

TO: Board of Adjustment
FROM: William Lenzen, Land Use Management
MEETING DATE: September 28th, 2026
REPORT DATE: September 18th, 2026

PUBLIC HEARING:

Request for Variance, submitted by Diana Johnson (Applicant/Owner) to allow the construction of new front steps that will be zero feet from the Germania Street Right-of-Way when 25 feet is the required setback.

Application Information:

<u>Applicant(s):</u>	Diana Johnson
<u>Address of zoning request:</u>	33743 Germania Street, Frontenac, MN 55026
<u>Parcel:</u>	32.140.0150
<u>Abbreviated Legal Description:</u>	Lot 9, Block 3, Plat of Frontenac Station
<u>Township:</u>	Florence Township
<u>Zoning District:</u>	R-1 (Suburban Residential)

Attachments:

- Application
- Township Decision
- Staff prepared aerial view of the property
- Certificate of survey
- Site plans
- Goodhue County Zoning Ordinance: [zoning_ordinance.pdf](#) ([goodhuecountymn.gov](#))

Background:

Diana Johnson wants to rebuild her deteriorating front entry steps. The current steps are about 2-3 feet into the Germania Street Right-of-Way (ROW). She is proposing the new steps to be zero feet setback from the ROW when a setback of 25 feet is required.

Variance Standards:

Variances shall only be permitted when they are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Goodhue County Zoning Ordinance and when consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan. Variances may be granted when the applicant establishes “practical difficulties” exist in complying with the existing official controls. Practical difficulties mean the applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by an official control, the plight of the

landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner, and the variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.

Draft Findings of Fact:

1) Harmony with the general purposes and intent of the official control:

- Property line and ROW setbacks are intended to create separation among adjacent structures and roads, allowing for adequate access, accommodating future road expansion, and adequate separation between property lines.
- The property is one parcel that is approximately 7,500 square feet. The minimum lot size in the R-1 District is 1 acre and 20,000 square feet for lots created prior to 2019. This parcel is a nonconforming lot.
- The entry steps, being zero feet from the ROW will not impact the parcel or the surrounding properties.
- This request is in harmony with the purpose and intent of the official control.

2) The variance request is consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan:

- The Goodhue County Comprehensive Plan supports the development and use of the R-1 District within the County.

This request appears in harmony with the Goodhue County Comprehensive Plan.

3) There are “practical difficulties” in complying with the official control (the applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by an official control, the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner, and the variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality):

- The Applicant’s request to build front steps is a reasonable use of property in the R-1 District.
- This lot was platted to be 50 feet by 150 feet back in 1872. The lot size is causing a practical difficulty in complying with the official control. Through the years, there has been an increase in lot area required for septic systems, impervious surface, and lot coverage requirements that have caused the minimum lot size to increase from 20,000 square feet to what is now one acre. The house was constructed around 1943.
- The property is surrounded by properties zoned R-1. The primary use of the surrounding land is residential.

-
- The request appears unlikely to alter the essential character of the locality.
- 4) **No variance may be granted that would allow any use that is not allowed in the zoning district in which the subject property is located.**
- Front steps are a permitted use in the R-1 District.

The draft Findings of Fact shall be amended to reflect concerns conveyed at the Board of Adjustment meeting and public hearing. The Board should specify the facts and reasons that are the basis of the Board's determination. In granting a variance, the Board of Adjustment may impose conditions related to, and bearing a rough proportionality with, the impact(s) created by the variance.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Board of Adjustment:

- adopt the staff report into the record;
- accept the application, testimony, exhibits, and other evidence presented into the record;
- and

Approve the request for variance, submitted by Diana Johnson (Applicant/Owner) to allow the construction of new front steps that will be zero feet from the Germania Street Right-of-Way when 25 feet is the required setback with the following conditions.

