



MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Jeramy Neefus, Principal Clerk, City Manager's Office
Date: October 24, 2025
Subject: Packet of Communications to Council

Listed below are the communications to the City Council known to staff as of October 24, 2025:

1. Martha Atkins, Ames Resident – October 11, 2025
RE: Request for Immediate Stormwater Management Improvements at the Southeast Corner of Hoover Avenue and Adams Street
2. Martin Laird, Ames Resident – October 15, 2025
RE: Request for "No Bicycles" Signs on 6th Street Sidewalks
3. Tim Ashley, Ames Resident – October 23, 2025
RE: Request for Zoning Text Amendment for Stairway Enclosure
4. Kelly Diekmann, Planning and Housing Director – October 24, 2025
RE: JT Logistics Warehouse Landscaping Request

Hall, Renee

From: mannatkings@aol.com
Sent: Saturday, October 11, 2025 11:02 AM
To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: Emergency Request for Immediate Stormwater Management on Southeast Corner of Hoover Avenue and Adams Street
Attachments: DSC07478.JPG

[External Email]

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

Emergency Request for Immediate Stormwater Management on Southeast Corner of Hoover Avenue and Adams Street

This request is for you to authorize a second culvert for storm sewer intake at the southeast corner of Hoover Avenue and Adams Street. This culvert is needed immediately, and is not so costly that it need be deferred into a long-term capital improvements plan. Corrective action is needed now. Here is the problem, and the rationale for this solution.

The problem:

When serious rain events occur, there is always an enormous amount of stormwater runoff rapidly flowing westerly downhill between Adams Street and Kinyon Circle. This water flows into a low-lying natural basin on the southeast corner of Hoover Avenue and Adams Street. A concrete culvert for storm sewer intake is in place at this location. On two previous occasions this culvert has proved inadequate at draining this fast-running water. The result was that our neighbor at 3918 Hoover Avenue had her basement flooded twice. Her home is currently sandbagged. This year, during a July rain event, water closely approached her house again (see attached photo). The water spread out in all directions since water will always seek its own level.

City staff is aware of the drainage problem at this corner. We have been told that the right of way area on Hoover Avenue was lowered so that extreme levels of water would actually flow over the curb and into the roadway rather than first flooding area homeowners. The limitation of this untested theory is that only after the water has spread out to every low-lying adjacent area can it then go up and over the curb. Water does not flow up until it has spread out as far as possible. Water will not flow into the roadway until it fills in all of the areas where it can spread. The problem is that the city has an untested theory.

New Development:

This corner has always been a vacant lot, but a new home is now being built there. This residence will cover about half of the existing stormwater basin. Shrinking the size of the stormwater basin where fast-moving water collects and drains slowly, eventually, will increase the floodwater risk for a number of area homeowners. We see specific risk to existing properties as the water overspreads the area.

Solution:

We have been told that the existing culvert for storm sewer intake, which stretches maybe 30 feet to the storm sewer, is pre-formed and can not be altered. We understand that. But there is ample room in this stormwater basin to install a second culvert nearby and allow twice as much water to exit into the storm sewer. We believe this is a much better solution than simply “hoping” the water will climb uphill and overflow the curb into the roadway.

Action Needed Now:

New home construction at this corner lot will completely alter the character of the stormwater basin. The basin capacity is being reduced by 50% by this new house. The excess water has to go somewhere, and it will likely spread out to low-lying adjacent areas before it can overflow the curb. Therefore, this modest corrective action is needed immediately, as opposed to getting in some kind of major capital

improvement line. A second storm water culvert is needed now to facilitate the removal of water before residential properties are flooded. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely, Joe Rippetoe and Martha Atkins, 1317 Kinyon Circle

I would like to request No bicycle signs on the sidewalks of 6th st. I have been ^{almost} run over multiple times and am tired of looking over my shoulder to see if anyone is coming up behind me.

another issue is with electric bikes and scooters. they are very quiet and fast and people do not announce themselves when coming up behind

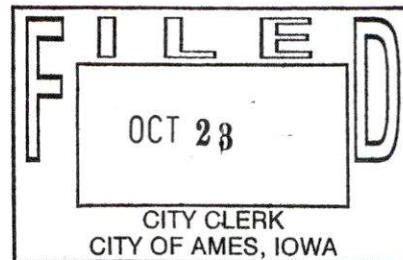
If someone on the city council wants to contact me my name is Martin Laird

515-598-6236

Tim Ashley

TASHLEY@HOGANHANSEN.COM

515-509-8731



To: Mayor and City Council
From: Tim Ashley
Date: October 22, 2025
Subject: Request for a Code Amendment

I am a resident of Ames at 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive. The residence is in a Residential Low Density Zone and is currently a two-family conversion, split foyer frame. 1422 is registered with the city as a rental property.

