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City of Cranston  
**City Plan Commission**

**May 5, 2020 Meeting**

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# “West Arlington Replat of Lots 391, 392, 393, 394, 434, 435, and 436”

Preliminary Plan, Minor Subdivision without street extension – Associated 3 Variance Requests

**Owner:** Cranston Bible Chapel, Inc. and Charlotte Lawson

**Applicant:** Keith L’Heureux

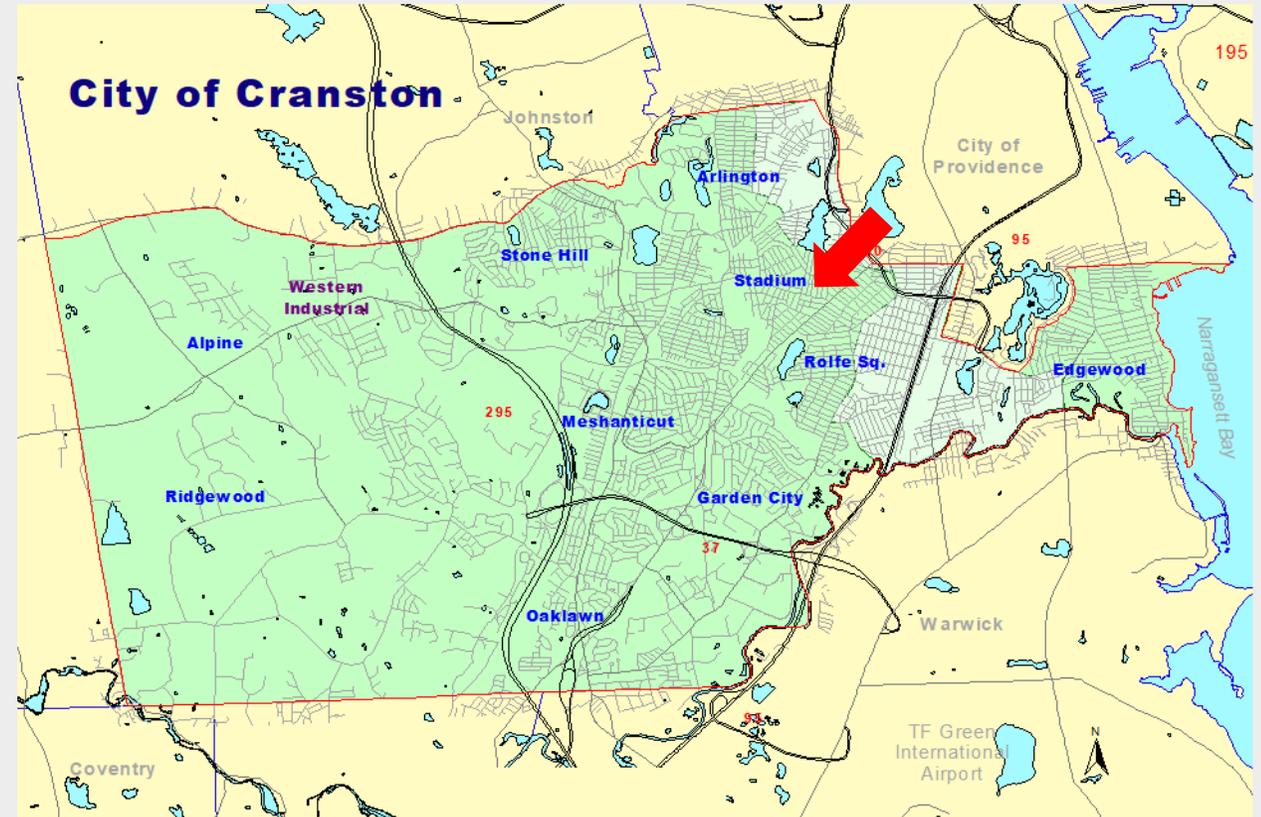
**Location:** Crescent Avenue and Harmon Ave. AP 7/5, Lots 1772, 1773, 1774, 1813, 1814, and 1815 and AP 6/3, Lot 1378

**Zone:** A-6

**FLU:** *Single-Family Residential 7.26 to 3.64 units per acre*

## Proposal Summary:

Proposal to subdivide/merge a total of 7 existing lots into 4 proposed new lots that will be larger in size. 3 of the proposed lots will require separate approval for dimensional relief from the Zoning Board of Review.



