

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Board of Zoning Adjustment



Application No. 18983 of Carrie and Phong Trieu, as amended,¹ pursuant to 11 DCMR § 3104.12, for a special exception under § 223, not meeting the lot occupancy requirements under § 403, and the nonconforming structure requirements under § 2001.3, to construct a rear detached accessory structure in the R-1-B District at premises 5236 Sherrier Place, N.W. (Square 1415, Lot 85).

HEARING DATES: April 21, 2015, January 26, 2016, and April 19, 2016³
DECISION DATE: April 19, 2016

DECISION AND ORDER

Carrie and Phong Trieu, the property owners of the subject premises (the “Applicants”), filed an application with the Board of Zoning Adjustment (the “Board”) on February 19, 2015, for a special exception under § 223 of the Zoning Regulations to construct an addition to a detached garage, wherein the completed project will not conform to the requirements of §§ 403.2 and 2001.3 of the

¹ The Applicant’s original request was for variances from the off-street parking requirements under § 2101.1, and the use requirements under § 3103.6, and special exceptions from the building lot control requirements under §§ 2516.1 and 2516.4, to construct a second principal structure in the R-1-B District, based on the relief cited in a memorandum from the Zoning Administrator (“ZA”) under Exhibit 7. The Applicant amended the application and submitted a revised ZA memorandum, citing the appropriate relief for the proposed project as a special exception under § 223, not meeting the lot occupancy requirements under § 403, and the nonconforming structure requirements under § 2001.3, to construct an addition to a detached garage. (Exhibit 52.) The caption has been revised accordingly.

² This and all other references in this Order to provisions contained in Title 11 DCMR, except those references made in the final all-capitalized paragraphs, are to provisions that were in effect on the date this Application was heard and decided by the Board of Zoning Adjustment (“the 1958 Regulations”), but which were repealed as of September 6, 2016 and replaced by new text (“the 2016 Regulations”). The repeal of the 1958 Regulations has no effect on the validity of the Board’s decision or the validity of this order. Pursuant to Subtitle A § 104 of the 2016 Regulations, the construction authorized by this Order is vested as to the area requirements contained in 1958 Regulations as of September 5, 2016.

³ The matter was originally scheduled for the Public Hearing of April 21, 2015, and was postponed from June 9, July 21, September 22, October 27, and December 8. The case was first heard on January 26, 2016 and continued to April 5, 2016. The continued hearing was postponed to April 19, 2016.

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Zoning Regulations. For the reasons explained below, the Board voted to approve the revised application.

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

Referral from the Zoning Administrator. The amended application was accompanied by a revised memorandum, dated March 23, 2016, from the Zoning Administrator, certifying the required relief. (Final Revised, Exhibit 52; Revised, Exhibit 34; Original, Exhibit 7.)

Notice of Public Hearing. Pursuant to 11 DCMR § 3113.13, notice of the hearing was sent to the Applicants, all owners of property within 200 feet of the subject site, the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (“ANC”) 3D, and the District of Columbia Office of Planning (“OP”). The Applicant posted placards at the property regarding the public hearing and submitted an affidavit to the Board to this effect. (Exhibit 36.)

ANC Report. In its report dated January 18, 2016, ANC 3D indicated that, at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting on January 6, 2016, with a quorum present, the ANC voted 7-0-0 to oppose the application, as proposed. The ANC also voted 7-0-0 to support the special exception, “provided the footprint of the existing accessory garage structure does not change or increase, and height does not exceed 15 ft.,” provided that the lot occupancy “does not exceed the current lot occupancy or 41 percent;” and, “provided one off-street parking space is provided in accordance with the requirements of § 2116.4(b).” (Exhibit 39.) ANC 3D submitted a second report dated April 11, 2016. The report indicated that, at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting on April 6, 2016, with a quorum present, the ANC voted 6-0-1 to “support[] the Special Exception application for a new structure at 5236 Sherrier Place, NW with length of 23 ft. and width of 19 ft. for an overall footprint of 437 sq. ft.” The ANC also directed that “[a]n eight (8) ft. setback will be provided between the exterior wall of the structure and the lot line shared with 5238 Sherrier Place, NW.” (Exhibit 56.) Commissioner Alma Gates represented the ANC at both public hearings and submitted her testimony from the January 26, 2016 hearing for the record under Exhibit 44.