The current resident of 1422 is an elderly family member who moved into the apartment in June 2019. After the first couple of winter seasons, it became apparent that the entry way into the apartment, which is depressed below ground level (4 feet) and has five stair steps down to the landing area, would need to be covered in order to provide a dry, safe entry way into the apartment. The current tenant is minimally stable on her feet and given adverse conditions (snow/ice) is very much a fall risk (for longer walking distances she requires some form of walking aide). The tenant was moved to Ames from Western Iowa about 6 years ago in an effort to keep her out of any facilities (independent living, assisted living, nursing home, etc.) due to a lack of financial resources (her sole income is IPERS and Social Security), because available medical services were not easily accessible in a rural town, and because her wishes are to stay out of these facilities as long as possible. Moving to Ames was her best option to be with family and to be nearer to medical facilities. Without the ability to keep this stairway fully covered during the winter season would likely mean that she would no longer be able to live in the residence.

The NW corner of the residence, which is the location of the entryway for 1422, is about 10 feet from the property line. In this Residential Low Density district, however, there is an 8-foot setback code that prohibits me from constructing or placing any type of enclosed structure around the stairway and landing area to keep it free of snow and ice. This includes both permanently attached structures as well as temporary structures. The stairway and landing area are 4 feet wide (entire stairway with the retaining wall are about 4 feet 8 inches wide) and are allowed to encroach into the 8 foot setback. This also includes a wrought iron railing that surrounds the stairway that is about 44" tall. These structures are allowed to encroach the setback.

Two options were presented by the Zoning Board of Adjustments. The first option presented was to add an awning over the entry way, which is allowed to encroach the setback by 3 feet. While this provides some functionality from above the structure, the ability to maintain a safe stairway would be minimal because of the open sides. Therefore, an awning does not address the safety problem. The second option was to request a Minor Area Modification, which would allow the covering to extend into the setback area by 2 feet. While this appears to be an option, it would not cover the entire stairway structure. Inside maintenance would be required and the structure itself would have an odd appearance since it would leave part of the area uncovered. Because I already had a temporary structure constructed that covered the entire stairway, I opted to pursue a full Variance.

To receive the requested area, dimensional, or other numerical variance, the property owner must prove that:

1. The practical difficulties faced are unique to the property at issue and not self-created,
2. Demonstrate that granting the variance will not significantly alter the essential character of the surrounding neighborhood,
3. The spirit of the ordinance shall be observed even when the variance is granted, and
4. Substantial justice shall be done as a result of granting the variance.

We were able to satisfy the ZBA on points 2-4, but the request was denied for the first point based on the difficulties not being unique to the property.

So because of the current 8-foot setback requirement, it is not possible to construct a full enclosure around the entire entryway to this apartment without being approved for the variance or requesting an amendment to the current code. This creates a real challenge for us that aims to improve the safety for the resident currently occupying the residence, or any future residence who may also have the same medical concerns/considerations. We also want to make sure that any structure that would be allowed to enclose the full area is attractive and retains a positive character for "curb appeal". The current structure was designed to be fully enclosed during the winter season but open on the sides to allow for light and open view during the other seasons. The current structure has also received support from neighboring residents.

Because the existing stairway, railing, and landing are all allowed to encroach into the 8-foot setback area, it seems logical and consistent with allowing the area directly above it to be fully covered and enclosed. Even with the entire area fully enclosed, the structure still maintains a 4-5 foot distance from the property line. Additionally, I am concerned with the liability issue. If a tenant should fall because of snow and ice and incur injury, I believe the tenant would have the right to pursue legal action. As a landlord, I am trying to provide an enclosing that would minimize the risk of any adverse legal actions.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the City amend the 8-foot setback code in such a manner that would allow me to construct and place a full covering/enclosure directly above and around the existing stairway and landing area that addresses the safety concerns as well as any liability concerns that exist.

I am also attaching the variance application, the ZBA meeting agenda and decision, dimensional sketches, and photos of the area.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tim and Tess Ashley

Attachment C – Application

1. Variance Standards

- a. **The practical difficulties faced are unique to the property at issue and not self-created:** The current tenant is the home owner's elderly parent (age 82). The tenant is minimally stable on her feet and given adverse conditions (snow/ice) is very much a fall risk (for longer walking distances she requires some form of walking aide). The tenant was moved to Ames from Western Iowa about 6 years ago in an effort to keep her out of any facilities (independent living, assisted living, nursing home, etc.) due to a lack of financial resources (her sole income is IPERS and Social Security), because available medical services were not easily available (her previous residence was Anthon, Iowa with all medical services being provided in Sioux City, Iowa.), and because her wishes are to stay out of these facilities as long as possible. Moving to Ames was her best option to be with family and near to medical facilities.

The property is a Two Family Conversion, split foyer frame. The tenant occupies one half of the lower level. The entry way (stairway) into the apartment is on the Northwest corner of the property. No modifications have been made to the apartment or the stairway since we purchased the residence in 2000. We have replaced the railing around the stairway, but there has never been a covering or awning to protect the entry/landing area.

Currently, both my spouse and I are full time employees locally and are typically not at the house during normal business hours. The tenant is still mobile and still has the ability to drive.

Without some type of covering or enclosure, this entryway becomes an extreme hazard for the tenant, especially in the winter months when snow/ice cannot be removed immediately. Wet stairs could also be a hazard for her, although at a much lesser degree.

The open exposure to natural elements was not a self-imposed limitation that we created...it existed this way before we purchased the residence. If we cannot keep this entry free from snow and ice, then it is highly likely that the tenant will no longer be able to live in the apartment. Therefore, the "beneficial use and enjoyment" of being able to provide affordable housing for an elderly parent whose wishes are to live with her family will be adversely impacted.