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# AERIAL VIEW



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# AERIAL VIEW – close up



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# 3-D AERIAL VIEW



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# STREET VIEW (from Crescent Ave)



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# STREET VIEW (from Harmon Ave)



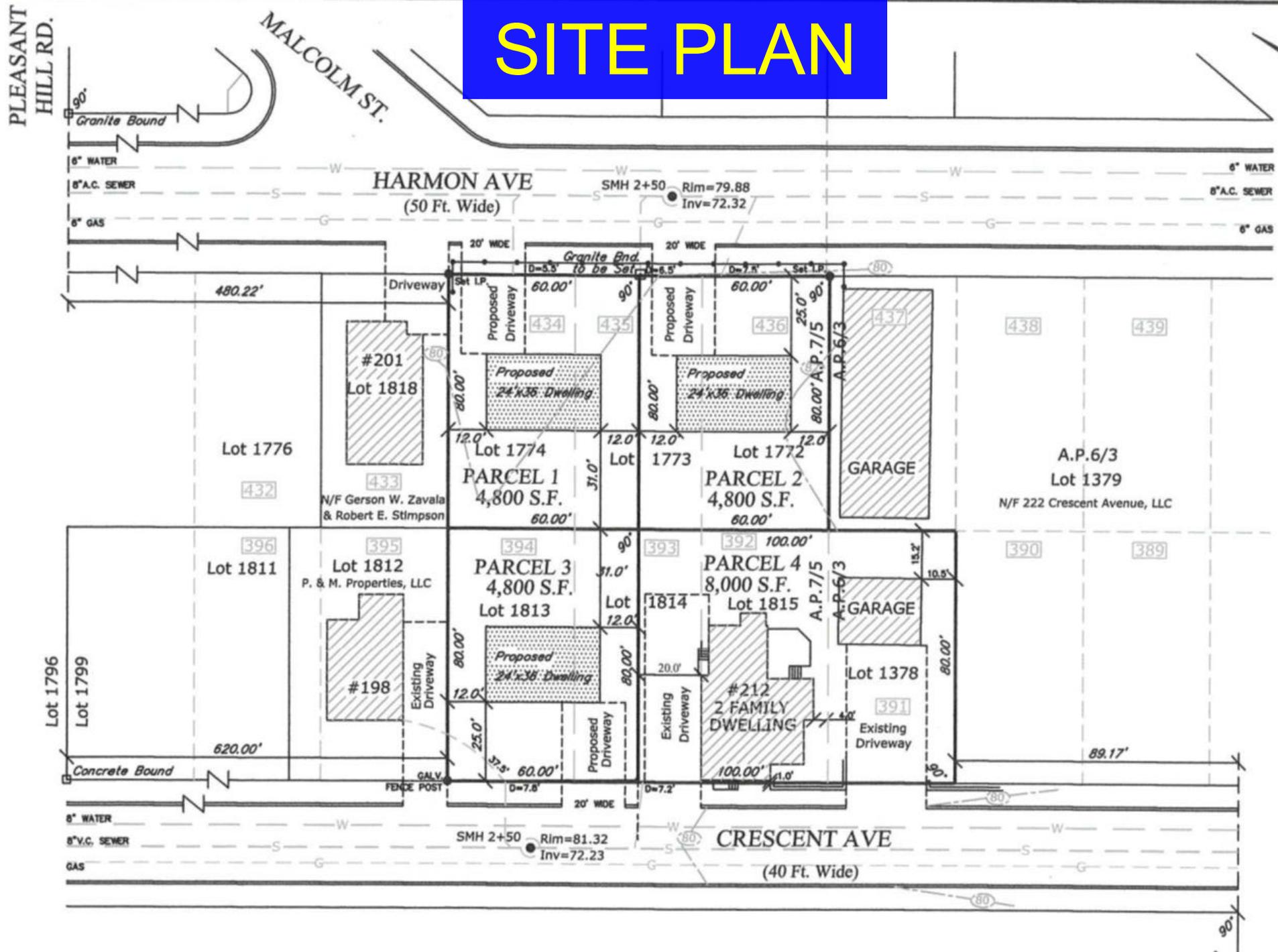
# ZONING MAP



# FUTURE LAND USE MAP



# SITE PLAN



# Staff Analysis

- The applicant proposes to subdivide/merge a total of 7 existing lots into 4 proposed new lots that will be larger in size. The project proposes 3 lots that will each be 4,800 sq. ft. for future single-family houses (requires ZBR approval), and 1 lot that will be 8,000 sq. ft. with a pre-existing, nonconforming two-family dwelling (no ZBR approval needed).
- The average size of residential lots within 400 feet of the subject parcels is 4,225 sq. ft., which is less than the proposed 3 substandard parcels (4,800 sq. ft.).
- The Comprehensive Plan supports the development of undersized lots. Furthermore, the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element in that development of infill lots is encouraged in Eastern Cranston.
- Staff finds that 8,000 sq. ft. is a sufficient size to accommodate a two-family dwelling based on comparable zoning standards from the B-1 zone and the specific conditions of the subject property. Furthermore, staff finds that a two-family dwelling is not inconsistent the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

## Abutter Comments

- The Planning Director received comments from three (3) abutters via email on April 7, 2020.
- In summary, the abutters expressed concerns with the subject application for the following issues:
  - Congestion/density of existing housing stock, traffic volume and speed on Harmon Ave. and Crescent Ave., on-street parking creating safety/visibility issues, overnight parking (illegal), loss of trees, dirt/litter on streets and sidewalks, difficulty accessing Malcolm Street due to intersection with Harmon Ave.
- City staff/department heads have provided comment in response to abutter concerns as detailed in planning memorandum dated April 29, 2020.

## Required Findings for Subdivision

1. The proposed subdivision is consistent with the policy direction within the City of Cranston Comprehensive Plan that states: "...the City grants variances routinely when properties are 5,000 square feet limiting the purpose and effectiveness of the existing minimum size requirements. The City needs to address this issue and consider changing regulations to reflect the higher density in these areas, which are essentially built out and have an older housing stock." The proposed parcels are 4,800 ft<sup>2</sup> in area which is above the average lot size of the existing housing stock within a 400 foot radius of the subject property. Furthermore, the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element in that development of infill lots are encouraged in Eastern Cranston. Based on the above, the subdivision is consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan.
