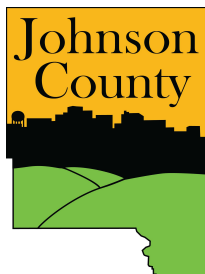


PLANNING APPLICATION COVER SHEET**PROJECT TYPE: Rezoning****NO. VAR26-000007****APPLICATION DATE: 08/27/2026****PROPERTY OWNER: JEAN M KUEHL****APPLICANT: Jean Kuehl****WORK DESCRIPTION: renovate existing shed and add a 10 X 9 shed enclosure to the back of it****SITE ADDRESS: 3602 Sun Valley DR NE****PARCEL NUMBER: 0705227005****PROPOSED USE OF STRUCTURE: storage****APPLICATION INFORMATION**

Yard	Required Setback	Requested Setback
Front	30	about 25- 27 feet

**Planning, Development and Sustainability****913 S. Dubuque St. Iowa City, IA 52240****planning@johnsoncountyiowa.gov. 319-356-6083****<https://www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov/pds>**

Variance Request

Property Address: 3602 Sun Valley Drive NE, North Liberty, Iowa

To the Johnson County Board of Adjustment:

I respectfully request a variance from the applicable front yard setback requirements to allow the existing shed renovation and an enclosed storage addition which is adjacent to my existing shed at 3602 Sun Valley Drive NE, North Liberty, Iowa. The existing shed has been there since we bought the property in 1990 and is approximately 28 feet from the road.

PROPERTY BACKGROUND

My husband and I purchased this property in 1990. Since that time, we have completed permitted improvements to the home, including projects in 2004 and 2020. The property is located within the Country Estates subdivision and contains several unique physical characteristics that significantly limit where accessory structures may be placed.

In 2025, I removed a deteriorated 10x12 shed in the rear yard. The structure had become unsafe due to age and rot, and my insurance carrier would no longer insure it. Because the shed was located at the bottom of a very steep slope, access had become increasingly difficult and unsafe. At 73+ years of age, continuing to carry equipment and storage items up and down the hill was no longer practical. (My husband is now deceased.)

PRACTICAL DIFFICULTY CREATED BY THE PROPERTY

The practical difficulty arises from the unique physical characteristics of the property. **See picture # 1.**

1. Unusual Topography

The home, garage, and existing shed are partially built into a steep hillside. The back of the garage and the back and side of the existing shed are also built into the hillside. The garage and shed were built in an L shape to the house. The driveway is diagonal to the house/parage; it's a hairpin turn into our driveway from the road. The rear yard contains significant slopes that make construction and access difficult. There was only one space – adjacent to the back of our existing shed in the front yard where I potentially could gain additional storage space. **See picture #2.**

2. Lack of Buildable Area in Side Yards

West Side Yard: A new shed would be unable to meet both front and side setback requirements and would eliminate needed access to the rear yard. **See picture # 3.**

East Side Yard: Retaining walls, drainage improvements, hillside conditions, and limited width prevent construction of a code-compliant shed. **See picture # 4.**

3. Existing Development Pattern

The existing 10' x 13' shed has been in the same location since before I purchased the property in 1990 and has never created visibility, traffic, drainage, safety, or neighborhood compatibility issues. **See picture # 5 and # 6.**

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT

I propose to:

- 1) Add a modest, enclosed storage area approximately 10 feet by 9 feet for lawn and garden equipment. This structure would be ground level located above the shed. See picture #5.
 - The furthest corner of the concrete pad is **approximately 35 feet** from the roadway **where a 30-foot front setback is required.**
 - The other corner is attached to the existing shed and is **approximately 28 feet from the road.** As previously stated, the existing shed has been there since we bought the property in 1990 and is the same distance from the road.
 - A roof will be put over both existing shed and the additional 10' x 9' storage. It will be above and parallel to the roofline of the garage.
- 2) expand the existing shed from present 10' X 13' to 10' X 19'. The shed would expand 6 foot out front into the driveway. The additional 6' will be block concrete wall; this section replaces a section of an existing retaining wall. The left wall extends from corner of the garage and is a concrete block wall with footings underneath. There are footings across the front so the front door would close properly/tightly. **See picture # 7.**
 - The front corner of the existing shed is **about 28 feet 27' 9"** from the roadway (front yard setback).
 - The back corner of the existing shed is **approximately 28 feet** from the roadway (front yard setback).
 - The side yard set back is over the required 8-foot setback – over 50 feet on one side and 17 feet on the other side.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBORING PROPERTIES

I have discussed this project with surrounding neighbors and the President of the Country Estates Road Association. No objections have been raised and support has been expressed. See exhibits G-1 through G-4.

BASIS FOR GRANTING THE VARIANCE

- The practical difficulty is created by the property's unique topography and limited buildable area.
- The hardship is not self-created.
- Strict application of the setback requirements eliminates reasonable locations for additional needed storage.
- The requested variance is the minimum necessary.
- The addition will not negatively affect neighboring properties, public safety, traffic, drainage, or neighborhood character.

