

CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT



Memorandum – FINAL

To: City Plan Commission
From: Gregory S. Guertin, MA – Senior Planner
Date: January 30, 2024
RE: 1579 Elmwood Avenue – Assessors Plat 4, Lot 222
1581 Elmwood Avenue – Assessors Plat 4, Lot 221
Application(s) for Dimensional & Use Variances

This memo pertains to two jointly submitted applications, both pertaining to a single Administrative Subdivision application.

Owner / Applicant: Fort Properties LLC (Sole Member Karley Carto)
Location: 1579 Elmwood Avenue & 1581 Elmwood Avenue
Zoning: C5 – Heavy Business, Industry, (10,000 sq. ft.)
FLUM Designation: Special Redevelopment Area

Subject Property:

The subject properties are located at 1579 Elmwood Avenue, identified as Plat 4, Lot 222 (*Parcel A*) & 1581 Elmwood Avenue, identified as Plat 4, Lot 221 (*Parcel B*). Parcel A currently has a land area of 0.274± acres, (11,920± sq. ft.) with frontage on Elmwood Avenue. Parcel B currently has a land area of 0.111± acres, (4,827± sq. ft.) with frontage on 1st Avenue and Elmwood Avenue

Request:

To allow for a merged lot with a lot line which runs through the building footprint of the two homes on the subject parcels to be unmerged and for the lot line to be moved in order to bring the subject parcels into further conformance with current schedule of intensity regulations. This subdivision requires variances for frontage, setback relief, substandard minimum lot area and use (17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity & 17.20.030 – Schedule of Uses).

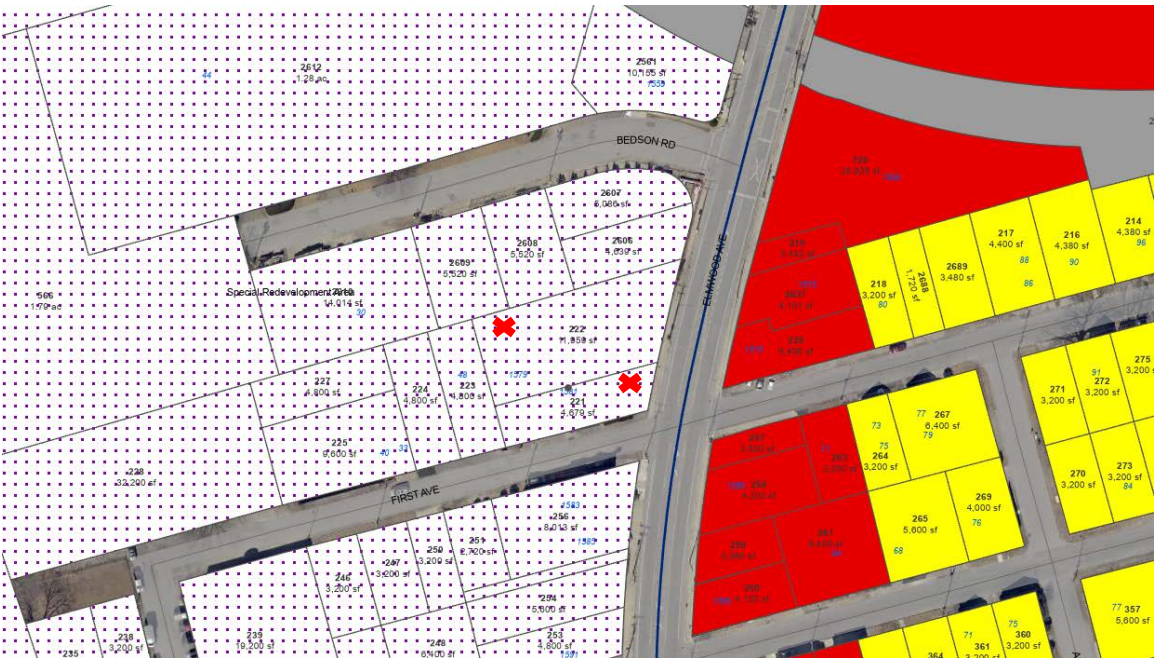
AERIAL PHOTO



ZONING MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



STREET VIEW (FROM CORNER OF 1ST & ELMWOOD)