An important note here is that a temporary covering/enclosure has already been created (and has existed for a number of years). I was not aware of the building permit requirement and it came to my attention during the most recent annual inspection of the apartment. After learning my options, I did attempt to submit the building permit, but that was immediately denied because of the 8 foot set back rule that does not allow the structure as currently constructed. An option was presented to me that would allow the addition of an awning over the entryway. However, an awning will not eliminate the hazards that I've outlined above.

- b. **Granting the variance will not significantly alter the essential character of the surrounding neighborhood:** This request will not alter the character of the surrounding neighborhood in that it only provides for a temporary covering/enclosure for the entryway that already exists, which is consistent with external entryways of this type in newer home constructions. The structure would be altered to blend into the structure of the residence.
- c. **The spirit of the ordinance shall be observed even when the variance is granted:** The intent of this variance is to provide a temporary solution to a hazardous living situation and is not intended to be a long term, permanent solution after the current tenant has left the residence, either because of passing or

because the need to be in assisted living arises. The structure would remain temporary and removable, if required. I believe Zoning Ordinances are put in place to make sure, at least in part, to maintain safe living conditions. It is the sole purpose of this variance request to provide a safe entry for an elderly tenant, which would involve creating a fully covered structure over the stairway. As mentioned earlier, the structure already exists and has done exactly what its intended purposes has been for the past 3-4 winters. It has allowed her to navigate the doorway and stairs completely clear of snow and ice.

- d. **Substantial justice shall be done as a result of granting the variance:** Again, the tenant has expressed a deep desire to stay out of facility care as long as possible by being able to live with her children. But the property must be made safe for her in order to allow her to do so. An awning will not keep snow and ice off from the stairs and even by using preventative measures (salt and even removal), these stairs will be hazardous and likely impassable for her without presenting a high probability of slipping/falling.

AGENDA
AMES ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
ROOM 154 FINANCE CONFERENCE ROOM – CITY HALL MAIN FLOOR
515 CLARK AVENUE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes of the meeting of July 23, 2025.
2. Public Hearing on a request for a Variance of four feet to allow a fence greater than the four-foot maximum height in the front yard and front yard setback at 1005 Yuma Avenue. (Parcel Number 09-05-104-090).
3. Public Hearing on a request for a Variance to reduce the side setbacks for a two-story home from eight feet to six feet along the south property line and four feet along the north property line at 216 N Hazel. (Parcel Number 09-03-455-160)
4. Public Hearing on a request for a Variance to the eight-foot side yard setback in the (RL) Residential Low Density Zoning District at 1420 & 1422 Coolidge Drive (Parcel Number 05-34-400-170).

COMMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT:

Complete legal description of subject property can be found in the Planning Department's Office, 515 Clark Avenue.

ITEM #: 4
DATE: 08-27-2025

**CITY OF AMES
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND HOUSING
REPORT TO THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

REQUEST: A Request for a Practical Difficulties Variance to allow a structure to encroach into the 8-foot side setback at 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive in the "RL" Residential Low Density Zoning District.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, Timothy Ashley, is requesting a variance to allow an existing covered entryway to remain as is and encroach (approximately 3.5 feet) how many feet) into the 8-foot minimum side yard setback at 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive (Attachment A). The setback at the closest point would be 4.5 feet if the variance is granted. The enclosure was noted as zoning violation as part of rental property inspection. The structure is viewed as an addition to the principal building with it being attached to the home.

Built in 1965, the structure was built as a single-family home and converted to a duplex. The Residential Low Density "RL" Zoning District (Attachment B) allows two-family conversions if they are pre-existing. One of the units, 1422, is registered with the City as a rental.

Mr. Ashley and his wife purchased the property in 2000. The house is designed in the split-level style, specifically as a bi-level split: the front door enters onto a landing with a short staircase that goes up and a short staircase that goes down. The lower level is partially out of the ground.

The units on the property have separate exterior entrances: 1420 has its entrance at the front door in the center of the primary façade and 1422 has its entrance to the side (west) of the house. The entrance to 1422, the rental unit, has the encroachment in question. The 1422 entrance is depressed below the ground level and has a short flight of five stairs down to a landing in front of the door. The stairs, landing, and surrounding retaining wall are concrete. Stairs at or below grade are allowed to encroach within setbacks.

The property has a rental permit, which requires regular inspection. A rental Letter of Compliance was issued in September of 2021 for three years. In September of 2024, the inspection renewal began. At that time, rental inspection staff noticed that the roof and the enclosed entryway had been added without permits and informed the property owners that the additions would need to be removed. The rental inspection was completed, except for the outstanding issue at hand, by January 2, 2025.

A review of Google Streetview images shows that the roof existed in July of 2022. The enclosed entryway is shown in an image in October of 2024.

The roof projects 5 feet, 4.5 inches from the house to cover the stairs and a depressed landing (Attachment D & E). The roof is supported by posts set just beyond the retaining wall. The enclosed entryway is the same width as the roof, though it is higher to account for the elevation change at the top of the stairs. The enclosed entryway also projects beyond the front of the house, though there is no front yard setback encroachment.

