, what the applicant is required to do is to submit a set of plans to comply with code, whether it's State code, Village Code, or FEMA, federal elevations, right? Pretty much everyone in this room can agree we know what FEMA is. There are different levels of FEMA depending on where you are located even on this small island. You can be closer to the ocean and have one elevation at FEMA and you can be at the other end of the island, north and south, and have a different elevation. Village code calls out 24 feet above your first floor FEMA elevation. Because of the first floor FEMA elevation on the

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ocean may be higher than that on the bay, a 24-foot structural dwelling would appear and, in fact, be higher on the ocean than it would be on the bay. Assuming the ocean may have a 13-foot first-floor elevation and the bay may have a nine-foot first-floor elevation. Therein lies the difference, but we are code compliant and I would hope that the Board understands that when we submit an application and say we're going to 24 feet from first floor elevation, we're not hiding anything.

MR. POLLACK: Yes, you did.
ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: We're complying with FEMA code and the Village code.

MR. POLLACK: That never came up at that last Zoning Board of Appeals hearing that the house was going to be nine feet high.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: It never came up because it is not --

MR. POLLACK: Off the ground.
ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Excuse me, sir. It never came up because it's not a Zoning Board question. We complied with the Zoning Board, I'm sorry, we complied with the zoning code with respect to both aspects of FEMA and the

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elevation of the building when it's complete above the first floor elevation.

MR. GRAY: Ken Gray here, can I chime in?
ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Please.
MR. GRAY: Ken Gray. I agree, it is FEMA elevation and I think it's FEMA elevation plus two feet. Then we get to the Village code of what the highest point is allowed to be, which is I think 24 feet. And the Village code has this issue on whether or not it's a pitched roof and what the pitched roof is or whatever. I believe it's FEMA elevation plus two. They give an extra two feet. And I agree that it was not in front of the Zoning Board because they were not asking for a variance, for any height variance because they didn't need any height variance.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Mr. Gray, I agree with you, and I agree with Mr. Bertolino that a height variance was not needed here and that was not before us.

However, as we look at the total of all the variances, we take into account the situation. In other words, although a height variance wasn't needed here, the variance was needed to put up

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the roof deck. And had we known, perhaps we wouldn't have said, yes, you can put up the roof deck. I'm looking through the transcript of the hearing and --

MR. GRAY: I'm sorry, Mr. Burris. I want to be clear. I believe the rooftop deck, although, pursuant to our Village code now, was a legal, preexisting, nonconforming structure, correct?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Correct, but it was moved. So when that roof deck was removed and demolished, well, forget about the demolished. Even if you had lifted the house, as opposed to demolish the house, it was put in a different location. So as such, it wasn't a nonconforming use and we granted a variance for it.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Burris, if I may. We discussed at the last hearing that the roof deck would be moved and I believe us moving it was at the request of Mr. Scharf, who lies just behind the house. So to say now, well, it was moved, we all knew it was moved and -CHAIRMAN BURRIS: And we said it was okay to move it. I agree with you.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Now it comes back to
the question if we're replacing girders and roof joists and floor board members, the end result is that we built and are building what was approved and I want to be clear. It's frustrating on our side because we did not hide anything and $I$ understand that that may be difficult for some people to believe even before today or after today, but we presented everything to the building department and to the Zoning Board that we believed the Zoning Board has the purview to review, needed to review. The Board reviewed it extensively on site and at the hearing. The public came. I apologize, but if the public doesn't understand FEMA elevations and Village Code, I can't tell them what questions to ask.

MEMBER SHERMAN: That's not true.
ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: No, not you. I didn't say the Board. I said the public.

MEMBER SHERMAN: That's not at question. If an explanation like that needs to be made, we can make that to the public. That's not the point. The thing that the Chairman is saying, which I agree with, is the roof deck had to be moved. It was being moved also for the benefit

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of the neighbor to the north. If we would have had the knowledge that that roof deck was going to be higher than the plans that were presented before us, we may have thought differently about granting the variance.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: But, Mr. Sherman, the roof deck is not higher than what was presented to you. That was our point.

