

To Whom It May Concern,

I am asking for a variance to the setback ordinance for the property at 4648 Hilltop St. Catawba, NC. I purchased this property on Jun 30, 2016. Since then, I have cleaned up this property. The previous owner rented the property to tenants that left it in horrible shape. The property was left with old appliances, furniture, and trash throughout yard. I made many trips to the county landfill. The inside of the mobile home was also left with all furnishings, clothes, and trash. At the time I felt it would be more of a fire hazard to have power on the property. My plans were to gut it out, including the existing wiring. I had spoken to Steven Winthrop at the Building Codes Permit Center, along with the previous owner and others around the lake and everyone had the same understanding that the structure would be grandfathered in as long as the mobile home was not moved. I proceeded with gutting the inside of the home. I hired a crew to remove a huge tree that had fallen prior to my purchase of the property that was hanging halfway into the cove, as well as removing several other trees from the property. Once removed, I repaired the dock and walkway that had damage from the fallen tree. I have maintained the property keeping the yard mowed, leaves removed, and weeds sprayed. My plans were to start the renovation last year, but the COVID-19 virus hit, and I decided to wait because I am a hairdresser, and I knew this would hit my profession financially hard. So, this February, I proceeded with my plans. I applied and received the proper permit for the renovation from the Catawba County Building Code Office. I also had Duke Power restore service to an outside pole. The renovation was planned to start on February 22, 2021. The week before this I received a call from Chris Timberlake at the Catawba County Planning Office. He informed me that a man had called and said he was going to challenge me for doing this renovation on the property that was now in noncompliance standing due to the power being off more than 180 days. I am very aware of who this man is, and I know the motive behind the phone call. Chris Timberlake advised me it would probably be best to not start the renovation. He also advised me I met the four criteria to apply for a variance. The topography of this property makes it very challenging due to the step grade. The area was prepped years ago to accommodate where the mobile home sits and to allow it to be set in by a crane. The well is located at the top of the property, but the septic is located on the flatter area behind the mobile home with the septic lines running behind the home. Attempting to meet the setbacks today would mean turning the mobile home or building on top of these septic line, which is not permitted. Due to the slope of the land and the lake, it is not feasible to relocate the septic system. I have spoken with the property owner to the right of me about purchasing enough land to make me compliant with the 15-foot setbacks I need. However, his septic lines are located in the property needed. Both adjoining property owners on both sides are very happy I purchased the property and the plans I have to renovate the home. They signed, as well as other property owners around the cove, agreeing with my plans to update and restore this home. If I am granted this variance, I will certainly continue to work hard with the Catawba County Building Permits Office to make sure the home is restored to all of today's standards within the county.

Sincerely,

Beth Cockerham