

TO: City Council

Ben Prchal, City Planner FROM:

Variance Request for 11075 32<sup>nd</sup> St. North **AGENDA ITEM:** 

Ken Roberts, Planning Director **REVIEWED BY:** 

**Planning Commission** 

### **BACKGROUND**

The City has received a variance request from applicant Matthew and Amy Knowlan, for the property located at 11075 32<sup>nd</sup> St. The request is for a variance from the City Code requirement which does not allow an accessory building closer to the front lot line than the principle building. The proposed building would meet the allowed size for the property and meet all other setbacks and impervious surface requirements.

### **ISSUE BEFORE CITY COUNCIL**

The City Council is being asked to review the variance request to build an accessory building in front of the home on the property addressed as 11075 32<sup>nd</sup> St.

### **REVIEW/ANALYSIS:**

11075 32<sup>nd</sup> St. North Address: 13.029.21.33.0022 PID:

Existing Land Use/Zoning: Single-family zone as Rural Single Family.

Surrounding Land Use/

Zoning:

Single family homes.

The property has been used as a single family dwelling since 1987. History:

Application Complete - 3/17/2021 Deadline for Action:

> 60 Day Deadline - 5/16/2021 120 Day Deadline – N/A

Applicable Regulations:

• Article V - Zoning Administration and Enforcement

Article XI – Rural Districts

Article XX – Shoreland Management

### PROPOSED VARIANCES

Variance Request. The applicant is requesting to build an accessory building closer to the front lot line than the principle structure.

154.406 C. Structure Location, Rural Districts. No detached garages or other accessory buildings shall be located nearer the front lot line than the principal building on that lot.

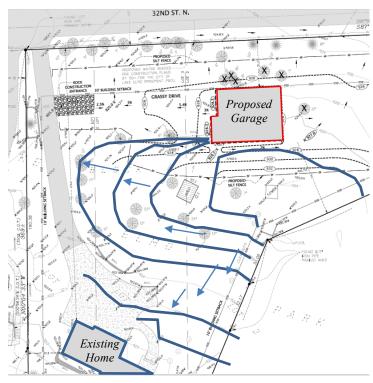
Standard	Required	Proposed
Setback from the Front Property Line.	30 ft.	31 ft.
154.406 C.	Or	The accessory building will be closer to the
	The Principle Structure	front lot line than the home.
Impervious Surface <i>Table 17-3</i>	15% (un-sewered property)	14.4%
Structure Size	1,500 sqft.	1,496 sqft.
154.406 Table 9-3 (1-1.99 acres)	(maximum allowed size)	_

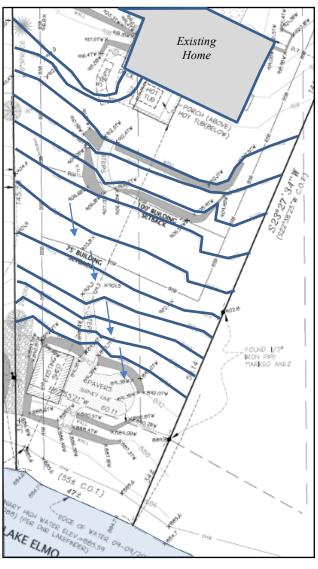
The applicant would like to place the accessory structure closer to the front lot line than the home for several reasons. If the garage was located in the rear yard there would be issues with accessing the building, the structure also could not meet both the setback requirement from the OHWL and top of bluff, and the septic system is also located in the rear yard. Although, it should be known that the property will soon connect to City sewer services (once available). The survey also shows a slope towards the water that would make construction difficult. Staff has determined that the rear yard would be a less ideal location for the accessory building.

Given the size of the front yard it would appear that the accessory building could go in multiple locations. However, after visiting the site Staff can say the applicant has chosen a good location for their building. They would like to build the structure on an already flat piece of ground and they have located the building between the water and sewer utility connections that will be servicing the property. Placing the structure in another location, perhaps closer to the home, would require additional grading.











