

City Planning Department



Memo

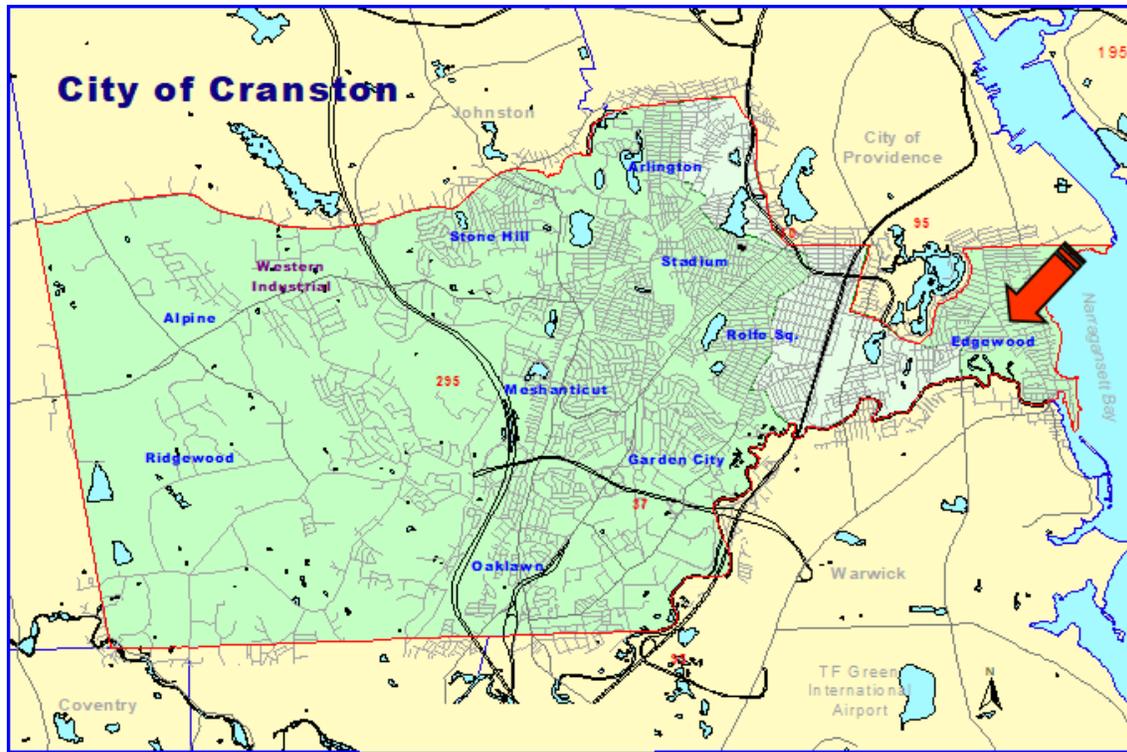
To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Joshua Berry, AICP - Senior Planner / Administrative Officer
Date: July 1, 2021
Re: **Use Variance @ 169 Bluff Avenue**

Owner/App: Jennifer A. Minute
Location: 169 Bluff Avenue, AP 2, Lots 3775
Zone: A-6 (Single-family dwellings on lots of minimum areas of 6,000 ft²)
FLU: Single Family Residential 7.26 to 3.64 units/acre