The new construction, both roof and enclosed entryway, was built without permits and encroaches into the 8-foot side yard setback. The RL district requires an 8-foot side yard setback for two-story structures. The west property line of 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive is not perpendicular to the house; it angles away from the front property line and becomes farther from the house the farther back it goes.

City staff described allowable encroachments and projections into setbacks to the owner. If all criteria are met, a 2-foot encroachment might be approved as a Minor Area Modification or a 3-foot projection of a covering that is unsupported is allowable by-right. The applicant has chosen to request a variance to allow for the full covering within the setbacks.

According to the applicant, at its closest point on the northwest corner, the house is approximately 10 feet from the property line. The house is therefore 2 feet from the minimum 8-foot side setback. A Minor Area Modification (if the criteria were met and if granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment) could project 4 feet from the house. This projection would not cover the entirety of the stairway, which is over 5 feet wide. The projection, however, could have posts set into the ground.

STATEMENT OF APPLICANT IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSAL:

The applicant has submitted responses to the variance criteria. See the attached supporting information prepared by the applicant as part of the "Variance Application Packet". Portions of this information in addition to the staff findings are summarized within the addendum.

APPLICABLE LAW:

The applicant requests a "Practical Difficulties" variance in relation to numeric standards of the Zoning Ordinance. The Board shall determine, pursuant to Iowa law, whether all the standards for granting of a variance are satisfied by the Variance Request. **Based upon the criteria defined by state law, the application submitted, and the conditions of the site, staff was not able to make findings in support of the variance.** The Criteria for Approval and Findings of Fact prepared by staff are included in the Addendum.

Pertinent Sections of the *Ames Municipal Code*, Chapter 29, Zoning, include the following:

Sec. 29.1504. VARIANCE

- (4) **Standards.** Pursuant to Iowa law, a variance, as defined by Iowa Code section 414.12(3), to the terms of this ordinance, including use, shall be granted only if all the following standards are satisfied:
- (5) **Standards for Area, Dimensional, or other Numerical Limitations.** A variance for area, dimensional or other numerical limitations as defined by Iowa Code Section 414.12(4) may be granted where owing to special conditions, a literal enforcement of the provisions of the ordinance will result in practical difficulties to the property owner in making a beneficial use of the property allowed by the zoning ordinance, and so that the spirit of the ordinance shall be observed and substantial justice done. Area, dimensional, or other numerical limitations subject to variances include but are not limited to requirements for minimum lot size, setbacks, yard widths, height, bulk, sidewalks, fencing, signage and off-street parking.

To receive the requested area, dimensional, or other numerical variance, the property owner must prove that:

- (a) The practical difficulties faced are unique to the property at issue and not self-created;
- (b) Demonstrate that granting the variance will not significantly alter the essential character of the surrounding neighborhood;
- (c) The spirit of the ordinance shall be observed even when the variance is granted; and
- (d) Substantial justice shall be done as a result of granting the variance.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION:

Notification was made to all owners of property within 400 feet. A notice of public hearing was placed on the property and published in the newspaper.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Zoning Board of Adjustment may deny this request for a Variance to allow a structure to encroach into the 8-foot side yard setback at 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive by finding there is not evidence that supports the explicit finding of consistency with all the Variance criteria.
2. The Zoning Board of Adjustment, with specific identified findings of consistency for all Variance criteria, may approve a Variance to allow a structure to encroach into the 8-foot side yard setback at 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive.
3. The Zoning Board of Adjustment may table this Variance Request and seek further information from the applicant or from staff.

PLANNING AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Zoning Ordinance outlines the requirements for development in Ames, including minimum setbacks. Minimum setbacks are a standard provision in zoning, particularly in suburban contexts such as the subject property. Setbacks are intended to provide for air and light, for access and separation between buildings, and to maintain a uniform appearance to a neighborhood.

The Zoning Ordinance also allows for limited projections into the minimum setbacks, though none of them would allow for the extent of the requested encroachment at 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive.

The applicant states that the encroachment is necessary because of the age of one of the residents and because of hazards caused by inclement weather. **The standard in the variance criteria, however, is whether or not there are conditions unique to the property. Neither the age of a resident nor the weather is unique to this property.**

The Zoning Board of Adjustment is required to consider a petition for a variance according to the criteria provided in code. Staff does not find that the requested encroachment meets any of the four criteria, particularly the first criterion that there be a condition "unique to the property" as it relates to a practical difficult that is not self-created that warrants the variance.

It is the conclusion of staff that the variance be denied. This is based upon an analysis of the Variance Request and the applicant's information requesting a variance to allow the building at 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive to encroach into the 8-foot side yard setback. **Therefore, the Planning and Housing Department recommends Alternative #1 to deny the Variance Request.**

ADDENDUM

Staff make the following findings of fact and conclusions for each of the Variance criteria.

To receive the requested area, dimensional, or other numerical variance, the property owner must prove that:

- (a) **The practical difficulties faced are unique to the property at issue and not self-created.**

Findings of Fact: The property at 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive meets the required minimum lot width (50 feet at the building line) and the required minimum lot area (6,000 square feet). The lot is 83 feet wide and over 10,000 square feet in size.