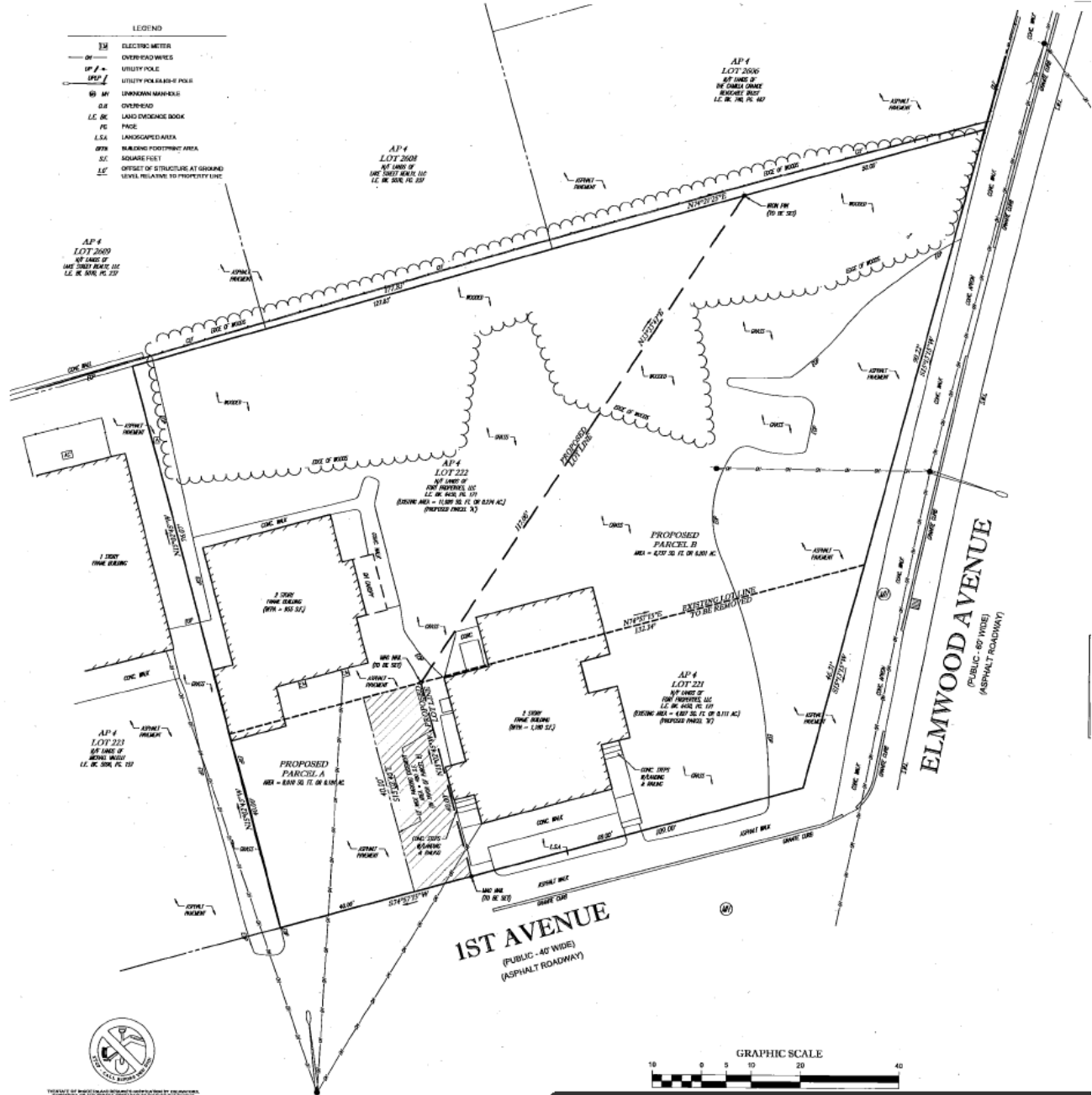
STREET VIEW (FROM ELMWOOD)



STREET VIEW (FROM CORNER OF 1ST)



SITE PLAN SNIPPET



Findings of Fact:

The Applicant has requested specific relief in their application, namely:

- 17.20.100 – Schedule of Intensity Regulations
 - Parcel A: Frontage, Setback relief, Substandard minimum square footage
 - Parcel B: Frontage, Setback relief, Substandard minimum square footage
- 17.20.030 – Schedule of Uses
 - Pre-existing nonconforming residential use (2, two family dwelling units) in a commercial zone (C5)

Staff has reviewed this Application in consideration of the compatibility with the character of the surrounding area and the request does not appear to impose undue nuisances and is not out of character with the surrounding area.

- The property is zoned commercial with a pre-existing non-conforming residential use. The use would not change per this proposal. The surrounding area is a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential zones and uses. Many parcels in the surrounding area appear to be pre-existing non-conforming uses. The request does not propose or encourage incompatible uses that would be disruptive to the surrounding area.
- The dimensional requirements which the applicant is seeking relief from would seem to result in the reduction of existing nonconformities and would not intensify the existing nonconformities.

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the subject property as “*Special Redevelopment Area*,” Special Redevelopment Areas are defined in the Comprehensive Plan as:

- Areas in which the City anticipates undertaking redevelopment through mixed-planned development ordinances such as the Elmwood/Wellington industrial corridor, the Cranston Printworks, and the site of the former Trolley Barn;
- Areas in which the City believes that the current land use is appropriate but the existing zoning is not appropriate
- Areas in which the City has identified specific sites where the existing zoning is not appropriate and requires further study prior to an appropriate land use designation is determined.
- Staff finds that the Application is directly consistent with the Future Land Use Map designation as it does not result in a change of the pre-existing use.

The Comprehensive Plan outlines goals, policies, and action items pertaining to this proposal which Staff find to support the approval of this Application, specifically:

- **Housing Goal 5:** Conserve housing resources, especially affordable housing units, to preserve the base housing stock, as the costs of locating and constructing new housing units are significant.
 - **Housing Policy 5.1:** Reduce the burden of zoning and building regulations, to enable two- and three-family unit dwellings to be easily modified, maintained, and improved within the existing neighborhoods.
- **Land Use Goal 9:** Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods.
 - **Land Use Policy 9.1:** Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by increasing open space, improving roadway conditions, and making the zoning conform to existing uses.

Recommendation:

In accordance with RIGL § 45-24-41(b) and Section 17.92.010(A) of the Zoning Ordinance, Staff finds this Application generally consistent with the goals and purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood. Staff therefore recommends that the City Plan Commission adopt the Findings of Fact documented above and forward a **POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION** on the Application to the Zoning Board of Review.