The above graphic is intended to provide additional insight as to where the accessory building will sit on the property. As mentioned above, the building will be placed to avoid conflicts with the utilities servicing the property. With that said, the site designer has also reached out to the City engineers to ensure there will not be issues between the build and the upcoming public improvement project.

### **AGENCY REVIEW**

All entities and departments who were provided information about the request either had no comment or have not provided a response.

### **Neighboring Comments:**

 $11108 \ 32^{nd} \ St$  – Does not support the request.

11120 32<sup>nd</sup> St. – Does not support the request.

### RECOMMENDED FINDINGS

An applicant must establish and demonstrate compliance with the variance criteria set forth in Lake Elmo City Code Section 154.017 before an exception or modification to city code requirements can be granted. These criteria are listed below, along with comments from Staff regarding applicability of these criteria to the applicant's request.

- 1) Practical Difficulties. A variance to the provision of this chapter may be granted by the Board of Adjustment upon the application by the owner of the affected property where the strict enforcement of this chapter would cause practical difficulties because of circumstances unique to the individual property under consideration and then only when it is demonstrated that such actions will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of this chapter. Definition of practical difficulties
  - "Practical difficulties" as used in connection with the granting of a variance, means that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by an official control.

### **FINDINGS**:

• Variance for Accessory Building Setback: With respect to the proposed variance for the location of structure, strict enforcement of the City's zoning regulations will cause practical difficulties and the applicant is proposing to use the property in a reasonable manner. The request can be considered reasonable when all factors are considered as a whole. The building will meet all other setback requirements, the size of the structure conforms to the sizing requirements of Table 9-3, and the impervious surface requirements for the property will be met. Furthermore, placing the structure in a location where the front lot provision can be met will cause accessibility issues and likely force the need of an additional variance elsewhere on the property.

2) Unique Circumstances. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.

### FINDINGS:

- Variance for Accessory Building Setback: With respect to the proposed variance for the location of the structure, the plight is unique and has not been caused by the applicant. When taking into consideration the pie shaped property tapering towards the rear yard, the existing septic system is in the rear yard, and slopes/top of bluff in the rear yard create a scenario where there is limited space behind the home to place the building.
- 3) Character of Locality. The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality in which the property in question is located.

### FINDINGS:

- **Variance for Size of Structure:** With respect to the proposed variance for the location of the structure, the proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality. In this specific area of the City it is very common to have accessory buildings/detached garages located in front of the homes. The properties addressed as 11055 32<sup>nd</sup> St, 11015 32<sup>nd</sup> St, 10997 32<sup>nd</sup> St, and 3200 Lake Elmo Ave. all have accessory buildings located in the front yard. All of these properties are within 350 ft. of 11075 32<sup>nd</sup> St. With multiple properties also having accessory buildings located within the front yard it is un-reasonable to assume this accessory building will change the character of the locality.
- 4) Adjacent Properties and Traffic. The proposed variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to properties adjacent to the property in question or substantially increase the congestion of the public streets or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood.

### FINDINGS.

• Variance for Accessory Building Setback: With respect to the proposed variance for the location of the structure, the proposed variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to the adjacent property or substantially increase the congestion of the public streets or substantially diminish property values. The location of the structure would not shade the neighboring properties or structures, nor would it impair air flow.

### RECOMMENDATION

### **Fiscal impact:**

None.

### **Conditions of Approval:**

- 1. That the Applicant obtain all applicable permits including but not limited to a City building permit.
- 2. If approved this variance approval is valid for 1 year and would expire on May 4th, 2022. The City must receive a building permit for the accessory building by May 4th, 2022 to keep the approval valid.
- 3. The exterior materials and finishes of the accessory building must comply with City code section 154.406 D. and shall be approved by City Staff. Before the City releases the building permit.