CONCLUSION

Because of the property's unusual hillside terrain, the location of the existing structures, and the lack of alternative compliant building locations, I respectfully request approval of this variance.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Kuehl

Attachments:

- **Exhibit G-1:** Neighbor Support Letter (Across Street)
- **Exhibit G-2:** Neighbor Support Letter (Adjacent Property east side - neighbor is on vacation)
- **Exhibit G-3:** Neighbor Support Letter (Dead-End Neighbor #1)
- **Exhibit G-4:** Neighbor Support Letter (Dead-End Neighbor #2)
- **Exhibit H:** President, Country Estates Road Association Support Letter



PICTURE # 1: This pictures how the house is located on the lot. (middle house). The back side of the garage is built into the side of the hill. You can see the attached shed; it was also built into the back and side of the hill. I am not sure when either the shed or garage were built. They were both there when we bought the property in 1990.

The picture provides a visual of how far the existing shed is from the road. (approximately 28 feet).

In the back yard, you can see the shed I took down in the bottom right of the back yard.

It shows the neighbor above (to the right) and the neighbor below (left). There is one more house past the neighbor below, then the road spur dead ends. There is also a neighbor across the road. I have talked to all of them about this project and they voice no objections. I have also discussed it with the President of the Country Estates Road Association who also supports the project and volunteered to attend variance hearing, if possible (see attached support letters).



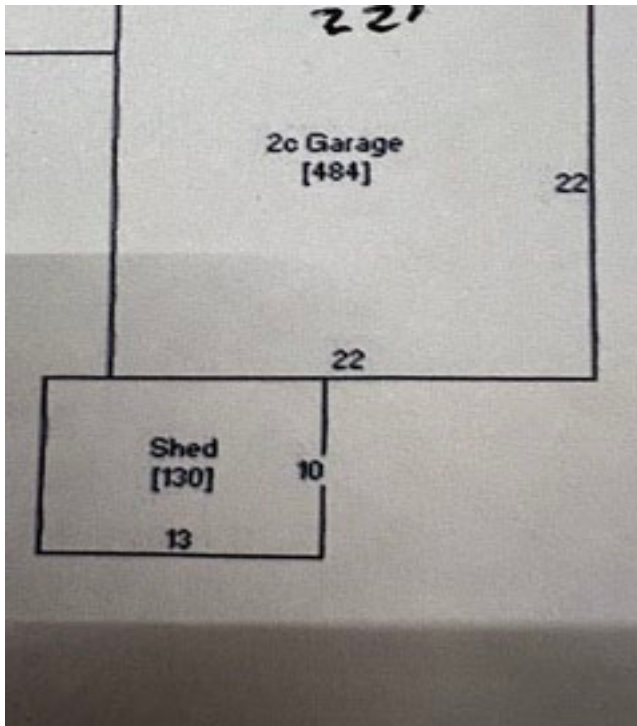
PICTURE # 2: Back yard: The picture gives some perspective on how steep this yard is. The rotted shed I took down was in the lower left corner. Access to my back yard is on the right side of the house in this picture. When we tried to hire lawn service, they will not use their riding equipment because of the steepness of the hill making it unsafe. I took down both retaining walls pictured as they were falling from pressure. The trees are gone now.



PICTURE # 3: West side yard – view from road looking to back yard. To satisfy front yard setback to locate a shed, I wouldn't meet side yard setback. Further, it would also eliminate access to my back yard from any services. My neighbor's garage (see dish on top) is on the side yard lot line – grandfathered.

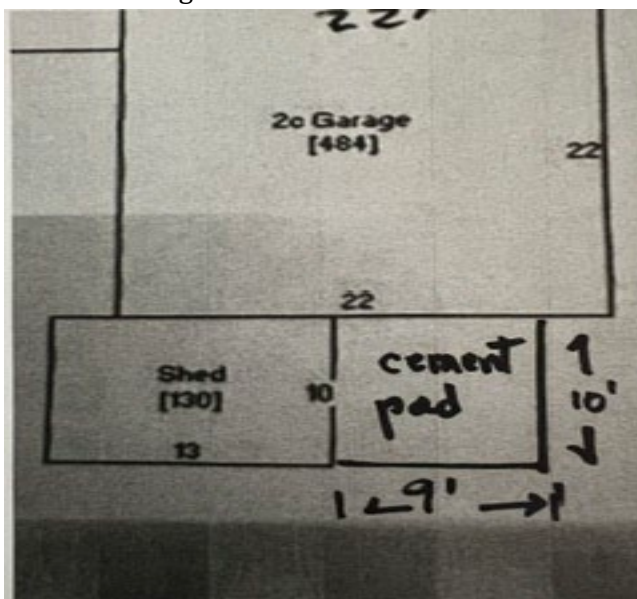


PICTURE # 4: East side yard – view from corner of the garage to back yard. The wood log on the right is the lot line extending down to the flag seen. This is 8' 3" from side of garage. (I recently purchased this land from the neighbor to satisfy setback requirements and clear my title.) As can be seen, no way to locate a shed. (This is a mess as I'm having work done to abate water runoff from the house above mine. Back in 2004, we put two retaining walls and drainage tiles in alongside our garage to abate water runoff from the house above us. Drain tiles are filled with dirt so redoing it to make a proper slope and trough.)