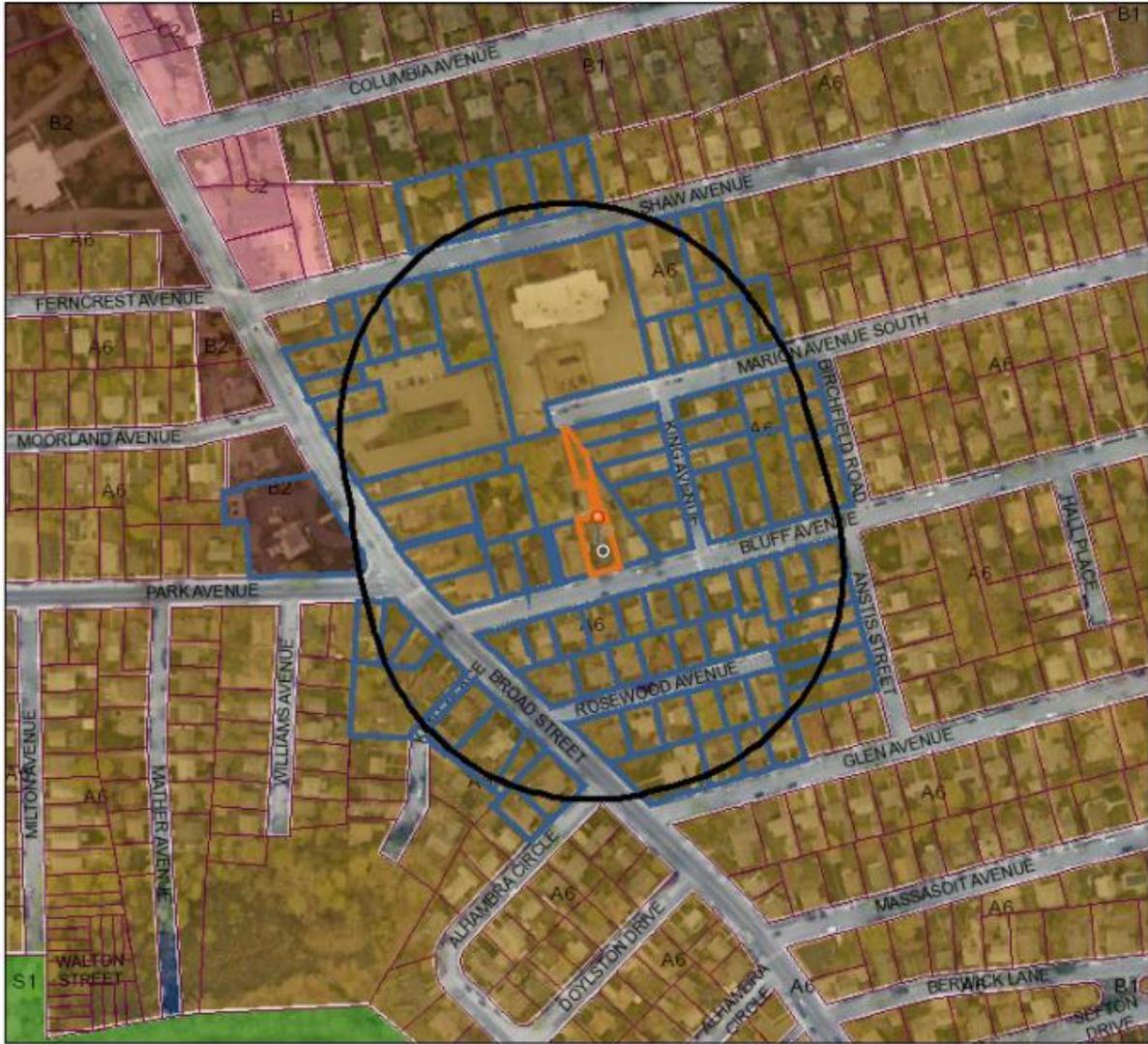
USE VARIANCE REQUEST:

1. To allow the construction of an accessory structure to be used for storage space and art/music studio. [17.60.010 - Accessory Structures]

LOCATION MAP



ZONING MAP



UserSelectedParcels		Zoning	B2	EI
vParcels_Buffer		none	C1	MPD
ParcelsInBufferOutput		A80	C2	S1
Parcels		A20	C3	Other
Streets Names		A12	C4	Street Names
Zoning Dimensions		A8	C5	Red: Red
Historic Overlay District		A6	M1	Green: Green
		B1	M2	Blue: Blue