1. No additional structures or other features can extend into the Germania Street Right-of-Way.



Variance Application

For Staff Use Only

Permit #	726-0093
\$400- Receipt #	19006
DATE:	8/28/26

SITE ADDRESS, CITY, AND STATE				ZIP CODE:
33743 Germania St. Frontenac MN 55026				
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:				
Frontenac Station Lot -009 Block -003 Doc #663249 Lot 9 Blk 3 Attached U				
PID#:	ZONING DISTRICT	LOT AREA (SF/ACRES):	LOT DIMENSIONS:	STRUCTURE DIMENSIONS (if applicable):
32.140.0150	R1	0.170/7,405	50 x 150	Proposed 15 x 30

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT'S NAME	
Diana Johnson	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
33743 Germania St *Mailing Frontenac, MN 55026 P.O. Box 13 Frontenac, MN 55026	
	EMAIL:

PROPERTY OWNER'S NAME:	
Same as Above X	
PROPERTY OWNER'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
Same as above	
	EMAIL:

CONTACT FOR PROJECT INFORMATION:	
Same as Above X	
ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
	EMAIL:

VARIANCE REQUESTED TO: (check all that apply)	CURRENT OR PREVIOUS USE:
	1940's garage - non-functional / Replace
	PROPOSED USE:
	New Garage for vehicle / storage
☒ Property Line Setbacks	☐ % Lot Coverage
☐ Height Limits	☐ Shoreland or Bluff Setbacks
☐ Lot Width &/or Area	☐ Other (specify)
☐ Subdivision Regulations	
	BUILDING APPLICATION PERMIT NO.: (if filed)
	DATE FILED:

TOWNSHIP SIGNATURE:		
By signing this form, the Township acknowledges they are aware of the Applicant's variance request. In no way does signing this application indicate the Township's position on the variance request.		
TOWNSHIP OFFICIAL'S SIGNATURE	TOWNSHIP OFFICIAL'S PRINTED NAME AND TITLE	DATE

Township / Signed -
See included variance Attached X

By signing below, the applicant acknowledges they are the owner or authorized agent of the owner of this property, and the information presented is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant's Signature: Diana Ant Johnson Date: 7/3/2024

REQUEST SUMMARY

Cite the Ordinance Article(s) and Section(s) you are requesting a variance from:

Article: R1-24 Section: 5 Title: min setback ROW 25 Feet

Article: _____ Section: _____ Title: _____

The property owner bears the burden of providing information to convince the Board to rule in their favor. Please provide answers to the following questions or attach a document.

Discuss your current use of the property and the reason for your variance request:

Primary residence. Current steps are structurally failing and walkway is deteriorating.
Poses an immediate safety hazard.

Describe the effects on the property if the variance is not granted:

If failing steps cannot be replaced it is an ongoing safety and liability risk for all
that enter home. Denial would eliminate home of safe, functional entrance,
impacting properties usability, accessibility and overall value.

Describe any unique physical limitations that exist on your property, not generally found on others, which prevent you from complying with the provisions of the current ordinance:

Because of home's placement on non-conforming lot, it is physically
impossible to construct front entry steps that satisfy standard ROW
setback requirement. Entrance door is eight feet from property line.
Discuss alternatives you considered that comply with existing standards. If compliant ^{See}
alternatives exist, provide your reasoning for rejecting them: _{Survey.}

There are no other alternatives that are compliant
due to placement of home on lot and property line.

Discuss alternatives you considered which would require a lesser variance. If you rejected such alternatives, provide your reasoning:

The proposed rebuild that is included with site plan is
an improvement, meaning completely on my property. It is
a slimmer footprint than what currently exists. What exists extends
slightly over 8 foot distance from front door to property line.

From: Diana Johnson
Subject: Re: 33743 Germania st front steps rebuild
Date: Aug 14, 2026 at 11:46:23 AM
To: Mike Pfeiffer mike@hometownplanning.com, Florence
Township Zoning florencezoning@gmail.com

Thanks Mike for your prompt reply. That is good news as we are getting so close to the end of the season here and I missed that variance need on the front from the County perspective.

As I work through the property plan I will have another question about rebuilding my basement entrance rebuild but that is next years project and need to focus on getting the immediate addressed first.

Have a great day.

Sincerely,

Diana Johnson

Florence Township
email showing
township does not
require variance

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 14, 2026, at 10:50 AM, Mike Pfeiffer
<mike@hometownplanning.com> wrote:

Hi Diana,

Thanks for reaching out and for providing the background on the project.

I reviewed the Township requirements for your property and, based on what you have described, I do not believe you need to submit a separate

Florence

Township variance application for the replacement of the front steps.

The setback issue identified by Goodhue County relates to the County's R-1 road right-of-way setback requirements. Florence Township has its own zoning ordinance and variance process, but a Township variance is only necessary when relief from a Township zoning standard is required.

In this case, you are replacing an existing deteriorated entrance for safety purposes, and the proposed steps will actually have a smaller footprint than the existing steps rather than extending the structure farther toward the road. That does not appear to expand or intensify the existing nonconformity under the Township ordinance.