### **Planning commission:**

Recommended approval of the request with the drafted findings and conditions (5-0 vote). Staff also supports this recommendation. During the Commission review the property owner did state they would be plating trees between the building and the roadway to improve the screening.

### **Options:**

The City Council may:

- Recommend approval of the proposed variance, with recommended findings and conditions.
- Amend the recommended findings and conditions and recommend approval of the variance,
- Move to recommend denial of all variance, citing findings for denial.

### **Recommended Motion:**

"Motion to approve the variance request to locate an accessory building closer to the front lot line than the principle building for the property at 11075 32nd St. with recommended findings and conditions of approval"

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1. Narrative
- 3. Location/Site Map
- 2. Survey
- 4. Resolution 2021-054

#### **Item 2: Written Statements**

- a. PROPERTY OWNERS: Matthew John Knowlan & Amy Christine Knowlan
- b. LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

LAKE ELMO PARK Lot 2 Block 1 PT OF LTS 2 & 3 & 4 DESC AS FOLL:COM @ NW COR LT 1 THN S87DEG08'37"W BEARINGS ARE BASED ON WACO COORDINATE SYST S ZONE ALG N LN SD LT 1 DIST 139.93FT TO MOST ELY COR SD LT 2 THNS66DEG07'57"W DIST OF 357.21FT TO POB THN N66DEG07'57"E DIST 357.21FT TO SD

PID#: 12.029.21.33.0022

PARCEL SIZE: 1.52 acres

**EXISTING USE OF LAND: Homestead** 

**CURRENT ZONING: RS (Rural Single Family)** 

 LAKE ELMO CITY CODE section 154.402 table 9-2.

- d. The city of Lake Elmo requires a landowner to put a detached garage behind the house on the property. It is not possible to put the detached garage behind the house on our property. The reason for this is that there is a steep hill and a lake behind the house, making it an unattainable endeavor. We have quite a bit of room on our property in the front of the house to put a detached garage. We bought this property with the house already in existence. By building this property we are not exceeding the 15% impervious surface area. That is what is currently the city compliance on our property, as we are using a septic system.
  - e. Below are the email & phone correspondences with Ben Prchal-Lake Elmo City Planner:

Ben Prchal <a href="mailto:bprchal@lakeelmo.org">bprchal@lakeelmo.org</a>

To:

matt k,Amy Knowlan

Wed. Nov 4 at 10:48 AM

I do not know if a surveyor can update old surveys but the one submitted with the application will need to have contours and show the proposed location of the building. The survey from 1985 is missing some information beyond those two things, such as the driveway and setback notations.

under consideration and then only when it is demonstrated that such actions will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of this chapter.

a. Definition of Practical Difficulties. "Practical difficulties." as used in connection with the granting of a variance, means that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by an official control.

Essentially is the request reasonable? I think there are multiple factors that come into play when reviewing this criteria. For example, is it reasonable to ask for an accessory building on your lot? I would say yes, the code allows an accessory building. But let's say there was room in the rear yard, the request now might not be as reasonable. Or for another example, it may be reasonable to ask for an accessory building but it may not be reasonable to ask for an accessory building that pushes the impervious surface of the lot to a "higher" percentage. It should be known that variance review is somewhat discretionary and the interpretation of what is too high varies.

2. Unique Circumstances. The problem for the landowner/applicant which the proposed variance is intended to correct must be due to circumstances that are unique to the property in question and that were not created by the land owner/applicant.

This is kind of a two part question. Did you (the property owner) cause the "issues" on site/are you the reason a variance is required. If no, then what is unique about your property that variance approval is warranted? For example, if you built the home chances are you would not receive a favorable finding for this criteria.

- 3. Character of Locality. The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality in which the property in question is located.
  - a. Definition of Locality. For purposes of this subsection, "locality" shall be defined as all that property within 350 feet of the property proposed for the variance; however, in all events, it shall include all parcels abutting the affected parcel, including those immediately across a public street, alley of other public property.
- **4.** Adjacent Properties and Traffic. The proposed variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to property adjacent to the property in question or substantially increase the congestion of the public streets or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood.

