

TO: Zoning Board

FROM: Olandha Pinky Miller

Subject variance request for... accessory structure construction?

DATE: December 10, 2024

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals, My name is Olandha Pinky Miller, and I am writing to formally request a variance from section. 27-4.2.3 of the zoning ordinance (chapter 27, article 4) which states the maximum allowance for ADU (accessory dwelling unit) is 900 square feet. My request pertains to the increased basement of 1268 square feet, for my property at 7853 Mohansic Park Lane, Lithonia, GA 30058. The purpose of this variance is to facilitate the construction of accessory structure. Namely the basement apartment. Which is crucial for the improvement and effective use of my property.

1. Physical condition of the site:

There is no significant physical condition of the property itself but utilizing existing heated floor space.

2. Minimum Variance Necessary:

I assure you that my request is solely for the minimum variance necessary to render my property usable. The apartment is constructed to a specific parameter and size to accommodate the residents that will be residing there. To make this project happen I only utilized the existing basement heated floor space; Not expanding. Ensuring that I and others can enjoy full use of my property without making advantages beyond those available to other property owners in the same zoning district.

3. Description of Apartment

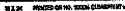
This Lithonia vacation rental makes a cozy home base for whatever brings you to Georgia! Nestled in a quiet suburban neighborhood, this cozy 2-bedroom, one-bath basement apartment boasts comfort like a full kitchen and three Smart TVs to help you feel at home. Remote-Work Friendly, Free Wi-Fi, and laundry. This charming apartment blends comfort and convenience to offer families, business travelers, or prospective students an ideal Georgia getaway. Bedroom #1: Queen bed, Smart TV, dining table with four chairs, desk and chair and couch/daybed - Bedroom #2: Full Bed, Smart TV, desk and chair. KITCHEN: Fully equipped, coffee maker, Ninja blender, cooking basics, dishware/flatware, toaster, air fryer, and a Keurig with coffee.

GENERAL: Central air conditioning & heating, linens/towels, complimentary toiletries, iron/ironing board, keyless entry, ceiling fans, hairdryer, trash bags/paper towels

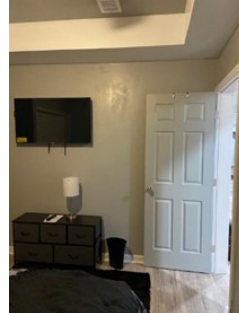
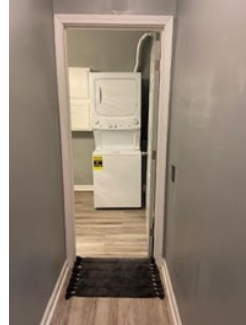
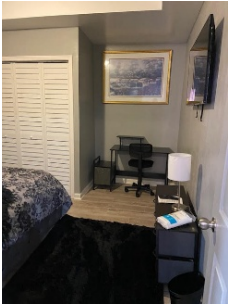
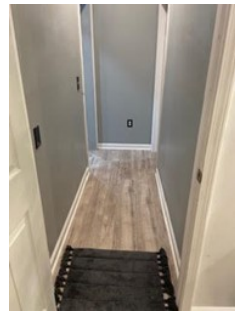
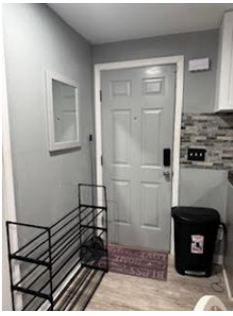
Ring doorbell camera, cell service, PARKING: Street parking

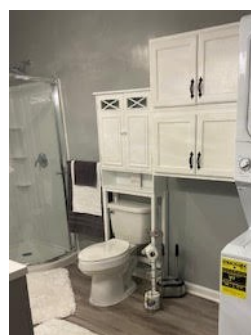
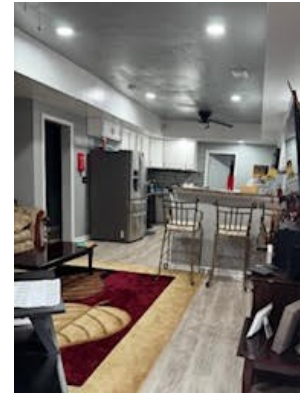
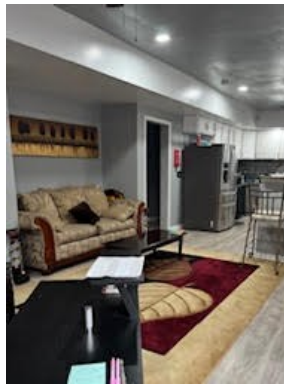
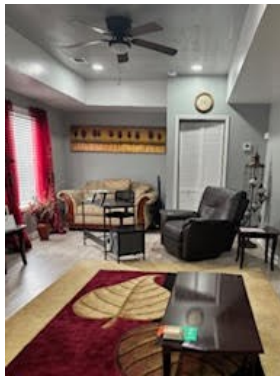
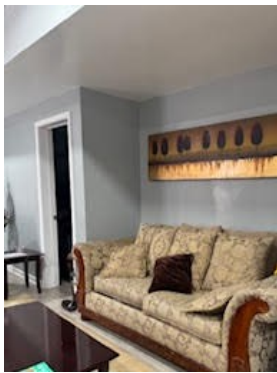
This cozy 2-bedroom, one bath, full kitchen vacation rental is nestled in a quiet suburban area. Enjoy the Remote-work friendly, free Wi-Fi, 3 SmartScreen TVs, laundry, Ninja blender, air-fryer, Keurig with coffee, hair dryer, iron/ironing board, linen, comforters, towels, dishware, flatware, toaster, dining tables, keyless entry, ceiling fans, complimentary toiletries, cooking basics, trash bags, paper towels, toilet paper, Ring doorbell, cell service, free parking, heat and air conditioning.