MEMBER SHERMAN: So that's the point we want to make clear. The reason why we're rehearing this is for clarification. You know, we just want to make sure that the way the decisions were made, that they were made with information that was proper to those decisions. If there were other information that we are unaware of at the time that the Board made the decision, we have to ask those questions.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: I understand. Excuse me, sir. But the premise that the roof deck is now higher than what was presented, to me, is incorrect.

MEMBER SHERMAN: Okay. MR. POLLACK: Can I say a few things, please?

MEMBER SHERMAN: Just state your name.

MR. POLLACK: Mitch Pollack. First of all, I am one of the neighbors that was affected by the so called chamfer movement. At the time that we looked at the property, the chamfer faced the ground floor of my house, and now, if you'll see in this picture (holding a photograph) the height of the ground floor is directly in front of my second-floor deck. Okay? I never would have agreed to that if I had known it was going to be an entire floor. You can barely see the chamfer. This is taken from my deck. That's the chamfer over there (indicating). It completely blocks my view. It was supposed to be one floor down.

At the time of the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing, no one said, oh, by the way, it's going to be at the height of your second floor, not your first floor. I never would have agreed to that, and I doubt if Mr. Scharf would have agreed to that either. Neither of us understood that the house was going to be built nine feet high.

Second of all, the house, I was there the day -- this attorney, I forget your name, Bertolino?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Yes.

MR. POLLACK: Okay. You were trying to imply that the building inspector knew about this prior to the house being demolished. I don't believe that to be true because I was there the day he rode up and the demo guys were there and he got off his bike and said to them, couldn't you save any of the house? And they said, no, it wasn't saveable.

In addition to that, you implied that the owner had no idea of the condition of the house inside the walls. I find that to be completely unbelievable. He had a deck that was hanging off by a nail. He had mold everywhere. The whole house was falling down. For you to say that he didn't notice it? That's impossible.

Now, I have a question about a handicap ramp. Isn't that required? CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I can't answer that. That's a building inspector question. MR. POLLACK: When a new house is built. New house. MR. MANDARINO: No, no, Mike Mandarino, no. MR. POLLACK: Okay. Thank you. ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: For the Board, just so I can address the comments from Mr. Pollock.

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What I'm representing to the Board is exactly what Mr. Mandarino, the Building Inspector, set forth. I was not present. I can't tell you the time of day, the day of the week, or even the month.

MR. POLLACK: You know for a fact.
ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: I defer to the building inspector who set forth to this Board that he visited the site numerous times. He inspected it. What I presented to this Board was the building inspector was fully aware of what was going on on that site. The applicant proceeded to construct what he was offering and renovating, albeit, to a greater extent than we originally thought. All under the supervision of the building inspector and under the issuance of the building permit and if the Board has more, we'd certainly address it. But otherwise, I submit to this Board at this point in time, the applicant would clearly suffer a huge economic detriment, as well as noneconomic loss if this Board were to revoke what was previously permitted and approved by this Board. And I think we're almost, seems like we're almost done, but I will obviously address any other
questions or concerns that the Board has.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Mr. Bertolino, I'm reading the transcript from the hearing, and on page eight or is it ten, on line 23.
"We're Looking to raise the house to current FEMA levels."

This is a quote from you.
"We're looking to raise the house up to current FEMA levels, so the entire structure will come up about 18 inches to two feet depending on your perspective."

