

City Planning Department



Memo

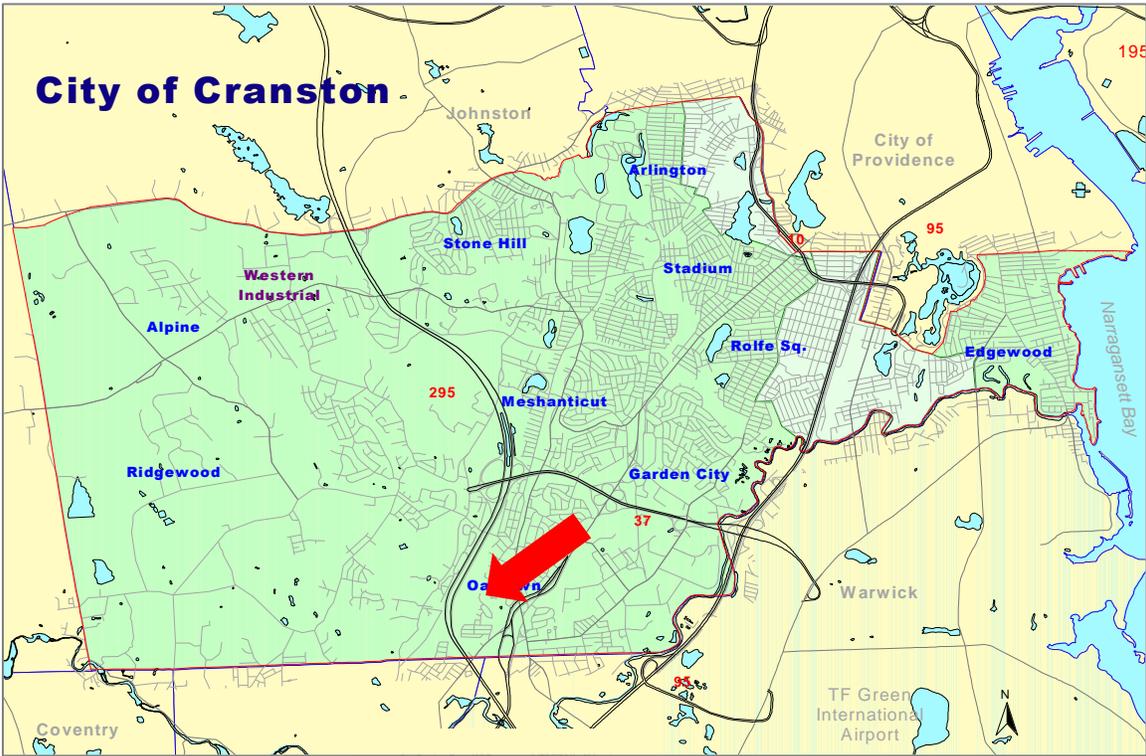
To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Alexander Berardo – Planning Technician
Date: June 3, 2022
Re: **Dimensional Variance @ 97 Amanda Street**

Owner: Robin A. Letterle
Applicant: Gregory J. DiZoglio
Location: 97 Amanda Street, AP 18, Lot 1501
Zone: A-8 (Single-family dwellings on 8,000 ft² minimum lots)
FLU: Single Family Residential 7.26 to 3.64 units/acre

