

City Planning Department



Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Alexander Berardo – Planning Technician
Amelia Lavallee – Planning Intern
Date: March 3, 2023
Re: **Dimensional Variances @ 51 Cleveland Avenue & 0 Cranston Street**

Owner/App: Alphonse R. Cardi III
Location: 51 Cleveland Avenue (AP 8, Lot 767) and 0 Cranston Street (AP 8, Lot 768)
Zone: C-2 (Neighborhood Business)
FLU: Neighborhood Commercial Services

DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUESTS:

Note that the lots in question are also the subject of a separate application for an Administrative Subdivision, which received conditional approval from the administrative officer on March 2, 2023, contingent upon the Zoning Board of Review granting the following requested relief:

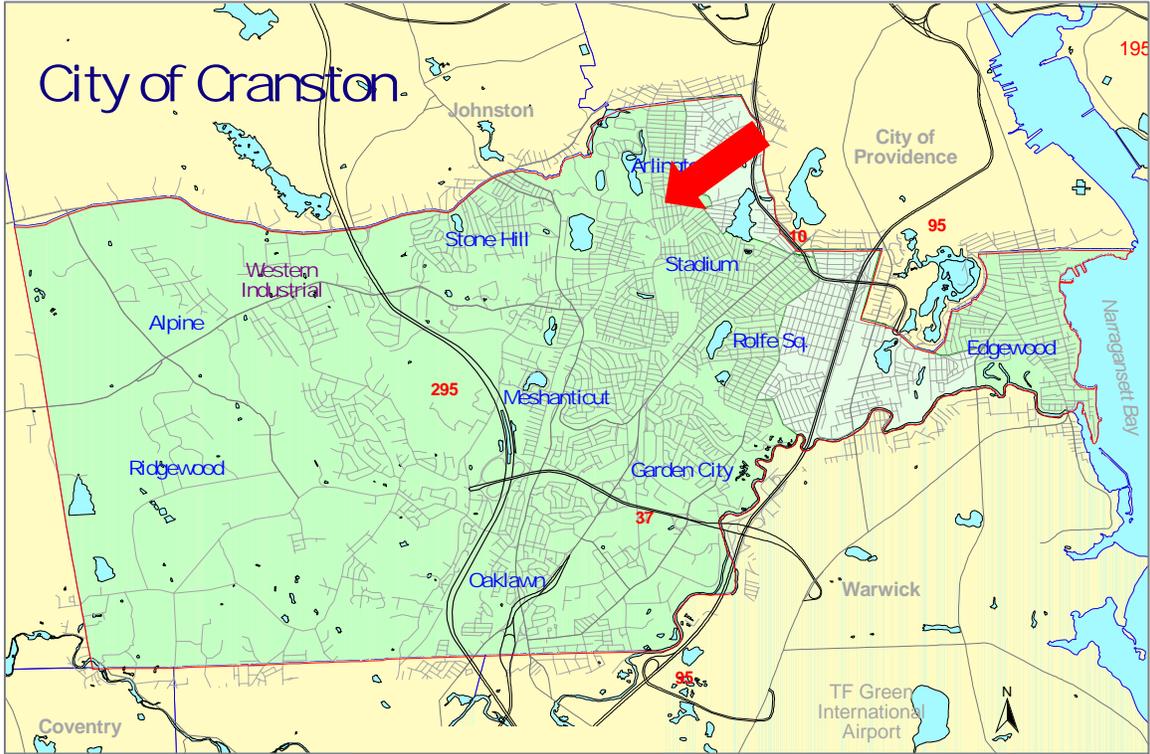
51 Cleveland Avenue (AP 8, Lot 767)

1. Relief for substandard lot area (4,756 ft² where 6,000 ft² would be required for by-right construction in a C-2 zone). [17.20.120 – *Schedule of Intensity*]
2. Relief for encroachment into the required 8' side setback (the existing house would encroach by roughly 6' into the side setback created by the proposed lot line). [17.20.120 – *Schedule of Intensity*]

0 Cranston Street (AP 8, Lot 768)

1. Relief for substandard lot area (4,844 ft² where 6,000 ft² would be required). [17.20.120 – *Schedule of Intensity*]
2. Relief for encroachment into the required 8' side setback (the existing house would encroach by roughly 6' into the side setback created by the proposed lot line). [17.20.120 – *Schedule of Intensity*]

LOCATION MAP



AERIAL VIEW



ZONING MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



STREET VIEW
(51 Cleveland Avenue, AP 8, Lot 767)



STREET VIEW
(0 Cranston St, AP 8, Lot 768)