So what I think that the neighbors believed, and certainly I would have too from hearing this, was that with the FEMA lift it was only going to raise the peak of the roof or the peak of the roof deck two feet. That's clearly not the case, though. Can we establish that?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Just reading that one snippet in the transcript, I would agree with you. However, we're raising it to FEMA, and the entire structure is going to be two feet higher. How that's interpreted, again, without --

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Two feet higher after reaching the FEMA level is what you're saying. So it's really --

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ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Yeah. And, again, as pointed out by Mr. Mandarino and the Board, we weren't asking for an area variance so we didn't present any more information and I didn't hear any questions at that time. Perhaps there was a misunderstanding back and forth.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Certainly, I can understand how the neighbors believed it was a two feet increase and I certainly would have believed the same and I think that's why the neighbors probably --

MR. POLLACK: We're pissed. I just want to remind you that this is a new construction. This is not a renovation. There's no part of the old house left.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: We understand but for a couple of two by fours in this picture. I think we need to take a recess, have an executive session. We're running in circles. David, you want to say something?

MR. SCHARF: May I say something?
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Yes.
MR. SCHARF: Since I'm affected more than anybody, I just want to make a few clarifications.

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Mr. Bertolino, the roof deck wasn't moved at my request at all. That's number one.

Number two, Glenn Graham was very clear. I mean, as a novice, I wouldn't ask how high is the house going up. It's absurd to think that as a novice I would know that it's going to go up 18 to 23 inches after the FEMA increase. I think that was intentionally unclear because if you told me it was going up two feet plus FEMA, another six feet to eight feet to completely block my view, my support for the project at the previous hearing would have been different and I suspect that's the same case for Mitchell Pollock.

So I suggest to the group in the future, when these people come before you asking for another variance, $I$ would suggest that you dig a little deeper. I had one chance to do this, and now my view is gone forever. I would suggest to the Board that you dig a little deeper when you get an answer from them for tremendous clarification because I can't imagine Glenn Graham wanted, was asking, you know, felt that my questions was, is it only going up two feet from the floor level. Any reasonable novice would

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think it's the top of the roof. You know, I just think that's an absurd statement.

The next thing I'd like to know from Mr. Mandarino, the Building Inspector, was did he actually inspect the rot? Or did he make the approval to take down the structure based on a few photographs he got from the builder?

MR. MANDARINO: I made that clear during my prior -- this is Mike Mandarino. I made that clear several times that I inspected that site every day that I'm there and I actually went down to the site and I practically put my fingers through the plywood. Yes, I made that clear earlier.

MR. SCHARF: Thank you.
So can I just get an answer from Glenn Graham or Mr. Bertolino? Because you keep going back to the answer was, well, what was built was what was on the plans. Which is not the answer to my question. Which is whether or not you thought I was asking is the top of the building only going up two feet, or is it going up two feet from where the new floor level is? To answer that question to say, we built what's on the plans, that is intentionally unclear and it

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leads me to believe that you knew that you were being, not telling the complete truth. You weren't lying, but you weren't telling the complete truth and that influenced my decision and Mitch Pollack's decision. So could someone that, please?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: I will address that, Mr. Scharf. I will tell you, I don't know you other than representing you on the purchase of your home or sale, and you are not important enough to me to lie to. Okay? So don't accuse me in public, on the record of lying to this Board. I did no such thing.

I will tell you if you do not have an understanding of the difference between FEMA elevations, that is not my fault. If somebody had asked me a specific question at the time of the initial hearing, I would have answered it. I would have answered it and presented it truthfully, but do not, under any circumstances, cast dispersions upon my character and tell this Board in public that $I$ have lied. You are not important enough for me to lie to. Understood? Have I addressed it?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I think we can move on.

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MR. SCHARF: I wonder if Glenn Graham could answer that question well.

MR. GRAHAM: Glenn Graham. My
understanding today is that the -- and let's all
talk about the house in general. This was a three-story home. We removed the lower level. We have pictures from 1977 showing that lower level. So FEMA is established from the lowest first floor. Which in this case, this house has a living room that has a three or four step up. So this house as it exists today is only about two feet higher than that original lower level living room. That lower level, and we can prove this by giving you the old surveys compared to today's surveys showing the lower level slightly below FEMA. We only had to lift the house that extra two feet to comply to FEMA. This is --

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Were any of the ceilings raised in addition --

MR. GRAHAM: Excuse me, Mike?
MR. MANDARINO: Maybe I can clarify this. We seem to be stuck on how much the house actually went up from the original house. Now the original house was three stories. If you remove that basement level, the first floor was

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how high grade on the old house?
MR. GRAHAM: Yeah, probably seven feet depending where you stood on the site.