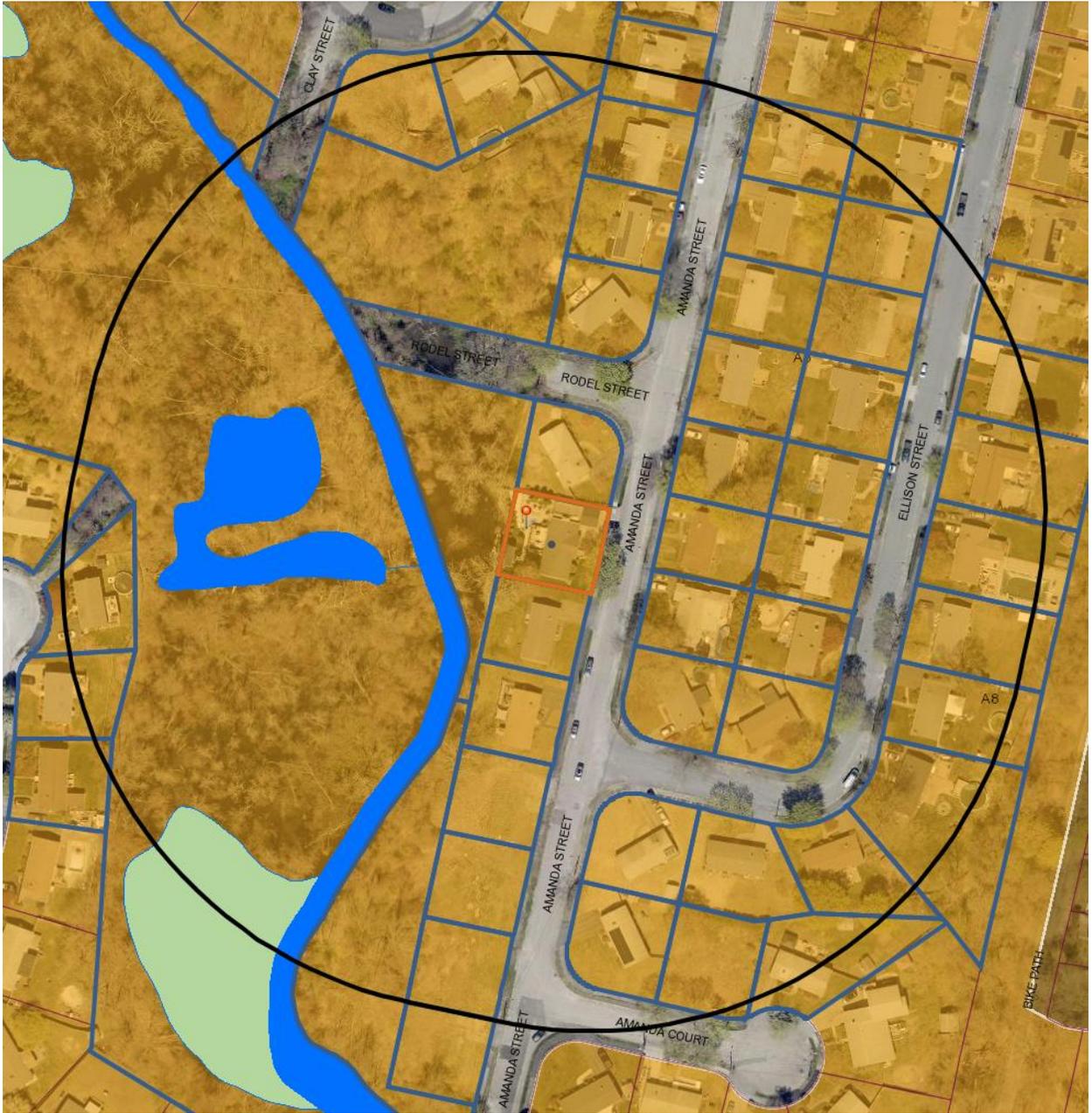
DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUEST:

1. To allow a garage addition built without benefit of permit and cited for violations encroaching into front and side yard setbacks. [17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity]