Ben: There will be conversations that will be made between the surveyor and the construction managers, but not sure at what stage that occurs

Army & Matt: We will follow up with our surveyor and see if that is a service they provide. How long does it typically take from submitting paperwork to actually receiving an answer about the variance from the city

Ben: roughly 2 months give or take days/weeks

Amy & Matt: Before we officially submit the variance paperwork to the city could you look it over to make sure that we have filled out all aspects of it properly.

Ben: Yes please submit any paperwork and we can go over it. The process can be overwhelming, I am happy to help.

Ben Prchal <br/>
Sprchal@lakeelmo.org>
To:
mattk888@yahoo.com

Amy Knowlan

Mon, Jan 25 at 11:54 AM

A zoning code amendment took place a while back regarding accessory buildings. It had recently removed the door height requirement of 14 ft. However, section 154.213 still has the ability to regulate accessory buildings within the City.

#### Section 154.213 B

Detached Residential Accessory Building. A 1-story accessory building primarily used or intended for the storage of automobiles and other miscellaneous equipment. No door or other access opening shall exceed 14 feet in height.

I do not think this impacts the size that you would like to build but it would limit the height and the ability to have two stories.

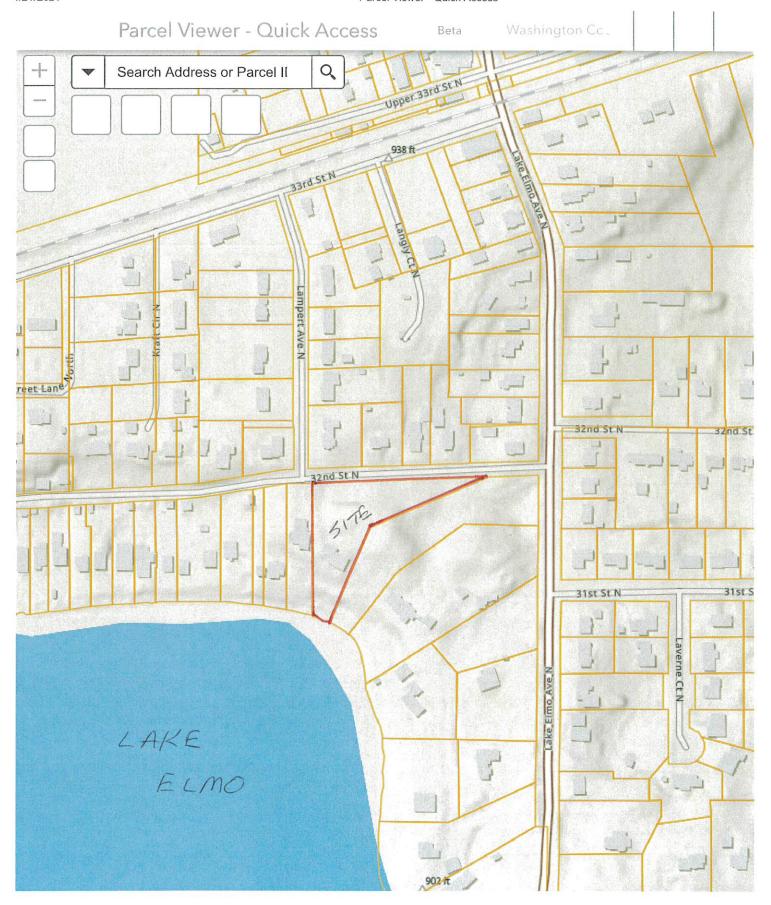
Thank you,

So that you are aware I am looking into this further to see if it will for sure be applicable for your request.