MR. MANDARINO: Yeah. The house actually went up two feet and as I look at it, I'm trying to picture in mind the old house versus the new house. If it did go up, it couldn't have gone up more than two feet because that first floor was already seven, eight feet off the ground and that's included in the FEMA. Does everyone understand that? Once you take the old house and you remove the basement, that's all open space. That first floor was only raised an additional two feet.

MR. POLLACK: May I speak?
MR. GRAHAM: I agree, Mike.
MR. POLLACK: May I say something? Joel?
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Yes.
MR. POLLACK: Mitch Pollock, again. When Mr. Bohlsen bought the house, there was no basement floor. That house, during Hurricane Sandy, sand washed over it and buried that entire lower floor.

MR. MANDARINO: Not an issue.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: You know, we established

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that the basement wouldn't be included. At one point, I believe, even before the plans were submitted, there was discussion about raising it and creating what $I$ viewed as a three or four-story house. And Mike and I caucused and agreed, no, that they were not to build a three-story house. And I think Glenn is nodding his head. Glenn agreed with that. Okay? So we viewed this as being a two-story house being lifted, not a three-story house and that wasn't the way it started. Mike was right on top of that issue.

I'd like to ask Mr. Ross a question, if I can. When I look at these pictures, I see tremendous equipment on the site from when the pictures started to be taken. I see poles being on the site. Typically, when you're lifting a house, you use cribbing. I understand you could move it to another location, but you don't jam it full of poles because you can't get under every portion of the house. So am I correct? You kind of splice together poles because you can't lift the house 20 or 30 feet in the air?

MR. ROSS: No. Our intention was to move the house towards the dune, put the poles in,
move the house back to the north, put the rest of the poles in, and then shift it back to the south.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: So your intention was when you signed the contract to do this, your intention and your contract was based upon elevating the existing structure, not building a new structure.

MR. ROSS: Yeah, and the poles were never to be spliced. The poles were always 30 some foot poles.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: And I assume that the cost of building a house is different whether you're rebuilding a house or altering. Probably because rebuilding a house is probably less expensive because altering becomes outrageously expensive and lifting it. I don't want you even to answer that because I think that, I'm assuming that you changed your contract and your price structure.

MR. ROSS: I had to charge an additional price to the owner for more lumber and all the rotted lumber that was going to be saved, which we now had to replace, yeah.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Do you agree this is
substantially a new house?
MR. ROSS: It was always, but I agree, it was always, if you look at the plans, every wall was new. Every exterior wall was new. Every interior wall was new. There was half the floor joists on the first floor were all new. So everything was basically new on this house when it was submitted, except for a few walls here and there and some floor joists.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Ken, please stop me if I'm out of line on this.

What I'm getting at, it's not going to affect how we vote or at least how I vote. What I'm getting at is that houses are taxed differently if it's a new house versus an old house.

MR. ROSS: Correct.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: And because you left 20 feet of two by four in this house, is it fair for this house to be taxed at a different level than other houses? Or is there some way, Counselor Ken, that we can view this, if it gets approved, that we can view this as a new house so it gets on the tax rolls?

MR. GRAY: Joel, Joel, Joel. Mr. Burris,

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Ken Gray speaking. How it gets assessed is based upon the Village assessor on how the house is situated as of January 1 of every year. So they get evaluated based on any renovations or whatever word you want to use, but it's based upon the condition of the house as of January 1 of every year.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Is there not --
MR. GRAY: The assessor doesn't make a determination whether or not you have marble or tile or whether you have gold plated garbage cans or anything like that. So that is not an issue on with taxation.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay. What I was getting at --

MR. GRAY: And that is not in the purview of the Zoning Board.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay. I told you to stop me because it probably wasn't.