The lot is mostly flat: the rear of the lot, which is 110 feet deep, is approximately 4 feet higher than the front.

The applicant states that the variance is needed due to the age of the resident of the rented unit (the applicant's mother) and because of the hazards associated with inclement, winter weather. It is the intent of the applicant to remove the encroaching covering when the current tenant leaves.

Conclusions: The property at 1420-1422 Coolidge Drive does not have physical conditions unique to the property that inhibit compliance with the minimum setbacks. The lot meets the minimum size and width requirements of the RL Zoning District, and the lot is mostly flat.

The applicant states that the variance should be granted because of the age of a resident of the dwelling and because of the risks associated with inclement weather. Neither an individual resident nor winter weather, however, are unique to this particular property. Residents of any age can live in houses across Ames and winter weather (snow, sleet, freezing rain, etc.) affects all properties equally.

The applicant intends for the structure to be temporary, which does not impact the finding that no conditions unique to the property could be identified warranting an encroachment into the minimum side yard setback.

Therefore, the Board can conclude this criterion is not met:

- (b) **Demonstrate that granting the variance will not significantly alter the essential character of the surrounding neighborhood.**

Findings of Fact: The encroaching roof covering and enclosed entryway are small: approximately 12 feet, 3 inches deep by 5 feet, 4.5 inches wide.

There are few two-family conversions in this neighborhood that necessitate a second entrance. The existence of a second front door is atypical for the area, which is zoned for single-family. Of the other duplexes nearby, none has a covered

entryway like that at the subject property.

The applicant states that the structure will have no effect on the surrounding neighborhood character because the structure will be temporary and that the design is consistent with external stairways on new home construction.

Conclusions: No other nearby duplexes or single-family homes could be found to have a similar side entryway or a side entryway that encroaches into a minimum setback. As the entryway is small, however, it is somewhat unobtrusive, though noticeable as the architectural style is markedly different from the rest of the house.

That the applicant intends for the encroaching structure to be temporary does not alter the character or nature of the structure while it exists.

Therefore, the Board can conclude that this criterion is not met.

- (c) The spirit of the Ordinance shall be observed even when the variance is granted.**

Findings of Fact: Minimum setbacks on the front, side, and rear are a standard feature of zoning ordinances, particularly in suburban development such as in the subject neighborhood. The variable side setback with 6 feet for a single-story structure, 8 feet for a two-story structure, etc., has existed in Ames since at least the 1960s. Setbacks preserve the character of a neighborhood and maintain air and light.

The applicant states that the variance should be granted because the encroachment will be temporary and because the structure will provide safety for the resident of the unit. The applicant further states that he sees one of the purposes of a Zoning Ordinance to be maintaining safe living conditions.

Conclusions: The Zoning Ordinance does not allow exceptions to setbacks based on climate. Whether a structure is intended by the applicant to be temporary is not a criterion for consideration. If the presence of inclement weather is the basis for granting a setback encroachment, then all such requests in Ames would need to be granted.

Therefore, the Board can conclude that this criterion is not met.

