

CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT



Memorandum – FINAL

To: City Plan Commission
From: Jonas U. Bruggemann, MSCRP | Senior Planner
Date: April 3, 2024
RE: The Blue Room: 2197 Broad Street – Assessors Plat 1, Lot 432
Application for Dimensional Variance

Owner / Applicant: Russo Family Trust
Location: 2197 Broad Street
Zoning: C3 – General Business
FLUM Designation: Neighborhood Commercial / Services

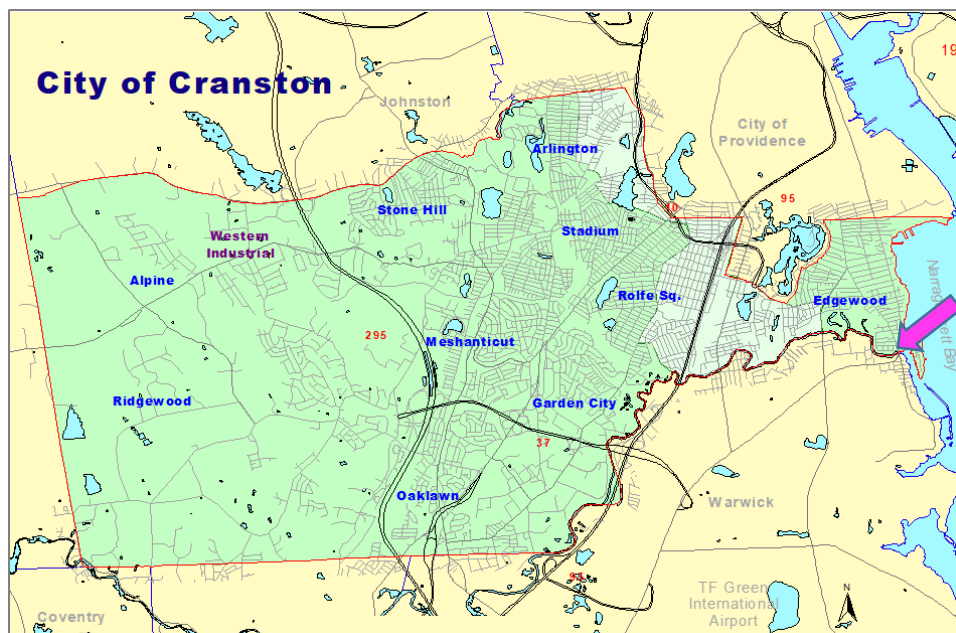
Subject Property:

The subject property is located at 2197 Broad Street, identified as Plat 1, Lot 432, and has a land area of 0.094± acres, (4,102± sq. ft.) with frontage on Broad Street.

Request:

To allow relief from parking requirement for the expansion of an existing neighborhood pub / tavern in a C3 zone (17.92.010 – Variances and 17.64.010 – Parking Requirements: 1.6. Eating and Drinking Establishments)