MR. POLLACK: Joel, I have one more question. Is it possible that we can see, in person, where, what pieces of the hold house are incorporated into the new structure? Can we go up there and be shown? Because I don't believe there's any of the old house in there.

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CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I think that Mr. Ross will acknowledge what pictures are showing -MR. KARALIS: (Showing picture.)

MEMBER SHERMAN: Unfortunately, as Mike Mandarino has said, it's almost entirely irrelevant what's left of the old house in the new house. It's irrelevant.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: The house is built.
MEMBER SHERMAN: I do want to read something from the record that Mr. Bertolino had stated. I only want to read this because I want you to understand how the confusion, not just on the part of the public, but also on the Zoning Board could have taken place because of the FEMA plus two versus the two feet.

From the record Mr. Bertolino:
"Mr. Chairman, that is a good recitation of what's happening."

I'm not going to go back to that. I didn't delve into that because you initially said in a short statement, yes, that's exactly what's happening and here's what you're saying.
"Two-story home maintaining the roof deck at its current level. I should say we're not stepping it up higher than that. The whole house
will be raised two feet so it will become two feet higher, but you won't be on the roof and then climbing higher than that."

The Chairman responded just stating, "Would you please restate or repeat 'two stories without a basement.'"

So there were some statements that were made that could cause confusion, and I understand that we're not looking at a request for a variance for height. But we are looking at a request for the roof deck and if the roof deck would have had the substantial obstruction to the neighbors that we're now aware of, we may not have voted the same way.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Sherman, I
appreciate that. I don't recall that, obviously, from that many months ago. But hearing it, sounds to me as though I'm explaining that here is your flat roof and we're not climbing up on top of that. Again, just knowing the project and knowing what I was, believing what $I$ was explaining and I say it. We have a flat roof. Roof deck will remain here. We're not climbing up. I know Mr. Scharf's roof deck. You got on the
staircase and you climb up to the roof deck. This roof deck is on top of the flat roof and I believe, if you read that again, it says, we are raising the house two feet and the roof deck is flat. We're not climbing up above that. Again, if somebody had a concern then I would have addressed it.

MEMBER SHERMAN: Absolutely. I think the point is that and I certainly recall the conversation in the room. Everyone in this room was under the impression that the house was going to be raised two feet from where it is now. In that statement, there was no comment of, yes, we're going FEMA plus two. To make anyone here believe that we were looking at really what's FEMA height plus two feet, and, so, you know, I just want to point out to you where the confusion may have lied (sic) regardless to what happens at this point as far as decisions on the variances. But that might have been the point. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: If we're done with
comments --
MR. GRAHAM: Can I just clarify the height? The existing house had eight-foot ceilings. You
had one-foot or so of floor pack. So you take the eight-foot ceilings and the floor pack then you add on the roof deck. The existing house was just about at height limit at 24 feet. We took that house, or the intention was to take that same house and lift to it two feet to meet FEMA and we're still winding up, the approved plans are at 24 feet. So it was never -MEMBER SHERMAN: We're not talking about the structure.

MEMBER KARALIS: Time out. It's 22 feet for flat roofs, not 24 feet.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I know where we are. It's not a comfortable situation for any of us. The house is built. What isn't done yet is the roof deck and the mechanicals that were going to go up there. Can we have some type of explanation as to how you are going to be able to prevent the mechanicals from interfering with the neighbor?

MR. ROSS: The mechanicals are not going on the roof.

MR. GRAHAM: That was one of the things brought up at the last hearing.

MEMBER SHERMAN: It was, but in the record,
there was conversation about the mechanicals being on the roof but in no way to interfere with the Scharfs.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: In fact, reasonable best efforts was I think what I said.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: I'm going to defer to Glenn on that, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Sherman. My recollection, and I just asked John Ross, is that the mechanicals were agreed to go on the west side of the structure and not on the roof.