Requests for Party Status. ANC 3D was automatically a party to this proceeding. The Board received and granted a request for party status in opposition from the adjacent property owner at 5238 Sherrier Place, N.W., Zdenek Becka. (Exhibit 37.) In granting the request, the Board also waived the timely filing requirement for party status requests. (Exhibit 38.)

Persons in Support/Opposition. At the April 19, 2016 public hearing, three individuals testified in support of the project: Thomas Dodd (resident of 2345 King Place N.W.), Daniel Lozier (5230 Sherrier Place N.W.), and Mary Evans (5231 Sherrier Place N.W.). The Board also received letters in support of the application from 54 residents within ANC 3D. (Exhibit 55.) The Board also received a letter in opposition from the neighboring property owner who resides at 5240 Sherrier Place, N.W. (Exhibit 54.)

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OP Report. OP submitted two reports to the record. In its first report, dated January 19, 2015, OP noted that it initially did not support the original application, but that it worked with the Applicants and DCRA to revise the request and, accordingly, does not oppose the application. (Exhibit 40.) In its supplemental report, dated April 5, 2016, OP recommended approval of the revised plans and provided information regarding the accessory dwelling regulations of the Zoning Regulations of 2016, based on the Board's request at the public hearing of January 26, 2016. (Exhibit 53.)

DDOT Report. The District Department of Transportation ("DDOT") submitted a report stating that it had no objection to the application. (Exhibit 25.)

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Site and Surrounding Area

1. The Subject Property is located at 5236 Sherrier Place, N.W. in the R-1-B District.
2. The neighborhood consists mostly of one-family detached structures, with commercial uses two blocks northwest along MacArthur Boulevard.
3. The rear of the property abuts a small portion of District-owned land noted as the Glen Echo Trolley Path and a large swath of federally-owned land, which contains the Palisades Playground. The trolley path is at a higher grade than the rear of the property. (Exhibit 10.)
4. The Subject Property is improved with a one-family detached dwelling with an accessory structure in the rear yard. The lot occupancy of the principal and accessory structures is 41%.
5. The footprint of the existing accessory structure is 15 feet 10 inches by 17 feet 1 inch.

The Proposed Project

6. The Applicants' original request was to construct a second principal structure on the lot, not complying with the lot occupancy, rear yard, side yard, and parking requirements. (Exhibit 7.)
7. Prior to the public hearing on January 26, 2016, the Applicants revised the application, including the submission of revised plans, to instead request relief to enlarge the existing accessory structure in the rear yard. (Exhibits 33 and 34.) The Applicants clarified that the enlarged accessory structure would be used as additional storage space for the principal dwelling, rather than as an accessory dwelling unit. (Hearing Transcript ("Tr.") of January 26, 2016, pg. 101-102.)