- (d) Substantial justice shall be done as a result of granting the variance.**

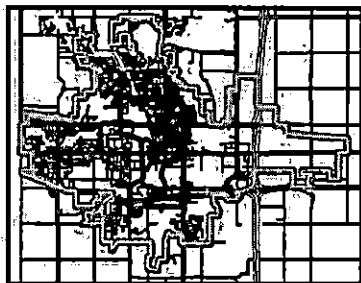
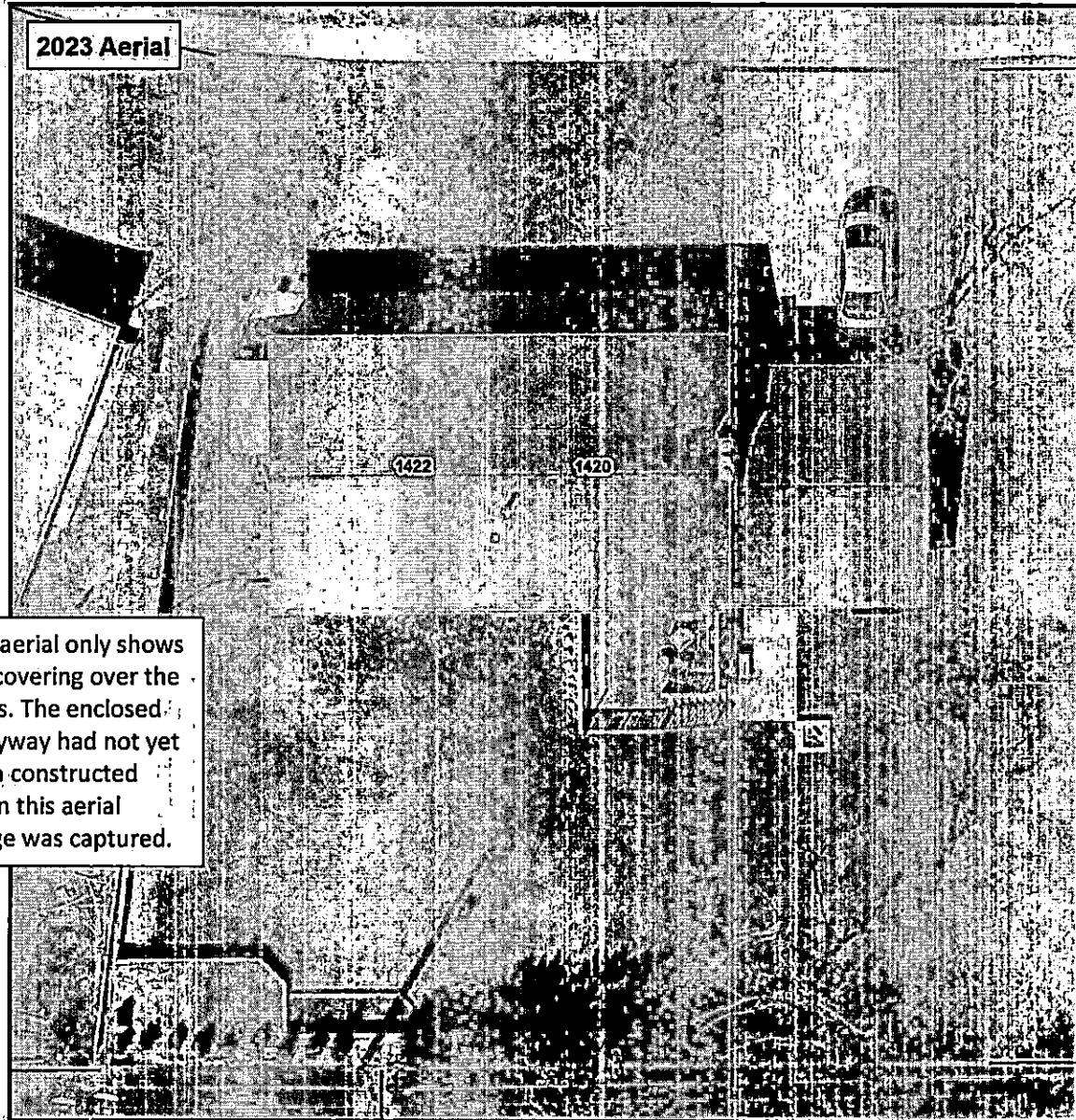
Findings of Fact: Substantial justice speaks to the requirement that the hardship must be peculiar to the property or that an issue of equity in use of property exists. The hardship must be peculiar to the property and not shared by the community.

The applicant states that the resident of the unit would be safer if the stairs are kept covered by the encroaching structure.


Conclusions: The applicant does not point to a unique aspect of the property, nor could staff identify one. From the perspective of the Zoning Code, the age of the residents and the recurrence of winter weather are not relevant.

Therefore, the Board can conclude that this criterion is not met.

Attachment A – Aerial Map



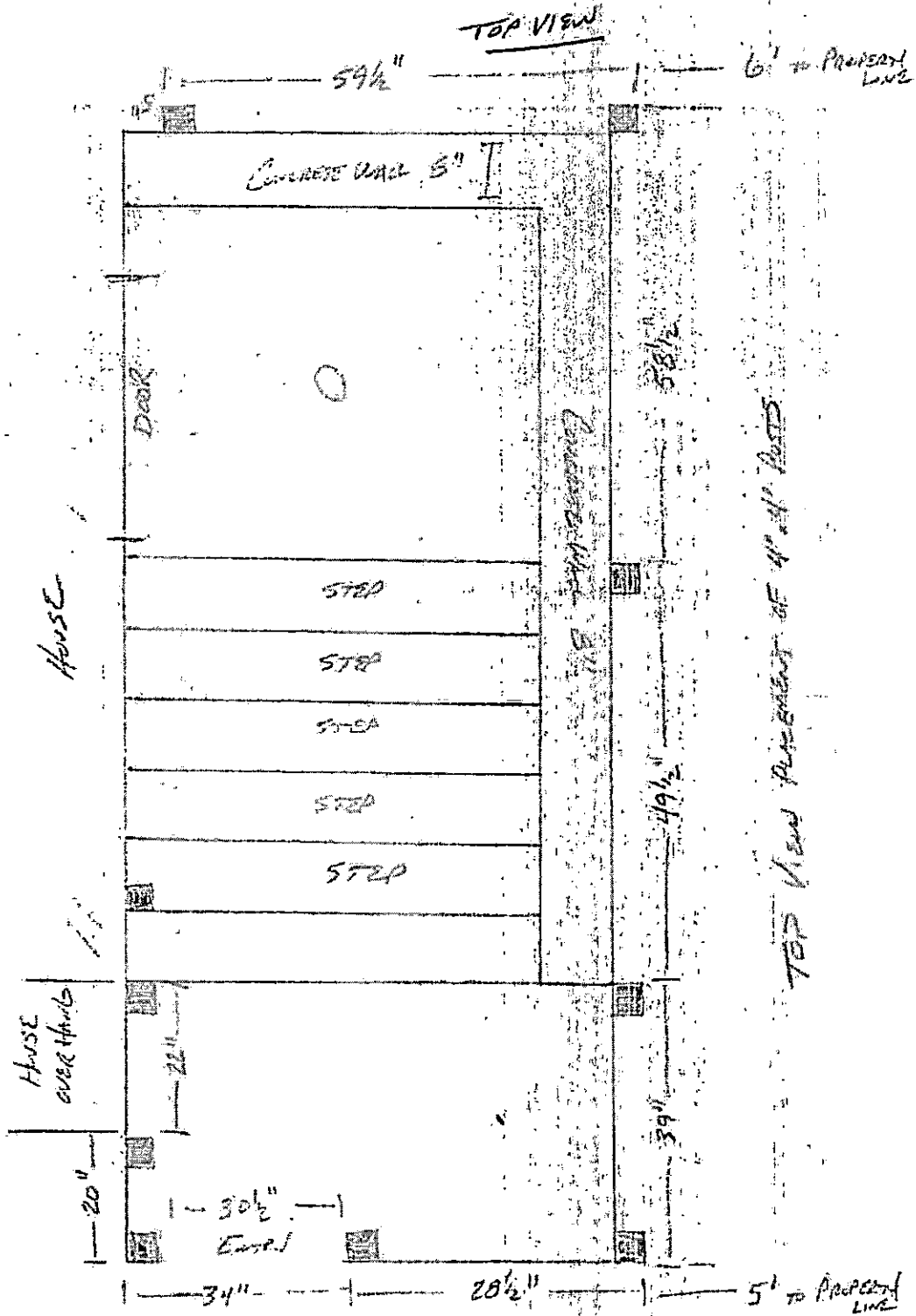
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 1420 & 1422 Coolidge Drive

