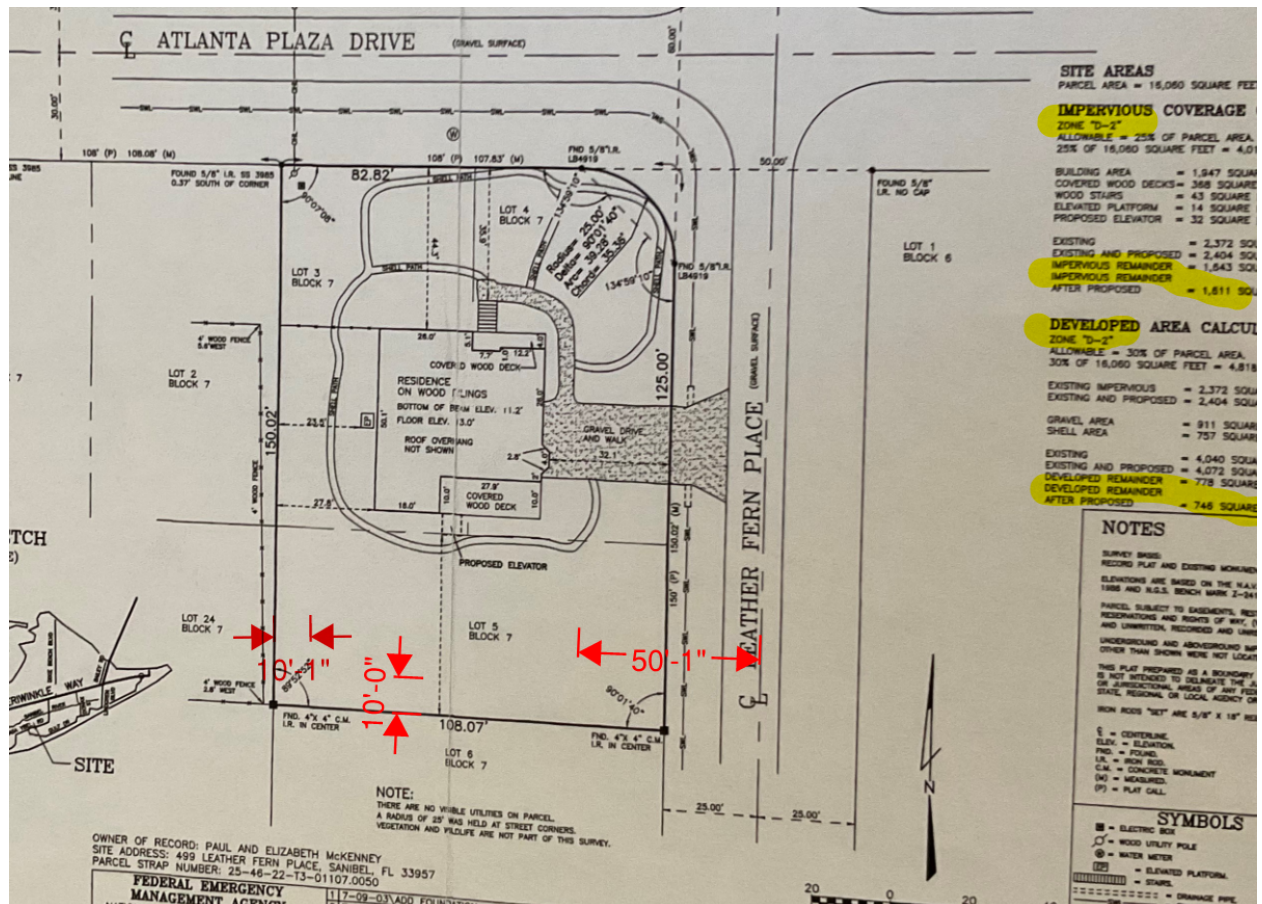


Variance Request Narrative - 499 Leather Fern Place

We respectfully submit this letter in support of our request for a variance related to improvements proposed at 499 Leather Fern Place, Sanibel, Florida. The requested variance is necessary due to unique conditions affecting the property, reliance on information provided by the City of Sanibel during the property purchase process, and special circumstances that make strict application of the code a unique and undue hardship.

Prior to purchasing the property, we contacted the City of Sanibel Planning Department to determine whether a pool could be constructed on the property. Having a pool was an important requirement for our family when evaluating potential homes. On March 19, 2025, after providing the property plat to the Planning Department, we received written information from Savannah White, Senior Planner with the City of Sanibel. The correspondence indicated that the setbacks drawn on the property were approximate and not to exact scale, and that the required setbacks in the Upland Wetland Zone were as follows:



- Front yard: 50 feet from the centerline of Leather Fern Place
- Side yard: 10 feet from the property line

- Rear yard: 10 feet from the property line

The information further indicated that, according to calculations on the survey, the property had 1,511 square feet of remaining impervious area and 745 square feet of remaining developed area available. Based on this guidance from the City, we determined that constructing a modest residential pool would be feasible within the allowable limits of the property.

Relying on the information provided by the Planning Department, we proceeded with the purchase of the home and closed on the property on May 2, 2025. Shortly thereafter, we began making improvements in preparation for installing the pool. Approximately one week after closing, we upgraded the electrical service to the home to accommodate the required amperage for a pool pump and heater. This electrical upgrade cost more than \$13,000.

We then retained Bahama Pools to design and construct the pool, an additional \$2,500 that has been spent thus far. Their engineering consultant, LIS Engineering, prepared plans for a modest residential pool and a small brick paver deck. These plans were specifically designed to comply with the setbacks and development allowances that had been provided by the City prior to our purchase of the property.

However, after the permit application was submitted, the application was denied following a more detailed review by the City. Through subsequent discussions with multiple city staff members and officials, and ultimately with Kim Ruiz, we were informed that the original calculations regarding the allowable development and impervious area on the property had not been calculated correctly.

The hardship created by this situation is not self-created. Rather, it results from the incorrect information provided to us by the City of Sanibel during the due diligence process prior to our purchase. We relied in good faith on the City's written guidance when deciding to purchase the property and when investing in improvements and professional design services necessary to pursue the pool installation.

Additionally, the requested variance has a unique personal significance for our household. In addition to the circumstances described above, the proposed pool would provide significant health and quality-of-life benefits for a member of our household. Caitlin Bouchard, who resides at the home, has Phelan-McDermid Syndrome, a rare and profound developmental disability. She is nonverbal and requires 24-hour care from her family. Aquatic therapy is an important component of her daily care, providing physical benefits such as improved mobility, balance, strength, and circulation, as well as psychological benefits including reduced anxiety and improved emotional well-being. The pool would allow her to safely receive these therapeutic benefits at home while remaining entirely consistent with the residential character of the neighborhood.

We fully recognize and respect the City of Sanibel's longstanding commitment to protecting wetlands and the unique ecological resources of the island. The requested variance is modest in scope and would not adversely affect the natural functions that the City's regulations are

designed to protect. The pool and deck have been designed to minimize impervious surface impacts and remain consistent with the residential use of the property.

The requested variance is modest and does not undermine the environmental purposes of the City's wetland protections. The proposed pool and deck are designed to minimize disturbance, limit impervious surface impacts, and remain consistent with the residential character of the neighborhood.

Granting this variance would allow a reasonable use of the property under circumstances where strict application of the code would create an unnecessary hardship that was not created by the property owners. The request is based on good-faith reliance on information provided by the City and on unique personal and property conditions that warrant consideration by the Board.

We respectfully request the Board of Adjustment's approval of the variance and appreciate your thoughtful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Debbie, Corey, Zach & Caitlin Bouchard