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FUTURE LAND USE MAP

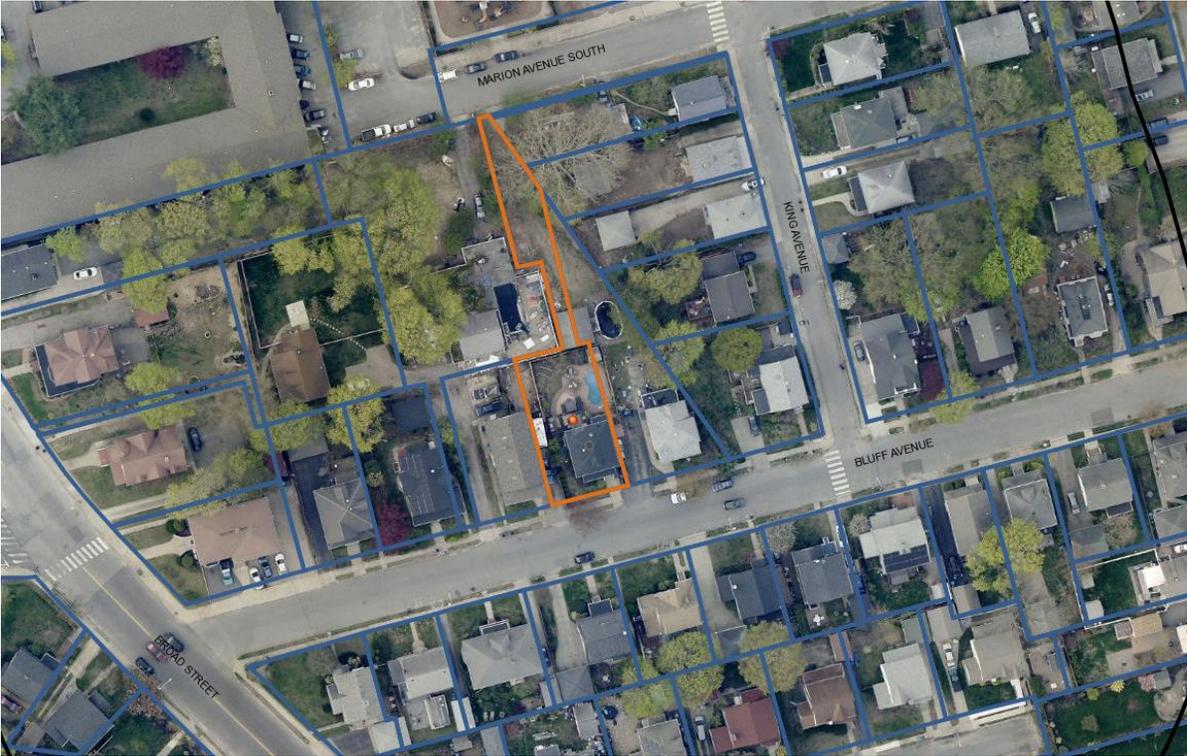


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AERIAL VIEW



3-D AERIAL VIEW (facing north)



STREET VIEW
(Bluff Ave facing north)