**Variance Request
Zoning Board of Adjustment
1420 & 1422 Coolidge Drive
August 27, 2025**

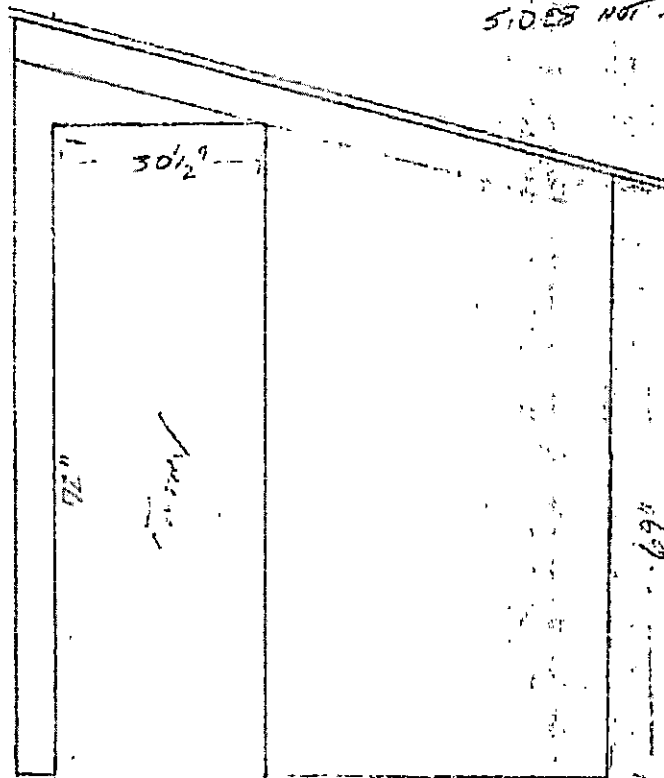
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Attachment D – Applicant Site Plan Drawings



Front View

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MEMO



Caring People ♦ Quality Programs ♦ Exceptional Service

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Kelly Diekmann, Planning & Housing Director
Date: October 23, 2025
Subject: JT Logistics Warehouse Landscaping Request

City Council recently received a letter (see attached) from the developer of the JT Logistics warehouse that is under construction on E. 13th Street. The letter described their interest in adjustments to landscaping for phasing of front yard landscaping and for a substantial reduction in tree plantings to the rear of the site. City Council referred the letter to staff on October 14th.

Staff reached out to a representative of the development group to understand the context of the letter. The issue of phasing landscaping has already been resolved with the recent subdivision of the property into two sites. Landscaping on the vacant lot will not be required with the development of warehouse building on its own separate lot.

The second issue in the letter was a request to eliminate 34 overstory trees at the rear of the site that were required in relation to their parking and maneuvering area landscaping requirements. **Staff understands that the developer made the request with the belief that the City is undertaking a landscape ordinance revision and that their site could have any approved ordinance changes applied to it. However, staff indicated that no landscaping ordinance changes to planting requirements had been initiated by the Council at this time and the parking lot trees were part of the current required landscaping.**

Staff did reassess the approved site plan and the grading for the site, which includes some severe slopes related to stormwater detention in the southwest corner. Staff believes that if there are slope stability issues that some of the trees could be reduced in that area as part of the 20% alternative design process without any ordinance changes by Council. However, most of the trees in the rear of the site are in relatively large and stable planting areas that can accommodate the typical overstory tree planting requirements of the City's ordinance and would not justify full reduction of all trees in that area.

LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE REVISIONS:

City Council has not directed any specific ordinance amendments related to overall landscaping planting requirements for either front yard landscaping or parking lot tree requirement. Staff indicated in April 2025 that based upon some developer feedback, some changes to the landscape standards would be included with the overall Zoning Ordinance rewrite, which has not yet begun.

Staff has received feedback in some cases that overall quantities of plantings exceed developer's expectations. They also dislike the tree dispersion requirements throughout parking

lots. **No specifics were discussed in April about changes and no separate update was directed by Council at that time.**

Staff brought up the issue in April thinking a wholesale rewrite of the 2017 landscaping standards was not needed as they have generally been successful in improving the appearance of the community, but that some reduction in planting ratios for front yards could be accommodated. However, generally staff believes the separate parking lot tree requirement, does not need an adjustment in planting ratios and believes it is one of the more valuable landscape standards as the overstory tree requirement best implements sustainability goals related to site design.

OPTIONS:

The JT Logistics request is focused on a substantial reduction of parking lot tree requirements, which was not an issue that staff had previously considered for a major change. With the Zoning Ordinance rewrite, some changes would occur to landscaping standards. These future changes have not yet been defined. The rewrite has not yet begun and is expected to take 18-24 months to complete in its entirety. This timing would not benefit any project under construction in 2025 or 2026.

Option 1-Interim Text Amendment Front Yard and Parking Lot Landscaping

City Council could direct staff to propose some minor changes to landscaping requirements for front yards and parking lot trees as an interim adjustment to landscaping requirements while awaiting a Zoning Ordinance rewrite. This process would take three months to complete. This may partially reduce landscape requirements as applied to JT warehouse site as part of citywide zoning standards change.

Option 2-Interim Text Amendment Front Yard Landscaping Only

City Council could direct staff to propose some minor changes to landscaping requirements for front yards as originally contemplated by staff in April. These would be an interim adjustment to landscaping requirements while awaiting a Zoning Ordinance rewrite. This process would take three months to complete as a focused reduction in planting ratios. This process would not change JT's rear planting requirements, but could reduce the front yard landscaping.

Option 3-No Change At This Time

If Council is generally satisfied with the City's standards no changes are required to zoning. The developer will be able to make some minor changes under the Alternative Design process, but will retain a significant number of trees on the site. Changes to landscaping standards would be addressed with the rewrite and reviewed comprehensively at that time.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff believes a small, targeted change to planting ratios could be addressed now if desired by the Council. However, a substantial change to the ordinance would be time consuming and not warranted outside of rewrite process. If a targeted change was initiated, staff would continue to recommend our parking lot tree plantings as a valuable standard for the community, and that it should not be reduced substantially.

Hall, Renee

From: Hall, Renee
Sent: Thursday, September 25, 2025 8:28 AM
To: Hall, Renee
Subject: FW: JT Logistics - Ames Construction Project
Attachments: JT Logistics - Ames Construction Project.pdf

From: Minerva Cord <minerva.cord@jtlogistics.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 3:08 PM
To: Haila, John <john.haila@cityofames.org>; City Council and Mayor <mayorcouncil@amescitycouncil.org>
Cc: Jamie Cord <jamie@jtlogistics.com>
Subject: JT Logistics - Ames Construction Project

[External Email]

Dear Mayor Haila,

I wanted to extend my sincere thanks for attending the groundbreaking event for JT Logistics. Your support and presence meant a lot to our team, and it was fantastic to share this special moment with you.

We are very excited about the future of this project and the great opportunity to work closely with the City of Ames. We greatly value our partnership and look forward to strengthening our relationship as we move forward.

Dear City Council Members,

I have attached a letter for your review and consideration. Please feel free to share any feedback or suggestions you might have. We're always eager to hear your thoughts and make any necessary improvements.

Thanks once again for your support and for being such an important part of this journey with us.

Best regards,

Minerva Cord



Minerva Cord

Chief Innovation Officer

3811 Dixon St
Des Moines, IA 50313

Mobile: (515) 339-5658

minerva.cord@jtlogistics.com

www.jtlogistics.com





Dear Council Members,

At JT Logistics, we take great pride in the quality and integrity of our developments. Our commitment to “*creating amazing*” spaces extends to every detail—including landscaping. That said, we’ve encountered challenges with the current ordinance, particularly in the volume of plantings required and their long-term maintenance.

As you consider potential updates to the landscaping ordinance, we respectfully request that any revisions be applied prior to our installation of plantings. While our permit was issued under the existing requirements, we ask that projects currently under construction—but not yet completed—be allowed to resubmit updated landscaping plans in alignment with the revised ordinance.

Specifically:

- The mandated quantity of shrubs, grasses, and trees has proven difficult to sustain in high-traffic industrial settings, where durability and ease of care are critical.
- A more flexible approach would allow developers and property managers to balance the city’s aesthetic goals with practical maintenance and long-term viability.

Attached you will find a drawing with two areas for consideration:

- Area 1 (pink): Requesting a reduction of 34 trees from the plan.
- Area 2 (yellow): Requesting that all planned landscaping be deferred and addressed in conjunction with the approval of JT Warehouse Subdivision, Plat 2.

We value our partnership with the city and remain committed to creating vibrant, sustainable spaces for the community. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Cord

President & CEO
JT Logistics