LOCATION MAP



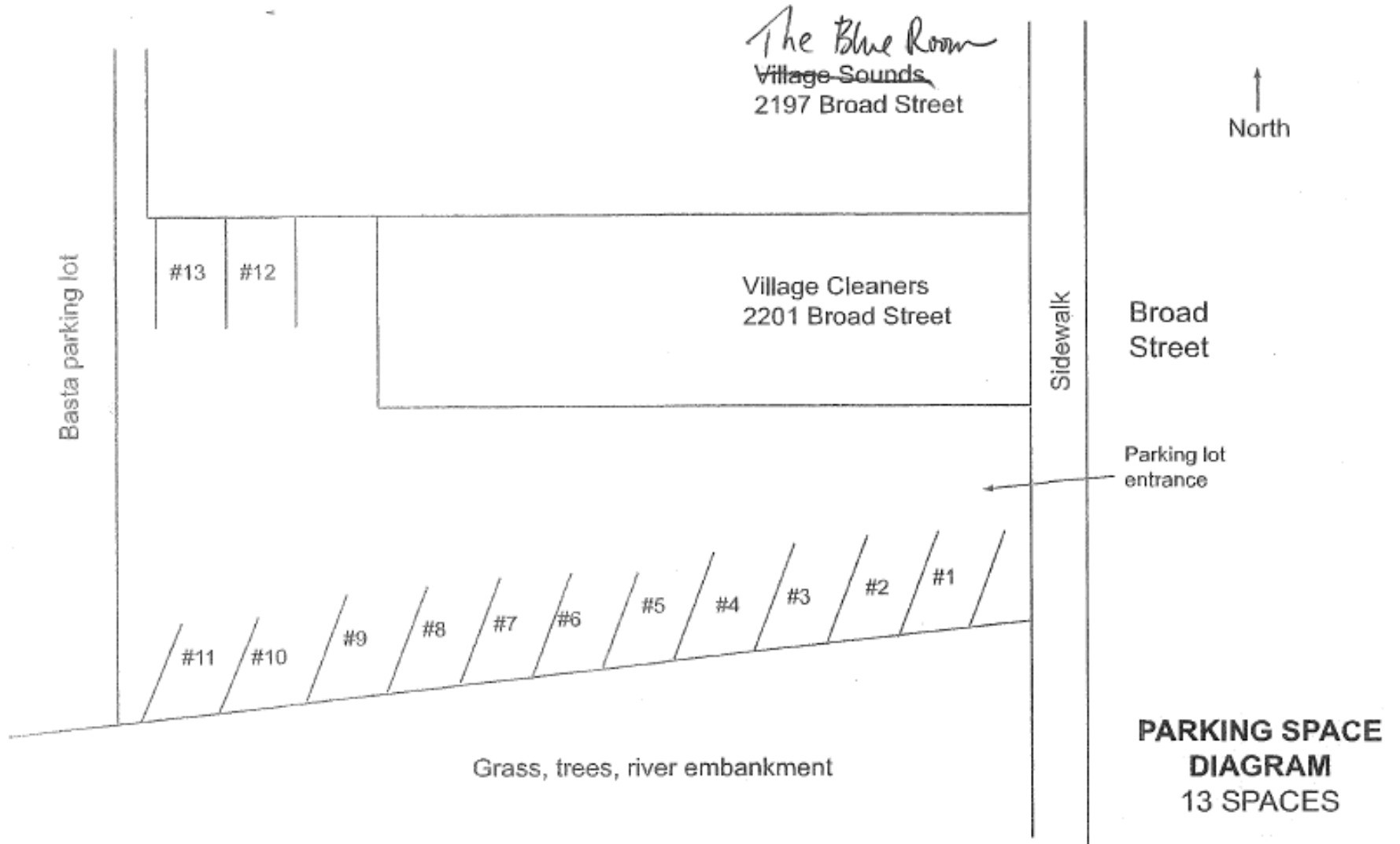
AERIAL PHOTO



STREET VIEW



PARKING PLAN



Findings of Fact:

- The Applicant has requested specific relief in their Application, namely:
 - 17.64.010 – Off-Street Parking
 - Section 17.64.010.I.6 “Eating and drinking establishments: one space for each three seats provided for patron use.”
 - Existing: 13 (incl. 1 ADA) – shared with Village Laundry & Cleaners
 - Existing required: 40 seats = 13 parking spaces (incl. 1 ADA)
 - Required with expansion: 60 seats = 20 parking spaces (incl. 1 ADA)
 - Total relief needed for expansion: 7 parking spaces
- Staff has reviewed this Application in consideration of the compatibility with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood and the request does not impose undue nuisances and is not out of character beyond any other uses on this site or within the surrounding area.
 - The establishment has been operating (and proposes to continue) as a neighborhood pub / tavern, a use by-right in the C-3 zone.
 - The property and the uses in the immediate surrounding area along Broad Street are light and small (neighborhood) commercial in nature and the request does not propose or encourage incompatible uses that would be disruptive to the surrounding area.
 - The lot in question has no dedicated off-street parking but the Applicant has an off-site parking agreement with the neighboring business, *Village Cleaners*, in their lease. The business hours of the establishments do not overlap outside of a brief period on Saturday. The Applicant stated that there has never been a conflict over parking availability between the two businesses.
 - Off-street parking dedicated to this establishment is limited to 13 spaces, but many surrounding businesses close prior to the active business hours of this establishment and on-street parking is abundant along Broad Street and nearby side streets.
 - The immediate area is walkable and provides abundant pedestrian infrastructure for nearby residents and outside visitors parked off-site to safely access the establishment.
 - Access to the establishment through public transit is also available via the Route 4 bus.
 - The Applicant stated that patrons often access the establishment through rideshare or combine their visit to the establishment with other restaurants and businesses.
- The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the subject property as “*Neighborhood Commercial / Services*.”
 - Per the Comprehensive Plan, the C-3 zoning district is an appropriate zoning classification for the existing neighborhood pub / tavern use.
 - Neighborhood commercial / services can be classified as small or “localized” commercial uses or establishments that serve the needs of the immediate surrounding area, rather than “destinations” with a widespread appeal. However, the commercial center of the Pawtuxet Village has an appeal beyond its immediate neighborhood.
 - The Proposal is an expansion of an existing neighborhood pub / tavern with live music that has appeal beyond the neighborhood it is located in. The establishment is an existing business which has not had a history of nuisances in the neighborhood and the expansion of the business is unlikely to create a significant change to the access to parking spaces in the neighborhood, despite attracting patrons from beyond the immediate neighborhood.
 - Staff finds that the Application is largely consistent with the Future Land Use Map designation.
- The Comprehensive Plan outlines goals, policies, and action items pertaining to commercial (re)development which Staff find support the approval of this Application, specifically:
 - Economic Development Goal 7: Improve/build neighborhood commercial areas at various sites through formulating and implementing revitalization projects.
 - Economic Development Policy 7.1: Promote the development or redevelopment of neighborhood commercial centers to service local market areas to reduce cross-town traffic. New neighborhood village center developments should be focused at Phenix Avenue and Natick Avenue, and Scituate Avenue and Pippin Orchard Road.

Redevelopment of neighborhood centers should continue to occur at **Pawtuxet Village**, Knightsville, and Rolfe Square.

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.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jonas U. Bruggemann, MSCRP
Senior Planner

Cc: City Planning Director
File