

## City Planning Department



## Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission  
From: Doug McLean, AICP - Principal Planner / Administrative Officer  
Date: September 29, 2020  
Re: **Dimensional Variance Application; Gordon and Deborah Riley (Owners); Dante Calise (Applicant)**

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**Owners:** Gordon and Deborah Riley

**Applicant:** Dante Calise

**Location:** 36 Appleton Street; AP 7, Lot 1943

**Zone:** A-6 (Single-family dwellings on lots of minimum areas of six thousand (6,000) square feet)

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

### **DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUESTS:**

1. To unmerge 2 substandard lots of record that are under common ownership in order to develop a single family house on the vacant lot. [Section 17.88.010 – Substandard lots of record]
2. To develop on a lot of record with substandard size, whereas the lot contains 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> while 6,000 ft<sup>2</sup> is required. [Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity]
3. To develop on a lot of record with substandard frontage, whereas the lot will have 50' of frontage while 60' is required. [Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity]

**AERIAL VIEW**



# AERIAL VIEW (close up)



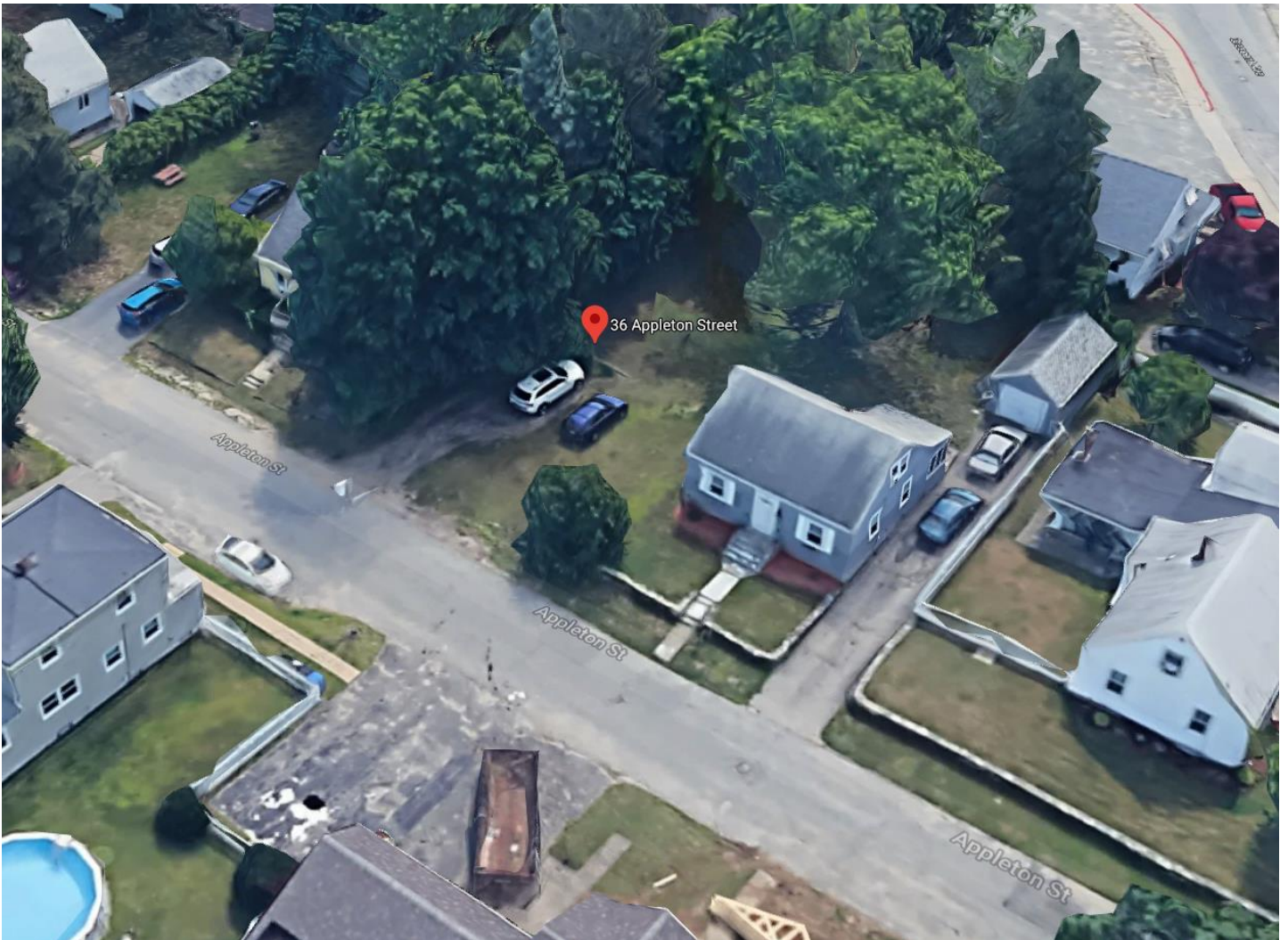
# ZONING MAP



# FUTURE LAND USE MAP



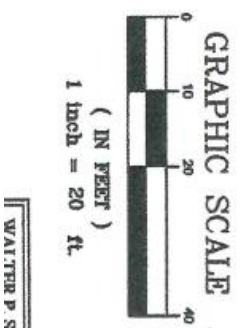
## 3-D AERIAL VIEW



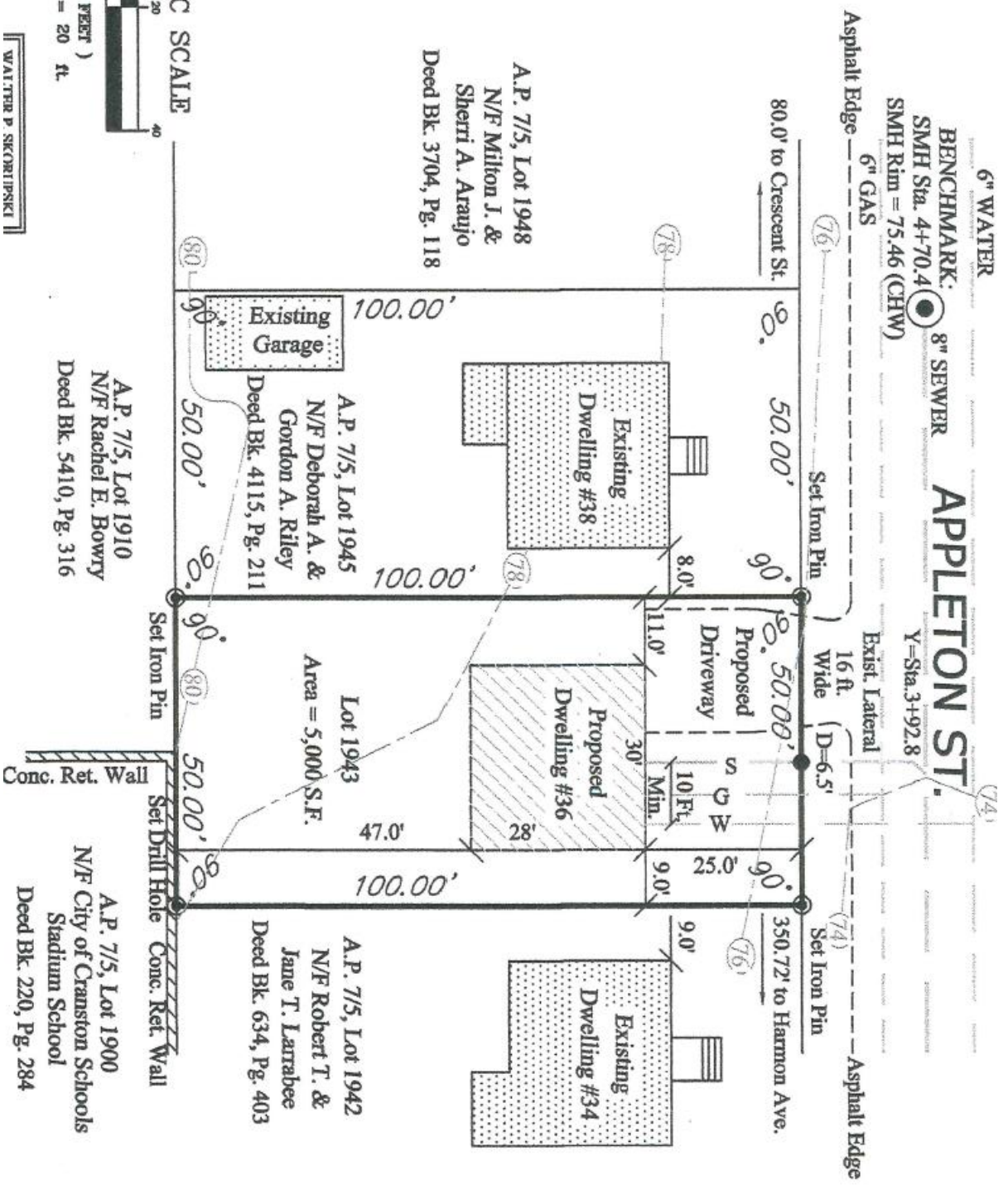
# STREET VIEW



# SITE PLAN



WALTER P. SIKORINSKI





## FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The proposal is seeking a variance to unmerge 2 lots of record in order to develop a single family house on a vacant lot (AP 7, Lot 1943). The 2 lots are considered merged for zoning purposes per Sec. 17.88.010 because they are both substandard in lot dimensions and they are under common ownership.
2. No subdivision approval is required by the Plan Commission to unmerge the 2 lots. No new lot lines are being proposed and no existing lot lines will be changed. The immediate application is seeking to recognize the 2 existing lots as separate, developable parcels in an A-6 zone.