MR. ROSS: And they're down low, finished first-floor level, yeah.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: So they're between the Scharf's house and then this house?

MR. ROSS: No, that would be the north side. They're on the west side.

MR. GRAHAM: And on the approved plan, it's showing the air-conditioning platform on the west side of the house. So we did take into consideration the mechanicals. We're also taking into consideration Mr. Scharf's request for wire railings to not block their view instead of doing solid. We're not trying to play games with anybody here. We're sympathetic to what --

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CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Having been up to Mr. Scharf's roof, it's not going to matter. Although, I appreciate you're doing wire railings. It's so far above Mr. Scharf's house that --

MEMBER SHERMAN: Member Karalis has something to --

MEMBER KARALIS: I would like to make a recommendation. On that northeast corner where the staircase is going up to the roof, there is now a totally solid wall that goes to the height of the railing on the roof. It would be well appreciated if you would actually modify that to (inaudible) and lower the second flight of the staircase because you're now above the landing. So that the view form the north side, the view will be open. As I think could be also for people coming from inside the house going out to the roof. When they go out that door on the north side, instead of looking at a solid wall, there would be railing continuous from the -MR. GRAHAM: That's an acceptable compromise. The only reason it was designed --

MR. KARALIS: It will make conditions better for everyone concerned and the neighbors
to the north.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Can you explain to us, if this is the house we're talking about, which wall? This whole wall (indicating)? Is it just this piece of it?
(Multiple conversations at once.)
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I'm going to make a motion, which I guess we have already done, to go into executive session. Everything is off the record for the past five minutes, approximately. Anybody want to second?

MEMBER SHERMAN: Second.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Anybody opposed?
(No verbal response given. The Board went into executive session at 2:06 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 2:17 p.m.)

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: We're out of executive session. I want to call the meeting back to order.

First of all, I thank everybody for bearing with us and putting up with this lengthy hearing, as was the last one, which was seven hours, which was the one that determined that we rehear this. Are there any members of public that haven't spoken that would like to speak? And if not, I'm
going to make a motion and see if we can resolve this in a manner that's amicable to everybody.

Is there anybody listening? Any members of the public?
(No verbal response given.)
No? Okay.
Ken, are you on?
MR. GRAY: I'm here.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: And Jeremy, are you on?
MEMBER CONWAY: Yes, I am.
MR. SCHARF: Excuse me, Joel. I just need clarification on exactly where the mechanicals are going on the west side of the building? The northwest corner for the house is just outside of my bedroom window, so can I get clarification --

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Yes. We discussed that with the architect as well as with the builder and do you want to, Glenn, do you want to specify where they're going? We're assured that they're moved away from the bedroom.

MR. GRAHAM: The approved plans show the air conditioning system on the west middle portion of the house. We have about four to five more feet we can move it south before we
hit into a window, so we will move that air conditioning as far south as practical. But right now, it's in the middle of the house. It would be one-third from the south.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Is the platform the level of the window or is it below the window?

MR. GRAHAM: It's slightly below the window, but it has to be at FEMA, so we don't want it to be in front of the window, so -CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I guess what I'm getting at is if it has to bother either the Scharfs or the Bohlsens, since it's the Bohlsen's system, it should bother the Bohlsens. So get it as far away and right up to the window, I guess. Is that fair?

MR. GRAHAM: Yes.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay?
With no further comments from the public, I'd like to make a motion, which Ken is going to articulate.

MR. GRAY: Well, first you're going to close the public hearing. If there are no more comments or public comments, first you're going to close the public hearing.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay. First, I'd like to
close the public hearing. Do I have a second?
MEMBER KARALIS: Second.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: All in favor?
ALL MEMBERS: Aye.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: The public hearing closed.