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8. The first revised proposal would expand the accessory structure from 15 feet 10 inches by 17 feet 1 inch to 23 feet by 23 feet. (Exhibit 33.)
9. The first revised design would have a height of 15 feet. (Exhibit 33.) The Applicants proposed to raise the pitch of the roof to allow for runoff and water collection and to store large outdoor equipment, such as canoes. (Tr. of January 26, 2016, pg. 114-117.)
10. Based on concerns raised by the party in opposition and ANC 3D, the Board recommended that the Applicant attempt to further revise its design to lessen the impact on the adjacent property. (Tr. of January 26, 2016, pg. 119 and 141-145.)
11. In advance of the continued public hearing on April 19, 2016, the Applicants revised their proposed plans to decrease the footprint of the accessory structure to 21 feet by 23 feet. (Exhibits 48-50.)
12. The revised plans for the accessory structure provide a side yard setback of six feet from the lot line of 5238 Sherrier Place, N.W. The structure's southwest side would be constructed on the property line separating 5236 Sherrier Place, N.W. and 5234 Sherrier Place, N.W. (Exhibit 48.)
13. The revised plans also lowered the height of the proposed accessory structure to 13 feet 9 inches. (Exhibit 48.)
14. The Applicants provided drawings of the proposed interior layout of the accessory structure to show the storage plan for items such as canoes, bicycles, a three foot by six foot fish tank, and a tractor. (Exhibit 49.)
15. The interior layout plans for the proposed accessory structure show a bathroom with a sink and toilet, but no shower or bath. (Exhibit 49.)
16. The revised plans contain three possible roof designs to demonstrate different options as to where the pitch of the roof should be located. (Exhibit 48.) The Applicants noted that they intend to continue to work with adjacent neighbors to decide on a final roof design. (Tr. of April 19, 2016 at pg. 202.)
17. The Applicants propose to maintain one off-street parking space on the site. (Tr. of January 26, 2016 at pg. 103.)

Zoning Relief

18. The Applicants submitted a revised memorandum from the Zoning Administrator ("ZA") stating the relief necessary for the project, based on the revised plans. (Exhibit 52.)

19. In the memorandum, the ZA characterizes the project as an “accessory structure addition,” though OP has clarified that the existing accessory structure will be razed and a new one constructed, according to the plans approved by the Board. (Tr. of April 19, 2016 at pg. 219.)
20. Section 403 of the Zoning Regulations requires that each structure in an R-1-B zone have maximum lot occupancy of 40%. The proposed addition will increase the existing lot occupancy from 41% to 48%. Therefore, the proposal requires relief from the requirements of § 403.
21. Subsection 2001.3 of the Zoning Regulations prohibits additions that extend or increase existing nonconformities. Based on the proposal to increase the existing nonconforming lot occupancy of 41%, the proposal requires relief from the requirements of § 2001.3.

The Impact of the Addition

22. The photographs filed with the application show the existing accessory structure and its surroundings. (Exhibit 10.)
23. The final revised plans demonstrate the footprint and height of the new proposed accessory structure and its location at the rear of the lot. (Exhibit 48.)
24. The owner of the adjacent property to the southeast, 5234 Sherrier Place, N.W., submitted a letter in support of the project. (Exhibit 35.) The owner of 5234 Sherrier Place, N.W. would not be significantly impacted by the proposal because of the modest size of the expansion and the location of the accessory structure at the rear of the property.
25. The owner of the adjacent property to the northwest, 5238 Sherrier Place, N.W., opposes the project and raises concerns about the accessory structure’s impact on light, air, and privacy.
26. Based on the final revised architectural drawings, the accessory structure will be set back from the shared property line with 5238 Sherrier Place, N.W. by six feet. The revised drawings also reflect the reduction in the proposed height and footprint of the accessory structure. The Applicants’ revisions to the originally proposed structure appropriately address any potentially significant impact on light or air to the adjacent property.
27. As a condition of this Order, the Applicants are given minor flexibility with regard to final roof design, in order for the Applicants to continue working with the adjacent neighbor to reduce any potential light and air impacts based on the placement of the roof pitch.

