

February 3, 2025

Romie Price, Plans Development Administrator

BOA Variances

Respectfully to the Planning Commission Brd:

I am the owner of the property located at 18 Overby Circle Little Rock, AR 72205. I am filing the documents to make it my homestead as well this week. It is my principle and only residence. I purchased the home on October 29, 2019, with a down payment of \$30,000. I specifically asked the realtor to show me homes with two kitchens and with a space that when my parents became older that they could live and feel independent while I was still only a shout away or an intercom away from running to their aide or buying what they need. Based on our religious beliefs, parents are to be cared for by their children but will be allowed to maintain independence. We hold that belief deeply in our family. I am the middle child in my family, and since I was young, I knew it would be my responsibility to care for them as they age. My father, Verbie Swanigan, will be 80 years old in March, and he is a retired police sergeant, a Vietnam War Gold Medal Hero who is 100% disabled, and has been a Pastor for over 25 years. My mother, Rhulene Artis is 78 years old, and she is a retired Milwaukee Public Schools Teacher and Math and Science Administrator, and she is currently a Sunday School Teacher, Deaconess, and volunteers as a Program Director for a local cultural Theater in Milwaukee. Our religious beliefs dictate that I provide for my parents with honor and respect, especially as they age, and that it is my religious obligation to provide them with nurturing care and a stable living environment. We teach that you are to protect and provide for them as they age, and it is your duty as the Bible guides for one to Honor thy Father and Mother.

My parents are my pride and my responsibility as the survivors of prostate and breast cancer respectively, the survivors of aneurysms (my mother had a brain aneurysm and my father had an aneurysm in his eye), the survivors of strokes, and my mother also survived a heart attack that left her with her heart operating at 30%. I spent around 10 months searching for a home that would fit their needs and my own, which included a yard where my parents could garden, and my nieces and nephews could play. I searched for a place where I could support and honor them without smothering them and invading their independence. Based on our religious beliefs, we seek to have the elders live with you while maintaining their independence and separate space and privacy. I am an attorney who primarily works from home, so I needed an office and a separate space to maintain confidentiality for my clients' documents and private conversations. Accordingly, I searched for a home with two separate living spaces under the same roof. I specifically requested a space with two kitchens so that my parents could cook to their specific needs or if they needed a nurse or assistant that they would have that space for themselves as well.

The home I purchased from what I was told was from the same family who owned it when it was built. The owners had passed away, and their daughter who was also a realtor sold the house to me. The space

that is at issue I was told by the neighbor they would rent it to nurses at the hospital and then their aunt lived there for a period. I have provided pictures of what the house looked like including two kitchens, one with a green stove and one with a white stove from when I purchased the home. After I purchased it I spent nearly \$90,000 dollars making upgrades to remove wallpaper from every room, update the appliances to Café appliances, flooring, repair broken bricks, yard improvements, repairing plumbing, painting, etc. Then it was hit by a tornado, and I invested over \$70,000 into repairing my home this time and the insurance has invested \$240,000. I was unaware until recently when the plumbing inspector came that the prior owner did not have a variance permitting the installation of the second kitchen. Based on my religious and personal career, I would not have purchased a home that did not have an attached apartment space for my parents. The lower level can only be entered through the back door, and it was like that when I purchased the home, and based on what I was told the space was built that way from the inception. The lower level was shown in the advertisement on the MLS with a kitchen table, an island, a stove, a refrigerator, a kitchen sink, and a microwave with a vent over the oven. There was a total of 6 cabinets downstairs and a pantry. There is also a full bathroom downstairs with a shower and tub and a bedroom with a double closet and built-in cabinets. I intended as I am watching my father become ill currently to make his life easier and make the area more handicap and wheelchair accessible. Because of his PTSD, it is important to create areas where he feels safe and comfortable, so he does not react or become anxious and agitated. Accordingly, I am humbly requesting to retain both kitchens with your permission and to continue to use the home as the prior owners used the home. Therefore, I am requesting to be able to maintain the home in the manner and for the same value it has gained from when I purchased the home. I would take a significant financial loss if the variance is not granted as I have purchased new GE Profile appliances, cabinets, sink, washer and dryer, and had it all placed where it is more handicap accessible for my parents long term use prior to even being made aware that the kitchen was not permitted; and it would significantly impacts the value of the home, our religious beliefs, and the use of the residence as anyone in the lower level due to the floor layout would not have access to a kitchen without leaving the downstairs walking around to the front, and climbing stairs. This is not feasible for the elderly. I also intend to live downstairs myself as I age and permit my niece to live upstairs. Accordingly, I humbly request that the variance request be granted. Thank you for your time and review!

Sincerely,

____/s/ *Verona Swanigan*_____

Verona Swanigan, Esq.
18 Overby Circle
Little Rock, AR 72205