MR. GRAY: So I believe the proposed resolution that the Board wants to consider would be, based upon the rehearing that was directed by the Zoning Board of Appeals and based upon this public hearing, that they would like to make a resolution to confirm the prior, and reaffirm the prior Zoning Board resolution that was approved on June 3rd of 2023 breaking certain variances with conditions and add the additional condition, at this point, that the access on the north side of the property that leads to the rooftop deck and the rooftop deck not have solid construction but be made of cable railing.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I think it's the access wall which forms a wall part of the stairway. MR. GRAY: The stairway heading up from the second floor to the rooftop deck and the rooftop deck be made and constructed of a rail, a cable
rail, as opposed to a solid wall construction; is that correct?

MR. KARALIS: That is correct. This is Constantine Karalis. It is the portion above the landing leading to the flight to the roof. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: It's from the landing up? MR. KARALIS: From the landing up to the roof level will be wire railing (inaudible) as best as possible to accommodate waterproofing of the edge of the railing and the walls.

MR. GRAY: Mr. Bertolino, that is the motion that's before the Board. Before the Board takes a vote on that, do you have a concession to make on that issue?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Yes, Mr. Gray, thank you. My understanding is being in executive session and consulting with Mr. Karalis, outside of that, we've agreed that we will make every attempt possible to have the access staircase to the roof deck with a wire railing. So to be clear, the roof deck will have a wire railing and we will make the staircase to that roof deck as low as possible with a wall.

In other words, my understanding with speaking to John Ross, the builder, that he will

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need a certain amount of space to accommodate waterproofing, which may leave, as Mr. Karalis said, a small wall a little higher than the landing but never to exceed the top of the roof.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Can we say, not to exceed one-foot?

MR. ROSS: Yes, one-foot above the structure, yes.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Well, not above the structure, above the landing. Not to exceed one-foot above the landing.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Yes, so I made that concession, Mr. Gray. As well as the concession, my understanding is that the mechanicals will be moved to the far south as possible on the west side.

MR. GRAY: Okay. And, of course, this is all subject to approval by the building inspector to make sure that it's compliant with Village and State code.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: And that's why I said as far as possible to the south, Mr. Gray. MR. GRAY: Understood. MR. SCHARF: I think that that's too vague to say "as far as possible" because I think
we've seen today how vague language gets us in trouble. Can we specify that that's going to be on the southern third of the house at a minimum? ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Well, none of us have the dimensions here in front of us. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Well, that's not true. I think we might be able to specify that it's in the southern third.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: It may not be the southern third depending on where the FEMA line runs in. I think specifically setting forth the southern third, I think it would be better for all involved to say as far south as possible without interfering, $A$, with the window and, $B$, with the FEMA line --

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: How 'bout we say up to at least as far as possible but up to the window? Up to within one-foot of the window, your window?

MR. GRAHAM: That's fine.
MEMBER KARALIS: It is actually, you take the landing. You allow one-foot above the level of the landing --

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: We're not talking
about the landing.

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CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Within one-foot of their window.

MR. GRAY: Chairman, to be honest, that was not part of the resolution, the location of those facilities. That was not part of the resolution.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I'm willing to do this --
MR. SCHARF: Why can't we just amend the resolution?

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Why not make this another condition?

MR. GRAY: Because it's not a variance. It's not a variance. That's a building inspector determination.

MR. MANDARINO: Guys, there's rules, this is Mike Mandarino. There is code regarding how far mechanicals can be from a window. So for you to say, oh, up to one-foot from the window might not be correct.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay. Do we have an agreement to move it as close as possible?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Burris, I have represented that to the Board. As far south as possible. I cannot represent that it will be in the southern one third nor within one-foot of
the window. Whatever meets code, both building and FEMA code, we will comply.

MEMBER SHERMAN: David, they're gonna make best efforts. That's what we're hearing. MR. SCHARF: Okay. CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay. Ken, do you feel that the motion as you've stated is sufficiently clear to be voted upon?