LOCATION MAP



ZONING MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



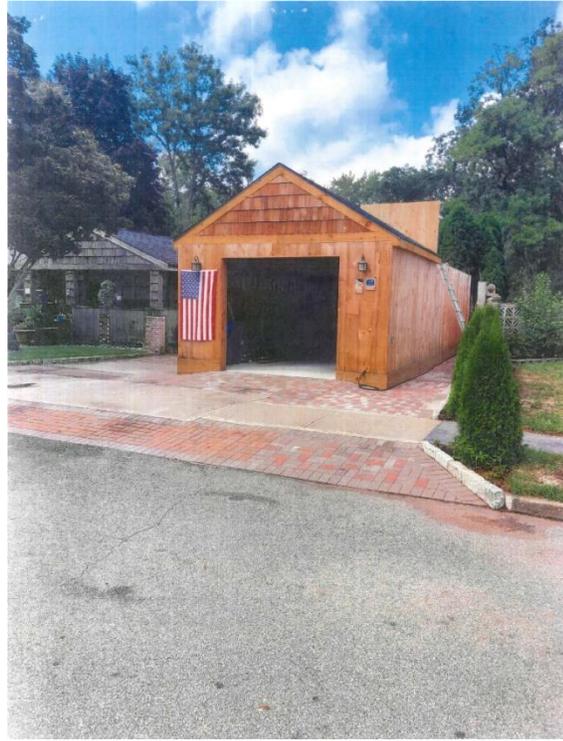
AERIAL VIEW



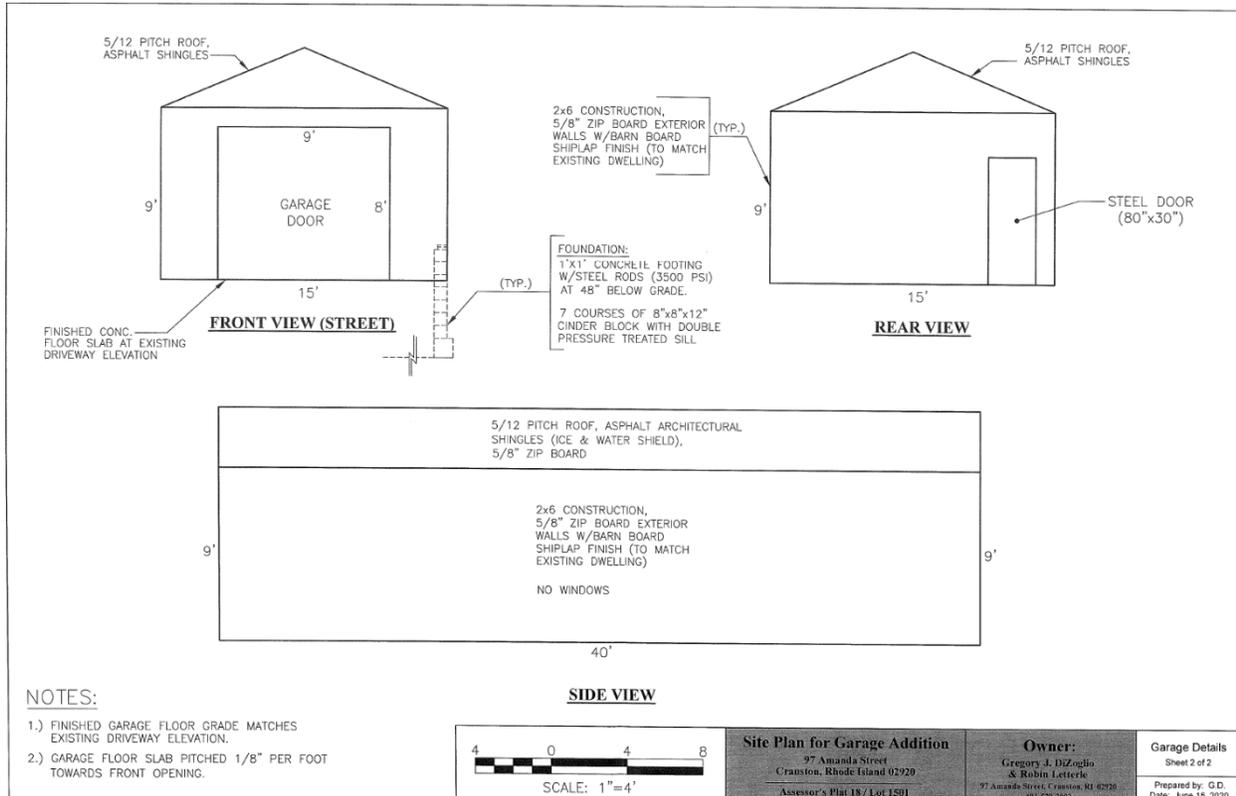
3-D AERIAL VIEW (facing west)



STREET VIEWS



SITE PLAN



PLANNING STAFF FINDINGS

1. The rear lot line of the subject parcel (AP 18, Lot 1501) lies approximately 5 feet from the Meshanticut Brook.
2. The applicant constructed a garage addition without securing a building permit and/or variances that encroaches 15.5 feet into the 25-foot front setback and 0.5 feet into the 5-foot side setback. The applicant was later cited for the violation and now seeks relief.
3. The garage's elongated design, intended to limit the side setback encroachment, allows for two cars to be parked in-line. As a result, however, the garage protrudes roughly 15 feet beyond the house's façade, encroaching into the front setback by a similar amount.
4. The applicant opted not to shift the garage addition further back on the property due to concerns over connecting the garage to the house, extending the driveway, and not encroaching nearer to the brook in the rear. However, several encroachments already exist in the rear of the property, which is in the floodplain as well as the floodway – most notably a shed located directly against the rear property line, but also the large amount of paved area. The applicant did not provide documentation from RIDEM regarding these improvements with its application.
5. All but one of the houses within a 400-foot radius of the subject parcel have attached single-car garages, including the house located on the subject parcel (which has been retained in addition to the recent construction of the two-car garage). Of these, only one garage is not flush with the façade of the house; it protrudes by roughly six feet and encroaches only 2 feet into the front setback.
6. The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Principle 4 advises to "*Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by basing land use decisions on neighborhood needs and quality of life*" and to "*Protect the natural, historic and visual resources that define the neighborhoods*" (p.34). The garage addition makes a substantial visual impact on the visual resources of the neighborhood, but the neighborhood need its construction satisfied is less apparent.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff finds that granting relief to retroactively allow the construction of the attached two-car garage would not be consistent with protecting the visual resources of the neighborhood as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Principle 4. Staff understands the logic that guided the applicant to construct the garage in an elongated layout – to minimize encroachment into the side setback – but the resulting 15-foot encroachment into the front setback that this design necessitated makes a substantial visual impact on the neighborhood. Similarly, Staff questions whether the logic of siting the garage so far forward – to avoid having to extend the driveway or accommodate an alternate connection between the garage and the house – amounts to a genuine hardship, especially since the house already included an existing attached single-car garage as nearly all surrounding houses in the neighborhood do.

Given the fact that the garage addition negatively impacts the neighborhood's visual resources and that the need for the garage is questionable, **staff finds that granting relief would negatively alter the character of the neighborhood and is generally inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.**

RECOMMENDATION

Due to the findings that the application is generally inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that it alters the character of the neighborhood, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward a **negative recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.