2. Significant cultural, historic or natural features that contribute to the attractiveness of the community have not been identified on site.

## Required Findings for Subdivision

3. Three (3) of the proposed lots will require zoning relief for substandard lot size (proposed 4,800 ft<sup>2</sup> lots where 6,000 ft<sup>2</sup> is required). Should approval be granted through a separate decision by the Zoning Board of Review, the project will be in compliance with the City's zoning ordinance.
4. The proposal will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of the Cranston Zoning Code.
5. Clearing of vegetation (trees and bushes) would be needed in order to accommodate the development of new structures on proposed Parcels 1 and 2, however, the vegetation is not significant in size, does not provide environmental habitat, and is located within a dense urban neighborhood. Additionally, the project will be subject to all local, state and federal standards regarding environmental impacts. Thus no negative environmental impacts are anticipated.
6. The Rhode Island November 2018 Natural Heritage map shows that there are no known rare species located on the site.

## Required Findings for Subdivision

7. The proposed subdivision will not result in the creation of individual lots with such physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable.
8. The design and location of building lots, utilities, drainage and other improvements conform to local regulations for mitigation of flooding and soil erosion.
9. The properties in question will have adequate permanent physical access on Crescent Avenue or Harmon Avenue, public roadways located within the City of Cranston.
10. The proposed subdivision provides for safe and adequate local circulation of pedestrian and vehicular through traffic, for adequate surface water run-off and for a suitable building site.

# Subdivision Recommendation

Staff finds this proposal consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-23-60 as well as with the City of Cranston's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and approve the Preliminary Plan application, subject to the conditions denoted below.

## Conditions of approval:

1. Applicant shall receive variance approval for substandard lot area from the Cranston Zoning Board of Review prior to filing the Final Plan Application with the Cranston Planning Department.
2. Payment of the Eastern Cranston Capital Facilities impact fee in the amount of \$1,780.38 (3 new units) must be submitted at the time of final plat recording.

# Variance Recommendations

*NOTE: The overall application to the Zoning Board of Review has been broken into 3 separate applications, representing 1 application for each of the proposed 3 substandard lots. As such, this recommendation is intended to be replicated for each of the 3 separate applications.*

**Due to the fact that the application is consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan, and due to the fact that the proposed lot size is consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward a [positive recommendation](#) on this application to the Zoning Board of Review.**