PICTURE # 5: This was the part of the sketch that was submitted with the previous building permits (2004, 2020 after the Derecho). The shed existed when we bought the property in 1990. Next is a diagram showing the proposed cement pad. The cement pad is 10' wide x 9' long. It is on top of the hill to the right of the back of the existing shed.

- It meets side lot requirements 11'6" from back corner of pad to side yard and 8'3" from front corner.
- It is ground level (whereas the existing shed is built into the hill).
- Door on the right side to access it. It will be enclosed to make it look nicer.





PICTURE # 6: Picture of existing shed: This picture is taken from the front of the house at the end of the driveway. You can see the attached existing shed to the right is level to the driveway. It extended out front several feet beyond the two-stall garage. The roof for the existing shed was underneath, parallel to the garage roof. You can see the roof of the shed is out front of the garage roof.



PICTURE # 7: This is a ChatGPT picture of what I am proposing. By extending the existing 10' X 13' shed (on the right) to 10' x 19', I gain additional storage. The side walls from the

existing shed remain as they are built into the side of the hill with footings and block concrete. By extending it another approximately 6' into our driveway, with proper footings in place, and replacing the drain tiles out to the end of the retaining wall, all my issues are resolved. The side and back walls did have footings and are concrete block, so they remain. The additional wall extension across the front now has a footing as well, where it did not have before.

Note: front door to shed never closed tight so rotted with snow and drainage off the hill came out right in front of it creating icy area right in front of that shed door which was dangerous. That is what we are fixing. Part of the cement inside the shed was badly cracked. It is only 10 foot wide. I only use this for storage, so it didn't need to be any wider. (Plus, it saves on cost.) I will put a matching garage door on the front of the shed and brick it to match the house to enhance it visually.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT (see G - 1 through G -4)

Exhibit G-1

August 26, 2026

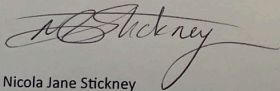
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Mrs. Jean Kuehl's request for a variance related to revisions to her garage and attached shed at 3602 Sun Valley Dr. NE, North Liberty, Iowa. I have resided across the street at 3691 Sun Valley Dr. NE since December 2001.

The attached shed has existed since we became neighbors. The requested variance involves an enlargement of the existing shed, utilizing the current driveway area, and a small enclosed addition on the east side of the structure. These improvements will enhance the property's appearance by creating a more cohesive and uniform streetside façade. The plans also include matching garage and shed doors, further improving the overall aesthetic.

As neighboring property owners, James L. Stickney and Nicola Jane Stickney have no concerns regarding the proposed revisions and fully support granting the variance. We believe the project will improve both the functionality and appearance of Mrs. Kuehl's property.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Nicola Jane Stickney".

Nicola Jane Stickney

Exhibit G-3

NEIGHBOR SUPPORT LETTER

Variance Request for 3602 Sun Valley Drive NE, North Liberty, Iowa

Date: 8/26/24

To: Johnson County Board of Adjustment

I am a nearby property owner to 3602 Sun Valley Drive NE. I live at the end of the deadend of the spur, the second house beyond her property.

I have reviewed the proposed variance request and support its approval. The existing shed has been present in substantially the same location for many years and has not created any adverse impact on neighboring properties. The addition of the pad above will allow her additional storage space and I understand she doesn't have other reasonable options for shed storage. I do not believe the proposed project will negatively affect neighborhood character, property values, drainage, traffic, visibility, or public safety. I support approval of the requested variance.

Sincerely,

Property Owner Name: Janice H. Schaper

Property Address: 3594 Sun Valley Dr NE

Phone Number (Optional): _____

Email (Optional): _____

Signature: Janice H. Schaper

Exhibit G-4

NEIGHBOR SUPPORT LETTER

Variance Request for 3602 Sun Valley Drive NE, North Liberty, Iowa

Date: 8-26-26

To: Johnson County Board of Adjustment

I am the owner and resident of the property located next door to **3602 Sun Valley Drive NE, North Liberty, Iowa**, and I have reviewed the variance request submitted by **Jean M. Kuehl**.

I understand that the applicant is requesting a variance related to a small, enclosed storage addition associated with an existing shed located on the property and that she is expanding the front of the existing shed about 5' into her driveway.

After reviewing the proposal and discussing it with the applicant, I have **no objection** to the requested variance.

Based on my understanding of the project:

- The proposed addition is modest in size.
- The improvement is consistent with the existing character of the neighborhood.
- The project will not negatively affect my use or enjoyment of my property.
- The project will not create traffic, visibility, drainage, or safety concerns.
- The property's steep terrain and limited buildable space make alternative locations difficult or impractical.
- I support the applicant's request for a variance.

I respectfully request that the Johnson County Board of Adjustment consider my support when evaluating this application.

Sincerely,

Property Owner Name: Greg Nelson

Property Address: 3598 Sun Valley Dr

Phone Number (Optional): [REDACTED]

Email (Optional): _____

Signature: Greg Nelson