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28. The Glen Echo Trolley Path is located to the rear of the lot at a higher grade than the Subject Property, therefore the impact of the enlarged accessory structure is negligible at the rear of the property.
29. The accessory structure will be used as additional storage for the one-family dwelling, rather than as a separate dwelling unit. The enlargement of the storage space may lead to increased usage of the accessory structure by members of the household, but the use of the structure for storage will not have a significant impact on the privacy of adjacent neighbors.
30. The Applicant offered to install privacy fences along the lot line shared with 5238 Sherrier Place N.W. (Tr. of April 19, 2016 at pg. 202.) The adjacent property owner declined that offer, noting that it would affect the views in the rear of the lot. (Tr. of April 19, 2016 at pg. 210-211.)
31. The addition will be visible from Sherrier Place through the side yards between the Subject Property and adjacent residences of 5234 Sherrier Place, N.W. and 5238 Sherrier Place N.W.
32. The proposed enlargement of the accessory structure would not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the subject street frontage, based on the design and materials shown on the plans.
33. The Commissioner representing ANC 3D and the party in opposition raised concerns regarding the potential use of the structure as an accessory dwelling unit. (Tr. of January 26, 2016 at pg. 210-211; Tr. of April 19, 2016 at pg. 131-132.)
34. The ANC indicated that it would support the project, if the Applicants were to further revise the footprint of the structure to further reduce the width to 19 feet, such that an eight-foot setback would be provided between the structure and the lot line shared with the party in opposition. (Exhibit 56.)
35. The revision of the plans to decrease the width of the structure to 19 feet would require a reduction of 46 square feet of floor area. Based on the interior layout plans provided by the Applicants, that would constrain the Applicants' use of the structure as accessory storage. Further, the additional reduction of two feet from the width of the structure would not significantly change the degree of impact the structure may have on the adjacent property.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Applicant requests special exception relief under § 223 of the Zoning Regulations to allow construction of an addition to a detached garage not meeting the zoning requirements for lot occupancy under § 403.2 or enlargement of a nonconforming structure under § 2001.3 in the R-1-B

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District at 5236 Sherrier Place, N.W. (Square 1415, Lot 85). The Board is authorized under § 8 of the Zoning Act, D.C. Official Code § 6-641.07(g)(2) (2008) to grant special exceptions, as provided in the Zoning Regulations, where, in the judgment of the Board, the special exception will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map, subject to specific conditions. (See 11 DCMR § 3104.1.)

In addition to meeting the general special exception standard, the Applicants must satisfy the “specific conditions” of § 223 to be granted special exception relief. Pursuant to § 223, an addition to a one-family dwelling may be permitted as a special exception, despite not meeting certain zoning requirements, subject to the enumerated conditions. These conditions include that the addition must not have a substantially adverse effect on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property. Specifically, the light and air available to neighboring properties must not be unduly affected (§ 223.2(a)), the privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties must not be unduly compromised (§ 223.2(b)), and the addition, together with the original building, must not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the subject street frontage (§ 223.2(c)).

Based on the findings of fact, the Board concludes that the request for special exception relief, as represented by the final revised plan in Exhibit 48, satisfies the requirements of § 223. The Board has determined that the proposed accessory structure would not have a significant impact on the light and air of adjacent properties. The property at 5234 Sherrier Place, N.W. to the southeast would not be unduly impacted by the proposed enlargement of the accessory structure because of the modest size of the expansion and the location of the accessory structure at the rear of the property. Further, the owner of 5234 Sherrier Place, N.W. submitted a letter in support of the project. (Exhibit 35.) The owner of 5238 Sherrier Place, N.W. to the northwest raised concerns about the impact of the enlargement of the accessory structure on his property. The side of the proposed structure will be set back by six feet from the shared property line. The Board finds that the Applicants’ reduction in the proposed height and footprint of the accessory structure appropriately addresses any potential significant impact on light or air to the adjacent property. The Board has further granted minor flexibility with regard to the location of the roof pitch, in order for the Applicants to continue working with the adjacent neighbor to reduce any potential light and air impacts. To the rear of the property, the impact of the proposed project is negligible due to the adjacency of the public trail and trolley path. Based on the revised plans, the Board concurs with the Office of Planning’s finding that light and air of adjacent properties would not be unduly impacted. (Exhibit 40.)