3. In addition to seeking relief to unmerge the lots, the applicant is also seeking relief for the lot to be developed with a new single family house. Specifically, the subject lot contains 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> in size while 6,000 ft<sup>2</sup> is required, and has 50' of frontage while 60' is required.
4. No building setback relief is needed as part of the proposed application. The distance from the existing house to the side property line (common property line between the 2 lots) is 8 feet - which meets the minimum distance required by zoning.
5. Of the 2 merged lots, the lot with the existing house (AP 7, Lot 1945) will be left with sufficient off-street parking via an existing driveway on the west side of the house. The lot with the proposed new house (AP 7, Lot 1943) will be designed with a new driveway to satisfy that dwelling's parking requirement. Therefore, unmerging the 2 lots and constructing the new house will not result in any nonconformity with regard to off-street parking.
6. The surrounding neighborhood (400 foot radius) is comprised of A-6 and B-1 zoned parcels, containing mostly single-family houses, with a smaller number of higher density residential uses such as 2-family, 3-family, and multi-family dwellings.
7. The applicant provided a neighborhood assessment that provided the following facts:
  - a. There are a total of 120 lots within a 400 ft radius.
  - b. Of the above lots, 1 lot is host to the City of Cranston Stadium School and is 243,936 ft<sup>2</sup> in size.
  - c. After removing the Stadium School lot from the analysis, the average lot size of the remaining 119 residential parcels is 4,035 ft<sup>2</sup>.
  - d. The proposed lot size as part of the immediate application is 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> which is greater than the average lot size in the area.
8. The Cranston Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map designates the subject parcels as "Single Family Residential 7.26 to 3.64 units per acre". The proposed density of the project is 8.71 units/per acres so the project is more dense than the designation of the Future Land Use Map.