Ben Prchal, City Planner City of Lake Elmo 651-747-3911

## Washington County, MN





LOCATION MAP

**300ft** -92.867 44.998 Degrees



# KNOWLAN RESIDENCE

### CONTACT:

Amy and Matthew Knowlan 11075 32ND St. N. Lake Elmo, MN 550421

### COUNTY/CITY:

WASHINGTON COUNTY

CITY OF LAKE ELMO

## **LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

### (LEGAL DESCRIPTION PER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NO. 75152)

That part of Lots 2, 3, and 4, Block 1, LAKE ELMO PARK, according to the plat thereof on file and of record in the office of the County

Recorder, Washington County, Minnesota described as follows: Commencing at the northeast corner of Lot 1, Block 1, of said LAKE ELMO PARK; thence South 87 degrees 08 minutes 37 seconds West, bearings are based on the Washington County Coordinate System South Zone, along the north line of said Lot 1, a distance of 139.93 feet to the most easterly corner of said Lot 2; thence South 66 degrees 07 minutes 57 seconds West, a distance of 357.21 feet to the point of beginning; thence North 66 degrees 07 minutes 57 seconds East a distance of 357.21 feet to the said most easterly corner of Lot 2; thence South 87 degrees 08 minutes 37 seconds West, along the north line of said Block 1, a distance of 487.57 feet to its intersection with the east line of the West 15.00 feet of Lot 4; thence South 00 degrees 56 minutes 24 seconds East, along said east line of the west 15.00 feet a distance of 350 feet, more or less, to the shore of Lake Elmo, thence southeasterly, along said shore of Lake Elmo, a distance of 55 feet, more or less, to its intersection with a line that bears South 22 degrees 38 minutes 25 seconds West from the point of beginning; thence North 22 degrees 38 minutes 25 seconds East, a distance of 267 feet, more or less to the point of beginning.

FOUND 1/2"

IRON PIPE MARKED ANEZ

## **BENCHMARKS**

ELEVATIONS BASED ON INFORMATION AS SHOWN ON THE MNDOT GEODETIC WEBSITE. SURVEY DISK S 27 WITH AN ELEVATION OF 935.67 WAS USED TO ESTABLISH VERTICAL CONTROL FOR THIS SURVEY

PROJECT BENCHMARK IS THE TOP OF HYDRANT AT THE NW CORNER OF 32ND ST. N. & LAMPERT AVE. N. ELEVATION=9034.39 (NAVD88)

## **SURVEY NOTES:**

1496

14.4%

66876 SQ. FT.

PROPOSED GARAGE

TOTAL LOT AREA

% IMPROVED

TOTAL PROP IMPROVEMENTS 9652 SQ.FT.

- 1. BEARINGS ARE BASED ON COORDINATES SUPPLIED BY THE WASHINGTON COUNTY SURVEYORS OFFICE.
- 2. UNDERGROUND UTILITIES SHOWN PER VISIBLE FEATURES, GOPHER STATE ONE CALL LOCATES AND AS-BUILTS PLANS PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF LAKE ELMO PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.
- 3. THERE MAY SOME UNDERGROUND UTILITIES, GAS, ELECTRIC, ETC. NOT SHOWN OR LOCATED.
- 4. FIELDWORK WAS COMPLETED FEBRUARY 02, 2021.

## **UNDERGROUND UTILITIES NOTES:**

THE UNDERGROUND UTILITIES SHOWN HAVE BEEN LOCATED FROM FIELD SURVEY INFORMATION AND EXISTING DRAWINGS. THE SURVEYOR MAKES NO GUARANTEE THAT THE UNDERGROUND UTILITIES SHOWN COMPRISE ALL SUCH UTILITIES IN THE AREA, EITHER IN SERVICE OR ABANDONED. THE SURVEYOR FURTHER DOES NOT WARRANT THAT THE UNDERGROUND UTILITIES SHOWN ARE IN THE EXACT LOCATION INDICATED ALTHOUGH HE DOES CERTIFY THAT THEY ARE LOCATED AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE FROM THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE. THIS SURVEY HAS NOT PHYSICALLY LOCATED THE UNDERGROUND UTILITIES. GOPHER STATE ONE CALL LOCATE TICKET NUMBER(S) 210271090. SOME MAPS WERE RECEIVED, WHILE OTHER UTILITIES DID NOT RESPOND TO THE LOCATE REQUEST. ADDITIONAL UTILITIES OF WHICH WE ARE UNAWARE MAY