The Board also finds that the privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties will not be significantly affected by the enlargement of the accessory structure. The Board notes that the proposal to enlarge the accessory structure may lead to increased usage of the structure; however, the accessory structure will be used for storage as an extension of the one-family dwelling, rather than as a separate dwelling unit. The Board finds that the use of the structure as accessory storage will not have a significant impact on the privacy of adjacent neighbors. The Board notes that the

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Applicants offered to install privacy fences along the lot line shared with 5238 Sherrier Place N.W., but the party in opposition declined that offer. OP concurred in finding that the application met the criteria regarding privacy and enjoyment of use. (Exhibit 40.)

As indicated in OP's report, the addition will be visible from Sherrier Place through the side yards between the Applicants' home and adjacent residences of 5234 Sherrier Place, N.W. and 5238 Sherrier Place N.W. (Exhibit 40.) The Board concurs with OP's analysis that because of the design and materials shown on the plans, the presence of the proposed enlargement of the accessory structure would not have an adverse impact on the character of the street.

Pursuant to § 223.3, the lot occupancy of the dwelling or flat, together with the addition, shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) in the R-1 District. With the proposed addition, the lot occupancy will be 48%; therefore, this condition will be met.

For these same reasons, the Board also finds that the proposed addition will not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties as required by § 3104.1. Further, the Board finds that the addition will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps. Though the party in opposition and Commissioner representing the ANC raise concerns about the potential future use of the structure as an accessory dwelling unit, the Applicant has clarified that the enlargement of the accessory structure will be used as additional storage for the one-family dwelling; therefore, the potential impacts of an accessory dwelling unit on the neighboring properties and the zone plan is not before the Board at this time. The Board concludes that the Applicant meets the requirements of § 3104.1.

Great Weight

The Board is required to give "great weight" to the recommendation of the Office of Planning. (D.C. Official Code § 6-623.04 (2012 Repl.)). In this case, for the reasons discussed, the Board concurs with OP's recommendation to approve the application, as reflected in its supplemental report under Exhibit 53.

The Board is also required to give "great weight" to the issues and concerns raised by the affected ANC in its written report. (Section 13(d) of the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions Act of 1975, effective March 26, 1976 (D.C. Law 1-21; D.C. Official Code § 1-309.10(d) (2012 Repl.)).) ANC 3D supplanted its initial report with a report dated April 11, 2016. The report indicated that, at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting on April 6, 2016, with a quorum present, the ANC voted 6-0-1 to "support[] the Special Exception application for a new structure at 5236 Sherrier Place, N.W. with length of 23 ft. and width of 19 ft. for an overall footprint of 437 sq. ft." The ANC also recommended that "[a]n eight (8) ft. setback will be provided between the exterior wall of the structure and the lot line shared with 5238 Sherrier Place, NW." (Exhibit 56.) The proposed dimensions for the accessory structure approved by the Board are 21 feet by 23 feet, with a side setback of six feet. (Exhibit 48 and 50.) Although the Applicants' proposed plans do not meet the specifications recommended in the ANC's report, the Board finds that the Applicants' reduction

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of the footprint and height of the structure sufficiently address the ANC's underlying concern regarding potential impacts on air, light, and privacy. The Board finds that a further reduction to the width of the structure by two feet would result in a reduction of 46 square feet of floor area, which would cause hardship to the Applicants in their proposed use of the accessory structure, as shown in the interior layout drawings. (Exhibit 49.) Accordingly, the Board acknowledges the issues raised by the ANC with regard to potential light, air, and privacy impacts of the structure, but was not persuaded by the ANC's recommendation that the Applicants further revise its plans to reduce the width of the structure by another two feet.

For the reasons stated above, the Board concludes that the Applicants have satisfied the burden of proof with respect to the application for a special exception under § 223 to allow the construction of a rear detached accessory structure to replace an existing rear shed.