9. The Land Use Plan Element recognizes that many existing lots in the eastern portion of the city are undersized, and the Comprehensive Plan supports the development of these lots, stating: "...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 Comprehensive Plan supports the development of undersized lots and provides clear policy direction relevant to this proposal.

10. The proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element in that development of infill lots is encouraged in Eastern Cranston.

#### **PLANNING ANALYSIS:**

The applicant proposes to unmerge 2 lots in order to develop a single family house on a vacant lot. No subdivision approval is required by the Plan Commission to unmerge the lots. The Zoning Board of Review holds the authority to grant a variance from Zoning Sec. 17.88.010 to recognize the 2 existing lots as separate, developable parcels.

The lot with the proposed new house will be designed with a new driveway and the existing house will be left with its own separate driveway on its own lot. This will ensure that the action of unmerging the 2 lots and constructing the new house will not result in any nonconformity with regard to off-street parking.

The applicant provided a neighborhood assessment that concluded the proposed lot size (5,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) is greater than the average lot size in the area (4,035 ft<sup>2</sup>). The proposed development of a new house on a 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> lot is denser than the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map (proposed density of 8.71 units/per acre with a FLUM designation of "Single Family Residential 7.26 to 3.64 units per acre"). However, the Comprehensive Plan also supports the development of undersized lots and provides clear policy direction relevant to this proposal. The proposal is also consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element in that development of infill lots is encouraged in Eastern Cranston. In consideration of the City's overall policy for infill lots, as well as the existing conditions of the subject lot and surrounding neighborhood, staff finds that the application is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

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** to the Zoning Board of Review.