Therefore, I would recommend that you proceed with the Goodhue County variance application, and you do not need to submit a Florence Township variance application by tomorrow for this project.

Please send me a copy of the County variance application, when available, or approval so that we can keep it with the Township's records.

I also understand the urgency given the condition of the steps and the need to maintain a safe entrance for your daughter. Based on the scope you have described, I don't see a Township requirement that should delay you from getting the County variance process started.

Thanks!

Mike

Mike Pfeiffer, Zoning Administrator
Hometown Planning
Mobile: 320-248-7983
<https://www.hometownplanning.com/>

-----Original Message-----

From: Diana Johnson

Sent: Friday, August 14, 2026 10:09 AM

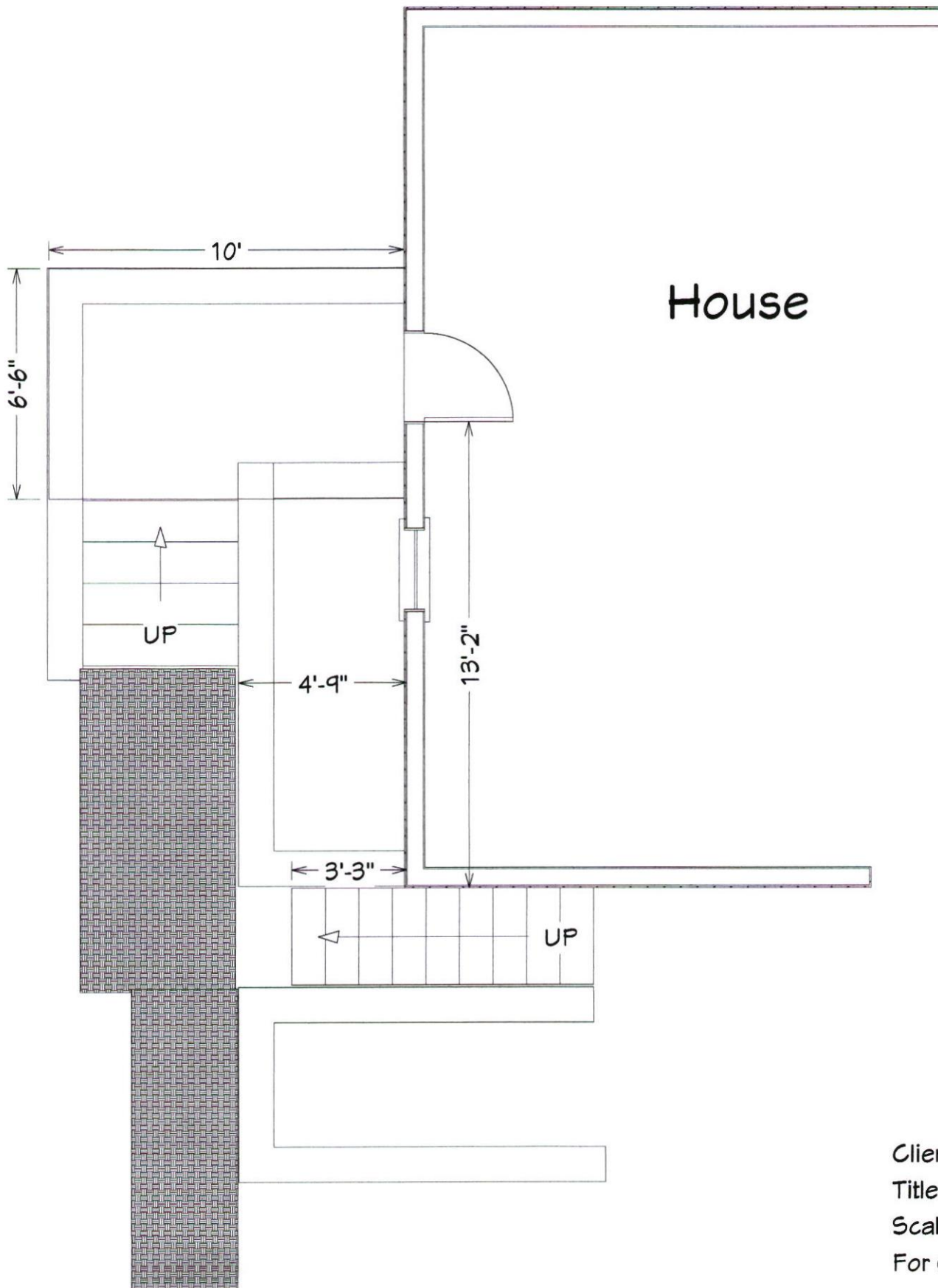
To: Florence Township Zoning <florencezoning@gmail.com>