It is therefore **ORDERED** that this application is hereby **GRANTED AND, PURSUANT TO SUBTITLE Y § 604.10, SUBJECT TO THE APPROVED ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS AT EXHIBIT 48, AND SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITION:**

1. The Applicant shall have minor flexibility regarding the final design of the peak of the roof.

VOTE: **4-0-1** (Marnique Y. Heath, Frederick L. Hill, Jeffrey L. Hinkle, and Robert E. Miller⁴ to APPROVE; Anita Butani D'Souza not participating.)

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

A majority of the Board members approved the issuance of this order.

ATTESTED BY:



SARA A. BARDIN
Director, Office of Zoning

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: June 27, 2017

PURSUANT TO 11 DCMR SUBTITLE Y § 604.11, NO ORDER OF THE BOARD SHALL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL TEN (10) DAYS AFTER IT BECOMES FINAL PURSUANT TO SUBTITLE Y § 604.7.

⁴ Commissioner Miller read the record of the Board's prior hearings on this application to participate in the hearing and decision on April 19, 2016.

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PURSUANT TO 11 DCMR SUBTITLE Y § 702.1, THIS ORDER SHALL NOT BE VALID FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS AFTER IT BECOMES EFFECTIVE UNLESS, WITHIN SUCH TWO-YEAR PERIOD, THE APPLICANT FILES PLANS FOR THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SECURING A BUILDING PERMIT, OR THE APPLICANT FILES A REQUEST FOR A TIME EXTENSION PURSUANT TO SUBTITLE Y § 705 PRIOR TO THE EXPIRATION OF THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD AND THE REQUEST IS GRANTED. PURSUANT TO SUBTITLE Y § 703.14, NO OTHER ACTION, INCLUDING THE FILING OR GRANTING OF AN APPLICATION FOR A MODIFICATION PURSUANT TO SUBTITLE Y §§ 703 OR 704, SHALL TOLL OR EXTEND THE TIME PERIOD.

PURSUANT TO 11 DCMR SUBTITLE Y § 604, APPROVAL OF AN APPLICATION SHALL INCLUDE APPROVAL OF THE PLANS SUBMITTED WITH THE APPLICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BUILDING OR STRUCTURE (OR ADDITION THERETO) OR THE RENOVATION OR ALTERATION OF AN EXISTING BUILDING OR STRUCTURE. AN APPLICANT SHALL CARRY OUT THE CONSTRUCTION, RENOVATION, OR ALTERATION ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PLANS APPROVED BY THE BOARD AS THE SAME MAY BE AMENDED AND/OR MODIFIED FROM TIME TO TIME BY THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT.

PURSUANT TO 11 DCMR SUBTITLE A § 303, THE PERSON WHO OWNS, CONTROLS, OCCUPIES, MAINTAINS, OR USES THE SUBJECT PROPERTY, OR ANY PART THERETO, SHALL COMPLY WITH THE CONDITION IN THIS ORDER, AS THE SAME MAY BE AMENDED AND/OR MODIFIED FROM TIME TO TIME BY THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT. FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THE CONDITION IN THIS ORDER, IN WHOLE OR IN PART SHALL BE GROUNDS FOR THE REVOCATION OF ANY BUILDING PERMIT OR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY ISSUED PURSUANT TO THIS ORDER.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE D.C. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT OF 1977, AS AMENDED, D.C. OFFICIAL CODE § 2-1401.01 ET SEQ. (ACT), THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED: RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, AGE, MARITAL STATUS, PERSONAL APPEARANCE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION, FAMILIAL STATUS, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, MATRICULATION, POLITICAL AFFILIATION, GENETIC INFORMATION, DISABILITY, SOURCE OF INCOME, OR PLACE OF RESIDENCE OR BUSINESS. SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A FORM OF SEX DISCRIMINATION WHICH IS PROHIBITED BY THE ACT. IN ADDITION, HARASSMENT BASED ON ANY OF THE ABOVE PROTECTED CATEGORIES IS PROHIBITED BY THE ACT. DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF THE ACT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. VIOLATORS WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

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