

## BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

October 29, 2025

Council Chambers  
680 Park Ave

**Members Present:** Nathan Kennedy - Chair, Ron Johnson Vice-Chair, Jenna Price, Scott Larson

**Staff Present:** David Peterson, Current Planner; Kerry Beutler, Assistant Director

**Call to Order:** Nathan Kennedy called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

### **Public Hearing**

**VAR25-004:** Variance to reduce the rear setback for an addition to a residence.

### **Kennedy opened the public hearing.**

**Applicant:** Randy Lords, the applicant and occupant of 565 Northrup, Idaho Falls, Idaho, is requesting approval to rebuild his existing garage, originally constructed in 1951. The current garage is small and awkwardly positioned due to the irregular shape of his lot and the way the house was built. He plans to keep the new garage in roughly the same location—no farther forward than the current structure—but slightly wider and longer to accommodate two vehicles (his truck and his daughter's).

The proposed new garage would be approximately 18 feet wide by 40 feet long, providing space for vehicles, a toolbox, and a workbench. He could set the new structure three feet from the property line instead of one foot, which City staff has recommended, which still leaves about four feet of walkway between the garage and the house. The project will be professionally planned and laid out by a contractor, although Mr. Lawrence plans to handle the building construction himself. Overall, his goal is to modernize and modestly expand the garage while maintaining compatibility with the property and neighborhood.

Randy Lawrence confirmed that his yard is fully fenced, with the fence currently running up to the front of his garage and then starting again at the back. As part of his garage rebuild, he plans to extend the fence, so it forms one continuous line from the front to the back of the property, maintaining the required front setback per code.

Peterson presented the staff report, a part of the record.

Johnson asked staff to explain the difference from one foot to three. Peterson explained that maintaining a three-foot setback from the property line is preferable to one foot for several reasons. At less than three feet, a structure requires additional fire separation for safety. The extra distance also allows for easier maintenance, prevents issues with snow or debris runoff crossing property lines, and helps ensure everything remains on the owner's property. With a three-foot separation, the garage would not require a full fire-rated wall, though any roof eaves extending within three feet would still need fire protection.

Roy Bowne, who lives at 575 North Avenue and is the applicants north-side neighbor, spoke in support of Randy's proposed garage project. He stated that he and Randy have discussed the plans extensively and that Randy has his full approval and support to proceed with building the new garage.

The applicant added that he plans to install double layers of fire-rated drywall on the north wall of the new garage, ensuring it meets required fire protection standards.

Larson asked the applicant if it would impact his building plans if the Board gave him the three-foot setback instead of the one foot. Randy Lawrence explained that if the city requires a three-foot setback instead of his requested one foot, he can still adjust the garage placement by shifting it slightly. This would maintain a four-foot walkway between the garage and the house, allowing for access and activities like mowing or barbecuing. He indicated this adjustment would still work for his plans. The board concluded that the request seems straightforward.

**Kennedy closed the public hearing.**

The board discussed Randy Lawrence's garage project, noting that:

- Staff recommends a three-foot setback for safety, maintenance, and stormwater/debris management, while Randy requested one foot.
- The board confirmed that with a one-foot setback, the garage would need a fire-rated wall, whereas a three-foot setback would reduce fire separation requirements.
- Setbacks are measured from the foundation; eaves may partially encroach if fire-resistant and code-compliant but cannot overhang neighboring property.
- The applicant confirmed he can adjust his plans to accommodate a three-foot setback while maintaining functional access (walkway, maintenance) between the garage and house.
- Overall, the project is supportable, with the variance allowing the board to establish any additional requirements to ensure compliance and protect neighboring properties.

**Johnson moved to approve the variance as presented with a three-foot setback. Price seconded the motion. Larson, yes; Kennedy, yes; Johnson, yes; Price, yes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Johnson moved to approve the Reasoned Statement of Relevant Criteria and Standards as presented. Larson seconded the motion. Larson, yes; Kennedy, yes; Johnson, yes; Price, yes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Adjourned at 6:02 p.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Ann Peterson, Recording Secretary**