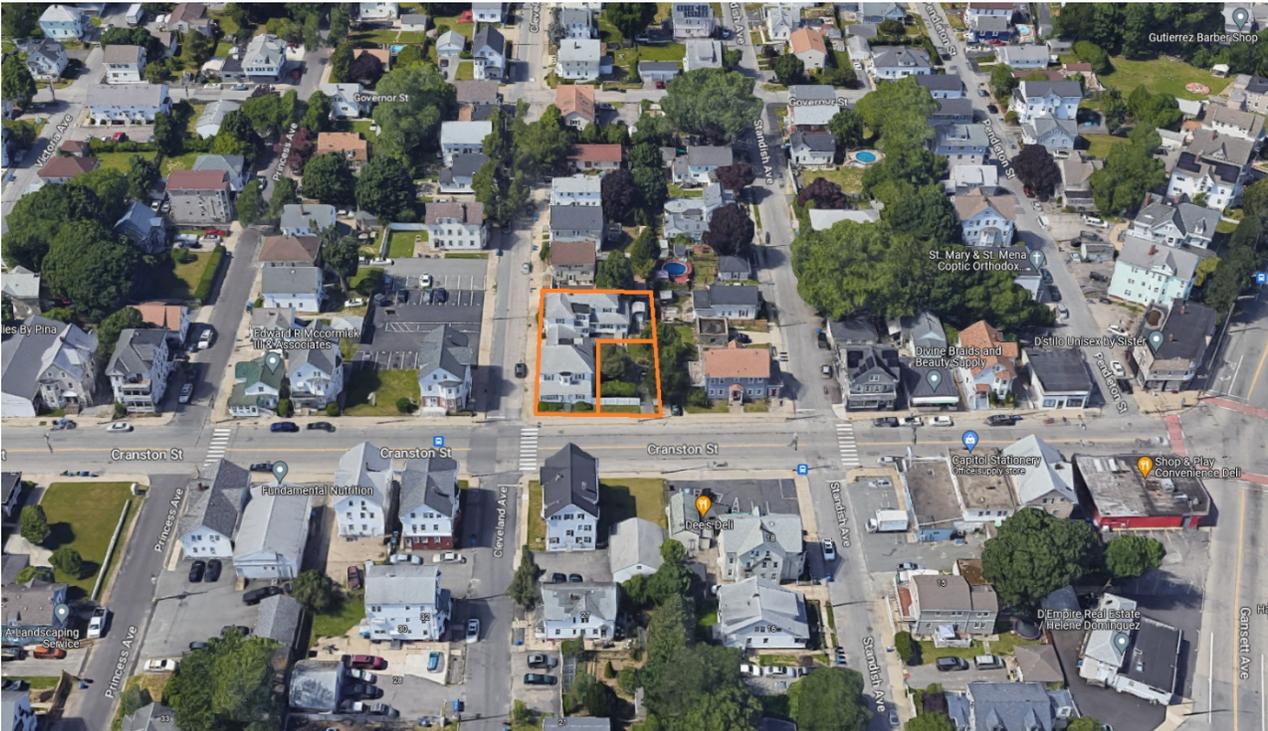


STREET VIEW

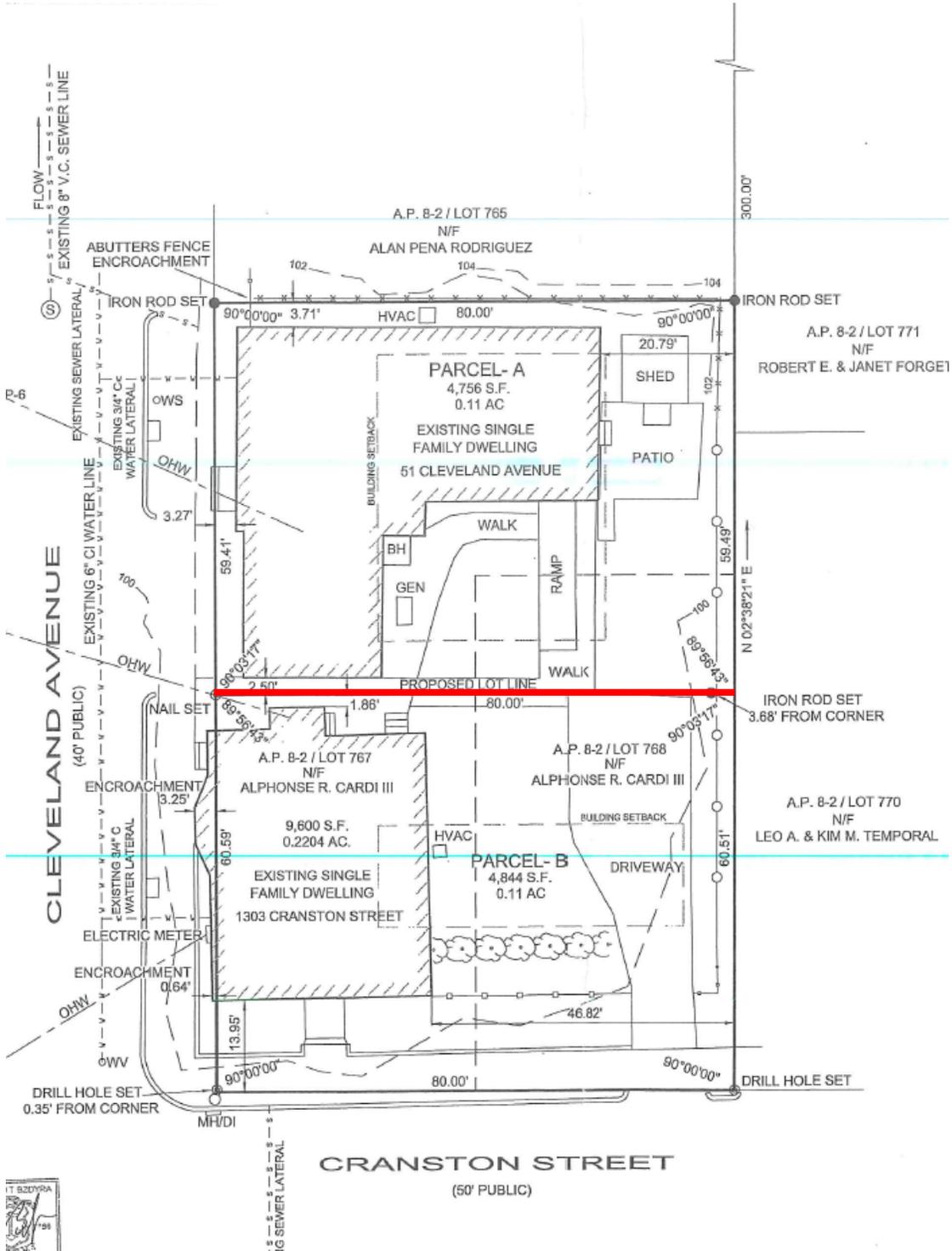
(Corner of Cleveland Ave & Cranston St)