4. - Floor plans as part of variance application



5 - Photographs of basement





6. Public welfare

According to an article from the Habitat for Humanity website

https://www.athenshabitat.com/workforce-housing-whitepaper/ga_workforce_housing_crisis-r3/

The state of Georgia as of 2023, ranked in the second highest tier of states for housing underproduction, at 138,000 units below demand (Up for Growth 2023), an increase of more than 2,600% over a ten-year period (Simmons 2022). A study by Atlanta Magazine compiled immediately prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 outlined eight primary factors contributing to the housing crunch (Atlanta Magazine 2020):

- The failure of housing production to keep pace with population change;
- Labor shortages in the construction field;
- A trend toward urban migration, producing more demand for housing in the largest population zones, which raises market price for homes, while simultaneously increasing the supply of available workers which dampens wage growth;
- An upward shift in property taxes.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the first and most significant of these pressures, lack of available housing, began a steep rise with the Great Recession in the early 2000s, which saw fewer new homes built than any time since the 1960s. The inability to catch up, however, is due largely to restricted land availability coupled with outdated “exclusionary zoning laws” such as restrictions on multi-family housing and minimum acreage and home footprint sizes, originally put in place during times of ample housing/land supply to keep home prices artificially high and, in many cases, restrict the movement of lower-income earners (Maye 2022).

I am striving to assist Georgia citizens find affordable housing opportunities and assist in providing options to help decrease the housing shortage. This is a problem that can be alleviated by allowing variances to be approved that will not harm but help our community.

7. letters of support from neighbors:

I the undersigned neighbor of Olandha Pinky Miller (7853 Mohansic Park Lane, Lithonia, GA 30058) support her endeavor to legally utilize her basement apartment as a legitimate Dekalb County approved dwelling. I am aware of the increased number of people that may live in her apartment. I am not concerned about the additional traffic, noise, and off-street parking. Pinky Miller has been a good neighbor. She has been the beacon of light when it comes to offering community events such as family oriented annual block parties, water balloon fights, cook-outs, feeding the hungry opportunities, game nights, New Years Day community brunch's, fireworks, children's activities, kick ball games etc.

Name

Address

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

My husband and I purchased our home on December 21, 2001; I was eight months pregnant. We were the third family to move on the block. All the houses still needed to be built. As the months passed, more families moved onto our beloved Mohansic Park Lane. Five of the new families that moved on our block were also expecting new bundles of joy or just had a new baby. All six of our babies were born in 2001 or 2002. My dearly loved community was a blessing to all who lived there. Our families have grown up together, and the last of the six children will graduate from college this Spring.

Living here for almost 24 years has been an amazing life journey. We are a community of twenty-three homes, and seven original families are still here. We have had numerous birthday parties, cook-outs, block parties, football rivalries, kickball games, fireworks displays, family-oriented water balloon fights, dinners, card games, fish fries, line dance parties, etc., anything fun, we did it, and I am the catalyst for community events on our block.

Our community has also experienced families being torn apart by divorce. 2018, I experienced such a fate and was about to lose my home. As a Special Education teacher working in DeKalb County, my salary does not allow me to pay all of the bills that go along with being a homeowner; as we know, taxes are increasing just like everything else. I found myself working two additional part-time jobs to help make ends meet.

In 2019, I was in a car accident and took the money and invested it into building the basement apartment. I prayed that this renovation will allow me to keep the home that I adore and stay in the community in which I love and raised my children. Then COVID hit.

I contacted the DeKalb Counting Permit office and was told that they did not know when they would be able to allow/approve permits. It would most likely be months before anyone would be available to approve permits or come to my home for an inspection. Ms. Willis told me to move forward and make sure I used certified contractors (which I did) because they were six months behind, and they would charge me accordingly.

I have been striving to get my basement apartment approved for over a year. My Allstate insurance charges me for the additional living space, and I am awaiting your approval to prove the legitimacy of my home's real value.

I am an African American divorced woman with four daughters who look to their mother for guidance, support, love, and a role model. I am the only one of my mother's seven children to own her home. My legacy to my children is to leave my home to them so that they will always have a place to live and keep their childhood memories alive.

I pray that you will approve this much-needed variance so that I can help with the housing crisis and keep my home.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

Olandha Pinky Miller