MR. GRAY: I believe so and I believe the motion was that we're maintaining and confirming both the zoning variances that were dated on June 3rd, 2023 with whatever conditions applied at that point. With the added condition now that the staircase going from the second floor to the rooftop deck and the rooftop deck will have cable railing, as opposed to solid, and I think Constantine pointed out that there has to be a point of some solid railing going up to the platform.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Not to exceed a foot.
MR. GRAY: Right. Other than that, the rooftop wrapping will be cable railing. So I think that's an additional condition that you're adding and modifying from the previously approved Zoning Board decision.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Cable railing, which will always be transparent. It will not have a solid wall or solid material between them.

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: To be clear, that cable railing requires posts every five feet.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Of course.
MR. GRAY: So before you vote on this, let me just read something into the record for you.
"New York State Village Law, Section 7-712-A, subsection 12, Zoning Board procedures concerning rehearings. A motion for a Board of Zoning Appeals to hold a rehearing to review any order, decision, or determination of the Board not previously reheard, may be made by any member of the Board. A unanimous vote of all members of the board then present is required for a rehearing to occur."

That's what happened in December, I believe, of 2023.

MEMBER SHERMAN: December 2nd, 2023.
MR. GRAY: December 2nd? Thank you.
MEMBER SHERMAN: No problem.
MR. GRAY: "Such rehearing," which is what we're having today, "is subject to the same notice provisions as an original hearing."

Which we've done.
"Upon such rehearing, the board may reverse, modify, or amend its original order, decision, or determination upon the unanimous vote of all members then present provided the board finds that the rights vested in the person acting in good faith in reliance upon the reheard order, decision, or determination will not be prejudiced, thereby."

And I'm reading from the statute, which was a recap of what part of Kevin Lowry's last part of his letter said. So I just wanted to read the statute to you.

So if this Board is inclined to modify, even adding the additional condition about the railing that we just talked about, that's a modification.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Yes, but I don't think it's really prejudicing them. It's not a hard thing, and they're consenting to it now. Is that correct?

ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Chairman and Mr. Gray, Steve Bertolino for the applicant. Just clarifying for the record.

We will consent to those two additional conditions on the modification provided the Board
affirms and grants the conditions that were already granted.

MR. GRAY: Very well.
Again, I just wanted to point out what the point of law was, and, Mr. Bertolino, I appreciate you consenting on the record as to those modifications.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Okay. I make a motion to -- I guess we can vote. I already made the motion and you articulated it.

MR. GRAY: You asked me to articulate a resolution, so if you want to --

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: I make a motion to vote upon the resolution as stated by Counsel Ken Gray. Do I have a second on making, on voting on it?

MEMBER SHERMAN: Second.
CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Now in order for this to go through, we need unanimous consent. So, Jeremy, you better be there.

I now will take a roll call vote, as to all members as to passing the resolution.

Chairman Burris says yes.
MEMBER SHERMAN: Craig Sherman, member,
yes.

MEMBER KARALIS: Constantine Karalis, member, yes.

MEMBER CONWAY: Jeremy Conway, member. Based solely on the condition of detrimental reliance, I vote yes.

CHAIRMAN BURRIS: Motion passes.
I want to thank everybody for their patience, for the time you put in. As Steve Bertolino probably doesn't understand, this was hundreds and hundreds of hours of agony for all of us. With telephone calls in the middle of the night to me and I'm sure other people. So I'm glad we were able to close this matter amicably and thank you, members of the public, for being here as well as for your input.

Mike, thank you very much for your assistance on this. It wasn't an easy situation for anybody but I think it all worked out and let's be together as a community again. With that being said, I close this meeting. ATTORNEY BERTOLINO: Mr. Burris, members of the Board, Mr. Gray, thank you very much on behalf of the applicant. Have a wonderful evening.
(Time Noted: 2:33 p.m.)

## CERTIFICATION

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I, D. Leigh Chapman, a Notary Public in and for the State of New York, do hereby certify:
THAT the forgoing is a true and accurate transcript of my stenographic notes. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 11th day of February, 2024.
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