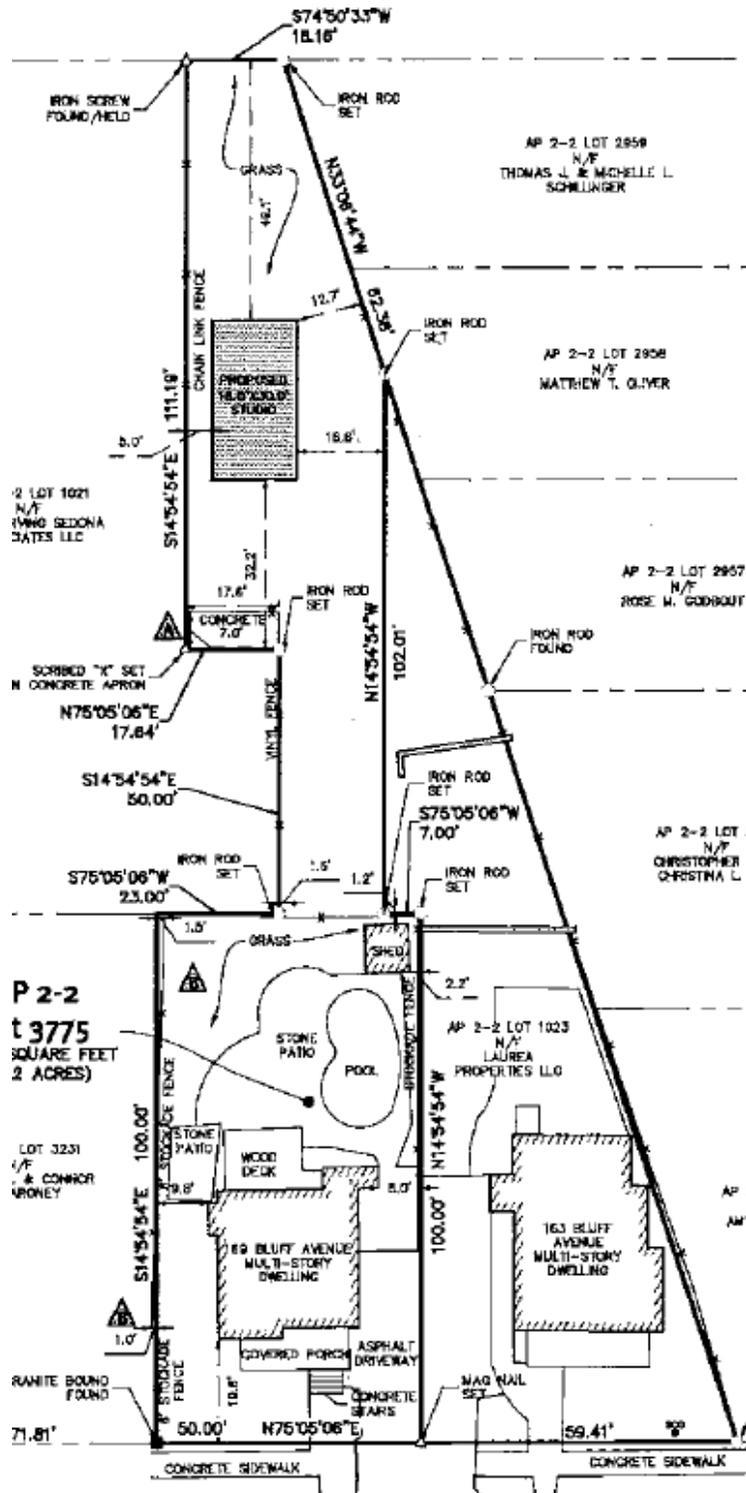


STREET VIEW
(Marion Ave facing south)



SITE PLAN

Marion Avenue
(50' WIDE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY)



Bluff Avenue

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The applicant proposes an accessory structure which is to be used as a storage space and art/music studio. It will have water and electricity and a restroom, but does not have a kitchen and is not a dwelling unit. No business operations are proposed as part of this application, nor is it proposed as a home occupation. The proposed use is accessory to the primary residential use.
2. Due to the unique shape of the lot and considering the width and the existing residence, pool, and deck, there is no way to expand the primary residence without encroaching into the setbacks or removing existing features.
3. The proposed accessory structure will comply with the 5-foot accessory structure side yard setback.
4. The visual impacts to the abutting neighbors will be minimal due to existing chain-link fencing that is covered with vegetation which, according to the survey plan, is right on the property line.
5. The Comprehensive Plan does not specifically address accessory structures. The Land Use Element; Principle 4 reads: "*Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by basing land use decisions on neighborhood needs and quality of life. Protect the natural, historic and visual resources that define the neighborhoods*" (p. 34). Allowing accessory structures that comply with building setbacks is consistent with promoting neighborhood needs and quality of life, and therefore the application is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

PLANNING ANALYSIS

The Zoning Secretary has determined that the applicant needs zoning relief from section 17.60.010 *Accessory Uses* in order to construct a 480 ft² "storage space and art studio and occasional music space."

Staff does not find any issues with the proposal. The proposed structure will comply with the 5-foot side yard setback for accessory structures. According to the owner/applicant, it is to be used for personal, not commercial or business use. It is **not** a professional recording studio that charges rental fees to be used by others. It could be described as a music *practice area*, which any garage or pool house in the city can easily be converted into. Perhaps the most appropriate word to describe the structure is **she-shed**.

There is an existing fence and vegetation on the property line which will mitigate most of the visual impact to the abutting neighbor to the west. The impact abutters to the east would be minimal due to the fact that those homes are facing east on King Ave and the three closest lots all have detached garages in their rear yards which would largely screen any view to the proposed structure.

Staff finds the proposal to be generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan does not specifically address accessory structures, but the Land Use Element; Principle 4 reads: "*Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by basing land use decisions on neighborhood needs and quality of life. Protect the natural, historic and*

visual resources that define the neighborhoods” (p. 34). Allowing accessory structures that comply with building setbacks is consistent with promoting neighborhood needs and quality of life.

Recommendation

Due to the findings that the application is generally consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan and that no negative impacts are anticipated, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward a **positive recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.