## TITLE NOTES:

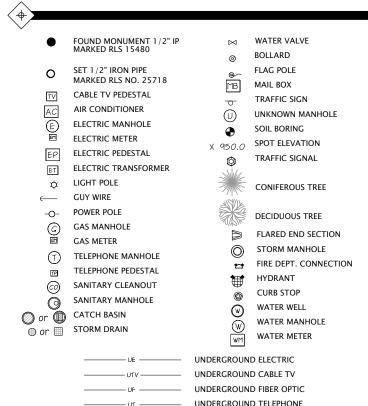
PER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NO. 75152. THERE ARE NO EASEMENTS LISTED ON THE MEMORIAL ON THE ABOVE MENTIONED CERTIFICATE OF TITLE. ADDITIONAL EASEMENTS OF WHICH WE ARE UNAWARE MAY EXIST.

\$87°57'46"W (\$87°08'37"W C.O.T.)

## LOT AREA:

PARCEL AREA TO OHW: 66,876 SQ. FT / 1.54 ACRES.

## LEGEND



UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC
UNDERGROUND CABLE TV
UNDERGROUND FIBER OPT
UNDERGROUND TELEPHON
OVERHEAD UTILITY
UNDERGROUND GAS
SANITARY SEWER
STORM SEWER
WATERMAIN
FENCE
CURB [TYPICAL]
CONTOURS
BUILDING LINE
BITUMINOUS SURFACE
CONCRETE SURFACE
TREE TO BE REMOVED
PROPOSED ELEVATION

PROPOSED CONTOUR

DIRECTION OF FLOW WITH GRADE

PER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE

## **REVISIONS:**

. \	
DATE	REVISION
03-04-2021	INITIAL ISSUE
03-09-2021	ADD PROP CITY IM
03-15-2021	MOVE ADD. 10 FT.

## **CERTIFICATION:**

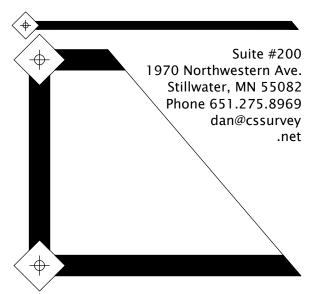
I hereby certify that this plan was prepared by me, or under my direct supervision, and that I am a duly Licensed Land Surveyor under the laws of the state of Minnesota.

Daniel L. Thurmes Registration Number: 25718

Date: 03-04-2021

PROJECT LOCATION:

11075 32ND ST. N. PID#1302921330022



CORNERSTONE LAND SURVEYING, INC.

FILE NAME PROJECT NO.

PLA19001B **CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY** 

SURVPLA01B

### CITY OF LAKE ELMO WASHINGTON COUNTY STATE OF MINNESOTA

### **RESOLUTION NO 2021-054**

A RESOLUTION APPROVING A VARIANCE TO ALLOW THE PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS 11075 32<sup>ND</sup> ST., TO CONSTRUCT AN ACCESSORY BUILDING CLOSER TO THE FRONT LOT LINE THAN THE PRINCIPLE STRUCTURE.