3-D AERIAL VIEW (facing west)



ADMINISTRATIVE SUBDIVISION PLAN



PLANNING STAFF FINDINGS

1. The subject parcel is comprised of two adjacent lots of record. AP 8, Lot 767 conforms to the dimensional standards of the C-2 zone but hosts two buildings: a single-family house with frontage on Cleveland Avenue (built in 1949), and a mixed-use building (ground-floor office with two apartments above) at the corner of Cranston St and Cleveland Ave (built in 1920). AP 8, Lot 768 is a substandard lot of record and serves the parking needs of the mixed-use building.
2. The applicant seeks to realign the shared lot line through an Administrative Subdivision so that each building will be located on its own lot. The administrative officer approved the Administrative Subdivision application on March 2, 2023 subject to the condition that the applicant secures the Zoning Board of Review's approval of its variance applications.
3. Both lots would become substandard in area as a result of the Administrative Subdivision. Although neither of the two buildings would conform to contemporary setback standards, both predate zoning and are considered pre-existing non-conforming structures, so each lot only requires relief for the side yard setback that would be created by the realignment of the shared lot line, which is drawn halfway between the existing buildings and leaves around 2 feet on each side. Both lots therefore need relief for around 6 feet of encroachment into the 8-foot side setback.
4. The applicant also intends to convert the ground floor office in the older, Cranston Street-facing building into an additional apartment, which would make the building a three-unit multifamily building. The newer, Cleveland Avenue-facing building would remain a single-family building. Both single-family and multifamily dwellings are allowed uses in the C-2 zone.
5. It is unclear if Lot 768 would require additional relief for parking configuration if the mixed-use building is converted into a multifamily dwelling. Staff notes the applicant did not request parking relief as part of this application and that this judgment is outside of Planning Staff's purview and properly rests with the Zoning Board of Review.
6. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates both parcels as Neighborhood Commercial Services, which places no density prescriptions on residential uses.
7. Granting relief would be generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element Principle 4, which advises to "*Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by basing land use decisions on neighborhood needs and quality of life.*" (p. 34), and Housing Goal 4, to "*Promote housing opportunity for a wide range of household types and income levels.*"

PLANNING ANALYSIS

Staff finds that granting relief to allow the Administrative Subdivision to proceed would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, particularly Housing Goal 4 and Land Use Principle 4. The applicant intends to redraw the shared lot line between the two lots in an east-west alignment that would place each building on its own lot, which in turn would facilitate the applicant's intention to convey one of the houses to his sister. Staff notes this is a significant

improvement over the existing condition, which has two separate residential buildings located on the same lot.

While the subdivision would cause one a conforming lot to become substandard in area, Staff believes this change to the parcel's dimensional situation will have no impact on its ability to support the existing uses on the two lots and will not change the character of the neighborhood in any perceptible way. Staff noted in the Findings of Fact that both buildings are pre-existing non-conforming structures and that their footprints on the parcel will not change. Staff has no concerns with the requested side setback relief (the need for which is only triggered by the proposal to relocate the shared lot line) because both buildings have stood within a few feet of each other for decades.

Staff further notes that the lots' proposed uses (single-family and multifamily residential) are allowed in the C-2 zone. Insofar as the parcel's FLUM designation of Neighborhood Commercial Services 1) makes no residential density prescriptions and 2) encompasses the C-1, C-2, and C-3 zones, the requested relief is consistent with the parcel's Future Land Use designation.

RECOMMENDATION (applies to both AP 8, Lot 767 and AP 8, Lot 768)

Due to the findings that the applications are generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that they do not alter the character of the neighborhood, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward **positive recommendations** on both applications to the Zoning Board of Review.