



Division of Development Administration and Review

City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning

412 Boulevard of the Allies, Second Floor

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Date of Hearing: June 12, 2025
Date of Decision: July 14, 2025

Zone Case: 65 of 2025
Address: 5312 Lotus Way
Lot and Block: 81-A-34
Zoning Districts: R1A-VH
Ward: 10
Neighborhood: Upper Lawrenceville

Request: Retaining Wall

Application: BDA-2025-03892

Variance	Section 915.02.A.1.e	10' maximum retaining wall height; 14' high retaining wall proposed
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Appearances:

Applicant: John Porter

Findings of Fact:

1. The Subject Property is located at 5312 Lotus Way in an R1A-VH (Residential One Unit Attached Very High Density) District in Upper Lawrenceville.
2. The parcel at 5313 Duncan Street is located at the rear of the Subject Property and the Subject Property shares an interior side property line with the parcel at 5311 Duncan Street.
3. The dimensions of the property are 20' by 50' (1,000 sf) and it is vacant.
4. The grade of the parcel has significant slopes at the rear proximate to the 5313 Duncan Street parcel and along the interior side property line on the 5311 Duncan Street side.
5. In 2021, without obtaining permission from the City, the Applicant excavated along the rear and interior side property lines and impacted the stability of the grade of the adjacent properties.
6. To temporarily stabilize the grade, the Applicant constructed a spray-on concrete retaining wall along the rear and interior side property lines. The height of the temporary retaining

wall is 14' the highest point along the rear property line and tapers down to a lower height along the interior side property line, towards Lotus Way.

7. To bring the retaining wall into compliance with the building code, the Applicant proposes to construct a permanent reinforced concrete retaining wall immediately in front of the spray-on concrete retaining wall, with the same maximum height of 14'.

8. The Applicant asserted that the height proposed for the retaining wall is the minimum that would support the grade of the neighboring properties.

9. No one appeared at the hearing to oppose the request.

Conclusions of Law:

1. Pursuant to Section 915.01.A.1.e, the maximum height permitted for a retaining wall is 10'.

2. The Applicant here seeks a variance to allow a 14' high retaining wall.

3. The Applicant presented credible evidence that the topography of the Subject Property, with significant grade changes along the rear and interior side property lines, is a unique condition that precludes strict compliance with the Code's retaining wall standards, and that the maximum 14' height proposed for the retaining wall is the minimum that would support the grade of the site.

4. Consistent with the evidence and testimony presented, and the applicable legal standards governing dimensional variances, the Board concludes that approval of the request is appropriate.

Decision: The Applicant's request for a variance from Section 915.01.A.1.e to construct a retaining wall with a maximum height of 14' is hereby APPROVED.

s/Alice B. Mitinger
Alice B. Mitinger, Chair

s/Lashawn Burton-Faulk
LaShawn Burton-Faulk

s/ John J. Richardson
John J. Richardson

Note: Decision issued with electronic signatures, with the Board members' review and approval.