



STAFF REPORT
WEST ALLIS BOARD OF APPEALS
October 9th, 2025, 5:30 PM
Room 128 – City Hall – 7525 W. Greenfield Ave.

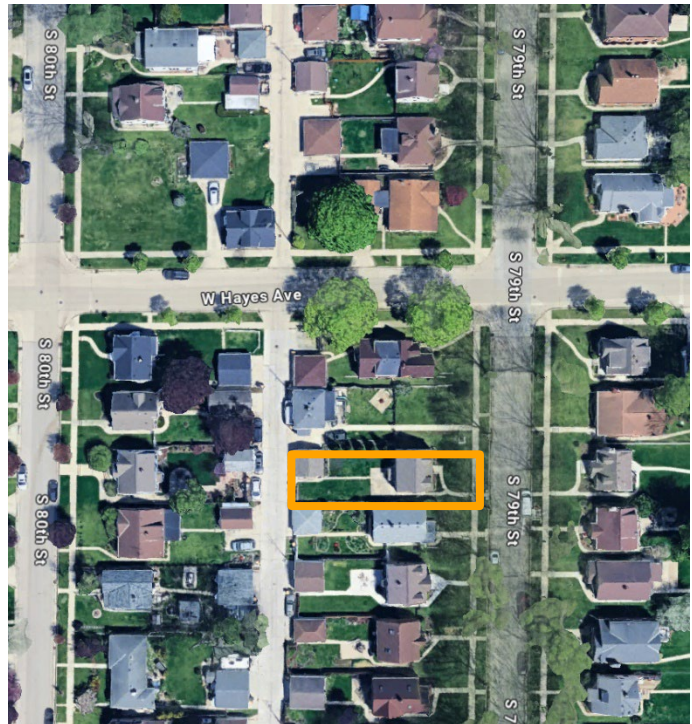
Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/user/westalliscitychannel>

3. Appeal by Megan Grinnell for an Area Variance to Sec. 13.31 to construct a fence in the front yard of a single-family residence at 2407 S. 79th St. (Tax Key No. 488-0162-000)

Request for area variance:

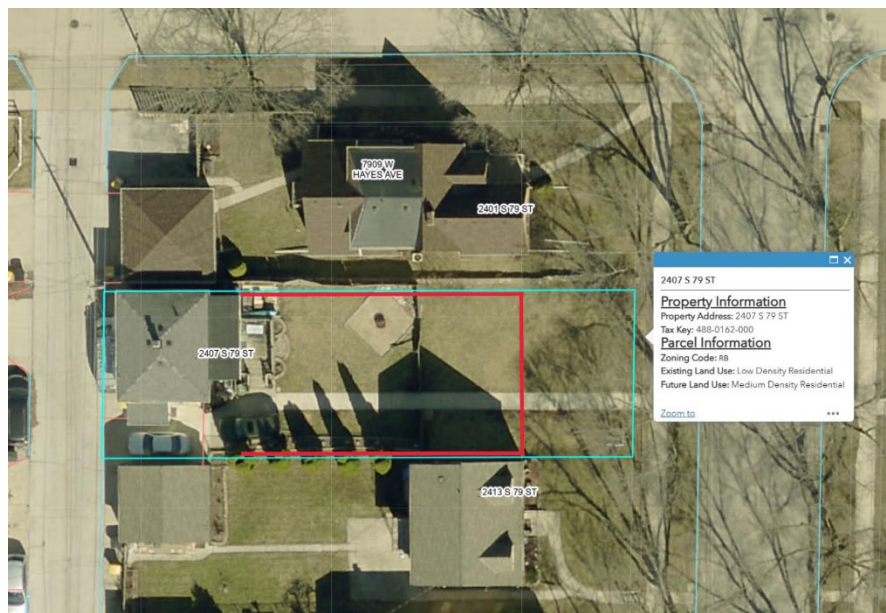
The property owner at 2407 S. 79th St. proposes to build a front yard fence on their property. The property at 2407 S. 79th St. is a single-family residence built in 1930, located on a parcel measuring approximately 40 feet wide by ~128 feet deep. The house was built unusually far toward the rear/west end of the property along the alley rather than being situated similar to other homes in the neighborhood that are centered within the lot area.

Under current regulations (Sec. 13.31), fences are not permitted within front yards. Because of the atypical placement of the house, the usable yard space is located in the front, preventing the owner from installing a fence that would provide privacy and security similar to that enjoyed by other properties with traditional house placements.



The property currently has an existing front yard fence, which may predate the adoption of the current ordinance. The applicant seeks to extend that fence to align with the front setbacks of neighboring homes, rather than the unusually deep setback of her own house. The proposed fence would meet the height and design requirements of the zoning code.

The Director of Code Enforcement has reviewed the request and expressed support for the variance, subject to approval by the Board of Appeals.



Required Variance Findings

1. Unnecessary Hardship

The owner is currently prevented from securing and enjoying the primary usable yard space on the property. Since the house is built far to the rear, the front yard functions as the property's main outdoor area. Compliance with the ordinance deprives the owner of the ability to enclose and use their yard space in a manner consistent with its intended residential purpose and nearby residences.

2. Conditions Unique to the Property

The hardship arises from the unusual placement of the house toward the rear of the lot that was built in 1930. This is an uncommon condition within the City. This is not a condition created by the property owner, but a legacy placement decision made when the house was originally constructed.

3. No Harm to Public Interests

Extending the fence to the line of neighboring houses will not create a detriment to adjacent properties or the public interest. The fence will be consistent with the visual pattern of front setbacks along the street and will not impair light, air, or visibility. The existing fence has long been present without negative impact.

Staff Comments: The unusual placement of this home presents a clear hardship. Without relief, the property owner is deprived of the ability to have a fenced-in outdoor space equivalent to other properties in the neighborhood. Extending the fence to match the prevailing setback line of adjacent homes would provide consistency and enhance neighborhood character, rather than detract from it.

Recommendation: Approval of an appeal by Megan Grinnell for an Area Variance to Sec. 13.31 to construct a fence in the front yard of a single-family residence at 2407 S. 79th St. (Tax Key No. 488-0162-000) subject to details of the fence being submitted to the Planning and Zoning Office to ensure compliance with zoning and design standards: No chain-link fencing allowed. A wood or composite style, and up to maximum 6-ft tall, not encroaching into required front yard beyond alignment with adjacent homes to the north and south.

