

March 23, 2021

Dear Board of Zoning and Planning Members,

Please accept my strong opposition to the proposed and requested variances for 471 N. Parkview Avenue. The role of your review is tremendously important to this process, to my family, and to our community—and I am grateful for your time and attention to this serious matter.

Although the applicant presents this project as a standard “fence installation,” based upon the height and location of the fence, it is anything but standard. Installation of a towering, chain link barrier will have too large of an immediate impact on my family, as well as generational impact of natural landscape changes in the protected district. I implore you to adhere to the governing codes that intentionally guide our community expectation around construction management and environmental preservation (Chapters 1264 Fences and Walls, and 1258 Riparian Setbacks).

While I appreciate the applicant’s need for personal security, the imposition of an industrial 8-foot chain-link fence on the property line will inflict an unacceptable, intimidating, institutional, and border-like-force that will be offensive to my family and our residential home (Appendix 1). Furthermore, the applicant has not met any convincing merits of the extremely limited parameters to warrant a variance (Chapter 1264.09 Vacancies).

The applicant is not without alternatives. A more agreeable solution would be to set the fence back from the property line by 10 feet, and planting Bexley Arboretum-approved native tree species—of at least 6’ in height—on the entire northern side of the fencing to soften the visual and physical presence. I offer 2399 South Commonwealth Park, the Drexel Avenue frontage, as a potential positive example of high fencing material set-back and softened by tree plantings (Appendix 2).

Separate from the personal impact to my family, the requested riparian variance presents a significant, unnecessary risk of lasting environmental degradation to an ecosystem Bexley has committed to protecting. The City’s status as an arboretum, the 2011 Bexley Land Use Alum Creek Study Recommendations, and the Bexley Codified Ordinance Chapter 1258 Alum Creek Preservation District emphasize and prioritize the importance of the environmental uniqueness and fragility of the riparian zones—and suggest that riparian variances should be very sparingly used. The purpose of the riparian corridor is tremendously important for our human community, our wildlife, and the stability of soil—not just today but into the future. Unlike variances for esthetic and design preferences, Chapter 1258 should be seen as much more rigid—to preserve our natural resources—which ultimately enhance our properties and community. Furthermore, the applicant has not met the minimum expected details required in a site plan (Chapter 1258.09 Applications and Site Plans).

The Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, FEMA, and others expect municipalities, such as Bexley, to be stewards and enforce code—like Chapter 1258—and not grant variances to homeowners to degrade the natural environment. Variances to these codes come at the expense of increased erosion, fences cutting off wildlife passage, flooding, devastating clearcutting, and unwarranted plant removal. All of that is intertwined, and, if approved, could be a direct result of this variance request. The issue at hand is not just limited to permeability of the fence type—but includes the damage done from the fence installation, permanent alteration of the project area, and any future alterations/building requests enabled by approval of this request.

471 N Parkview Avenue and the surrounding homes' western boundary to Alum Creek are quite unique, and, by being upstream of both Jeffrey Mansion Park, and the rest of Bexley, play an important part of the ecosystem. Approval of a variance related to the project area in the riparian zone, including the hillside slope, threatens the loss of habitat and unnecessary disruption and harm for the aforementioned ecological attributes.

The applicant has already shown a blatant disregard for the protections of the Alum Creek Preservation District. Without securing any permits or even completing a land survey, the applicant contractor used a Bobcat skid steer to clear much of the understory flora of the wooded lot within the riparian area, including a swath going up the protected ravine slope in the anticipated fence location. Not only did the unpermitted clearing take place within the riparian setback, but a survey performed afterwards proved that the contractor cleared a sizeable portion of our property. That type of cavalier behavior, on any project within Bexley—be it house paint color, ignored zoning regulations, and certainly not limited to irreparable damage to the natural landscape of someone else's property—should not be tolerated, let alone rewarded. (Appendix 3)

In advance of the meeting, I encourage and welcome you to visit to see first-hand the ugly remnants of the expansive clearing and encroachment, and also to better understand the topography and natural state of the riparian area; as well as to visualize the imposing scale that the 8' fence, as proposed, would have on our home and living experience.

Please affirm Bexley's strategic planning that prioritizes welcoming development practices, the codified ordinances, and environmental stewardship. Please unanimously reject the currently presented proposal.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dan and Samantha Sharpe  
Homeowners of 481 N Parkview Avenue  
614-619-2590 [sharpe.dan@gmail.com](mailto:sharpe.dan@gmail.com)

Appendix 1.  
Inappropriate proximity and height of proposed 8' fence at property line, to extend down ravine into riparian zone.



Appendix 2.  
2399 South Commonwealth Park – example of fence set-back, 6' plantings along fence line.



Appendix 3.

July 2020 unauthorized and unpermitted clearing, which is also in violation of Bexley Codified Ordinance Chapter 1258 Alum Creek Preservation District. This is in the rear of 471 N. Parkview (right), with egregious trespass and clearing of portion of 481 N. Parkview as noted in red (left).



Image taken 3/6/2021, facing eastward looking into the riparian zone, towards ravine slope.