WHEREAS, Matthew and Amy Knowlan (the "Applicant") owners of 111075 32<sup>nd</sup> St., Lake Elmo MN 55042 (the "Property") has submitted an application to the City of Lake Elmo (the "City") for a variance(s) to allow the construction of an accessory building which will meet all zoning requirements, except that it will be closer to the front lot line than the principle structure; and

**WHEREAS,** notice has been published, mailed, and posted pursuant to the Lake Elmo Zoning Code, Section 154.109; and

**WHEREAS,** the Lake Elmo Planning Commission held a public hearing on said variance(s) on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lake Elmo Planning Commission has submitted its report and recommendations with respect to the requested variances to the City Council as part of the City Staff Memorandum dated May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the City Council considered the variances at its May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting; and

**NOW, THEREFORE,** based on the testimony elicited and information received, the City Council makes the following:

### **FINDINGS**

- 1) That the procedures for obtaining a variance are found in the Section 154.109 of the Lake Elmo Zoning Code.
- 2) That all submission requirements of Section 154.109 of the Lake Elmo Zoning Code have been met by the Applicants.
- 3) That the proposed variances include the following components:
  - a) The construction of an accessory building which will sit closer to the front property line than the principle structure on site but will also meet all other zoning setback requirements.
- 4) **Practical Difficulties** as used in connection with the granting of a variance, means that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by an official control;

- Variance for Accessory Building Setback: With respect to the proposed variance for the location of structure, strict enforcement of the City's zoning regulations will cause practical difficulties and the applicant is proposing to use the property in a reasonable manner. The request can be considered reasonable when all factors are considered as a whole. The building will meet all other setback requirements, the size of the structure conforms to the sizing requirements of Table 9-3, and the impervious surface requirements for the property will be met. Furthermore, placing the structure in a location where the front lot provision can be met will cause accessibility issues and likely force the need of a variance elsewhere on the property.
  - 5) **Unique Circumstances** the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner;
- Variance for Accessory Building Setback: With respect to the proposed variance for the location of the structure, the plight is unique and has not been caused by the applicant. When taking into consideration the pie shaped property tapering towards the rear yard, the existing septic system is in the rear yard, and slopes/top of bluff in the rear yard create a scenario where there is limited space behind the home to place the building.
- 6) **Character of Locality** the proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality in which the property in question is located;
- Variance for Size of Structure: With respect to the proposed variance for the location of the structure, the proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality. In this specific area of the City it is very common to have accessory buildings/detached garages located in front of the homes. The properties addressed as 11055 32<sup>nd</sup> St, 11015 32<sup>nd</sup> St, 10997 32<sup>nd</sup> St, and 3200 Lake Elmo Ave. all have accessory buildings located in the front yard. All of these properties are within 350 ft. of 11075 32<sup>nd</sup> St. With multiple properties also having accessory buildings located within the front yard it is unreasonable to assume this accessory building will change the character of the locality.
  - 7) **Adjacent Properties and Traffic** the proposed variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to properties adjacent to the property in question or substantially increase the congestion of the public streets or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood;
- Variance for Accessory Building Setback: With respect to the proposed variance for the location of the structure, the proposed variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to the adjacent property or substantially increase the congestion of the public streets or substantially diminish property values. The location of the structure would not shade the neighboring properties or structures, nor would it impair air flow.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND DECISION**

The City Council hereby approves the requested variance to build an accessory structure closer to the front lot line than the principle structure for the property addressed as 11075 32<sup>nd</sup> St. The conditions for approval for the variance are outlined below:

- 1. That the Applicant obtain all applicable permits including but not limited to a City building permit.
- 2. If approved this variance approval is valid for 1 year and would expire on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The City must receive a building permit for the accessory building by May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 to keep the approval valid.
- 3. The exterior materials and finishes of the accessory building must comply with City code section 154.406 D. and shall be approved by City Staff. Before the City releases the building permit.

Passed and duly adopted this 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2021 by the City Council of the City of Lake Elmo, Minnesota.

	Mayor, Charles Cadenhead
ATTEST:	
Julie Johnson, City Clerk	<del></del>