Cc: William Lenzen <william.lenzen@goodhuecountymn.gov>; Raechel Vandewalle

<raechel.vandewalle@livablehomesolutions.com>

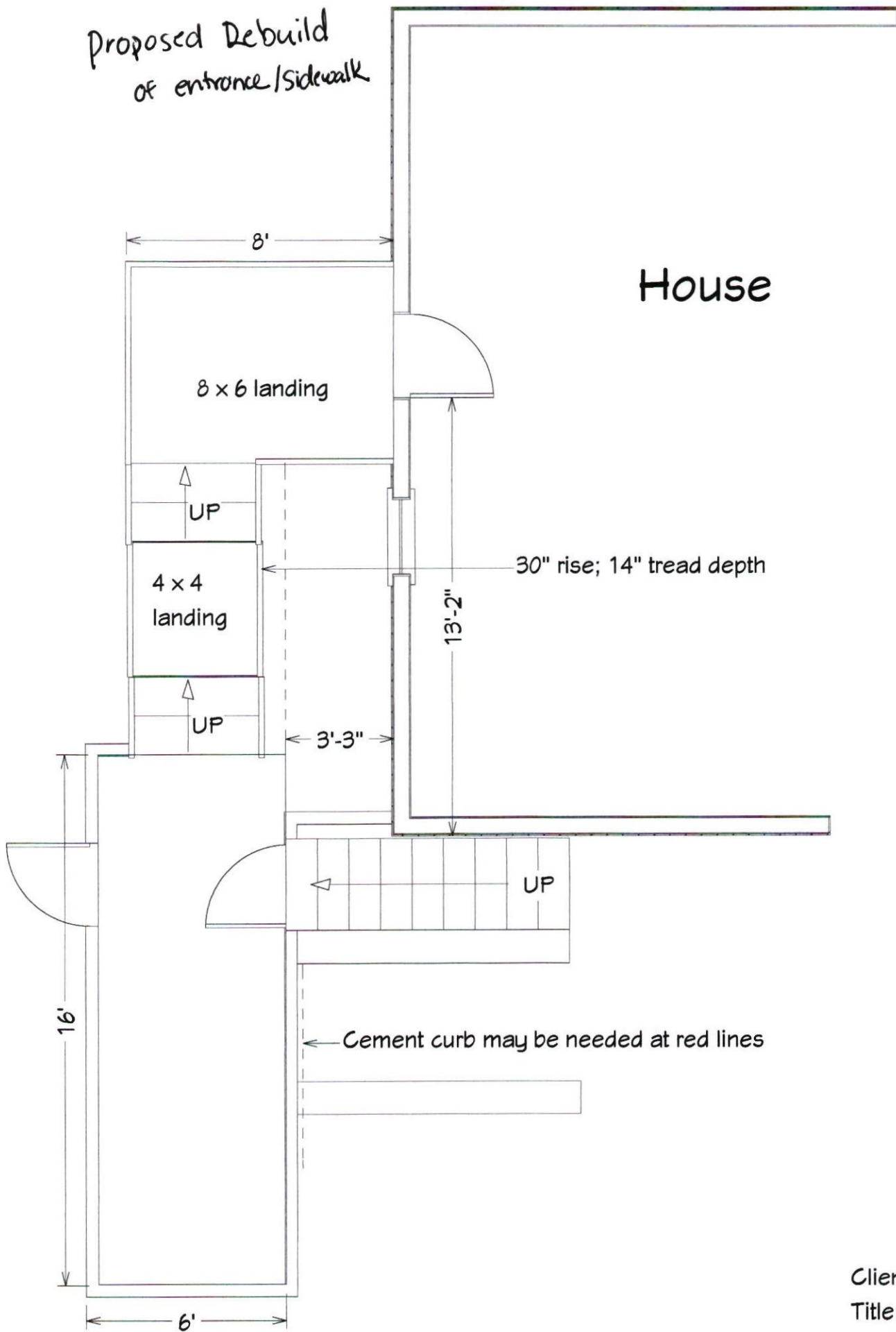
Subject: 33743 Germania st front steps rebuild

Current site as
it exists.



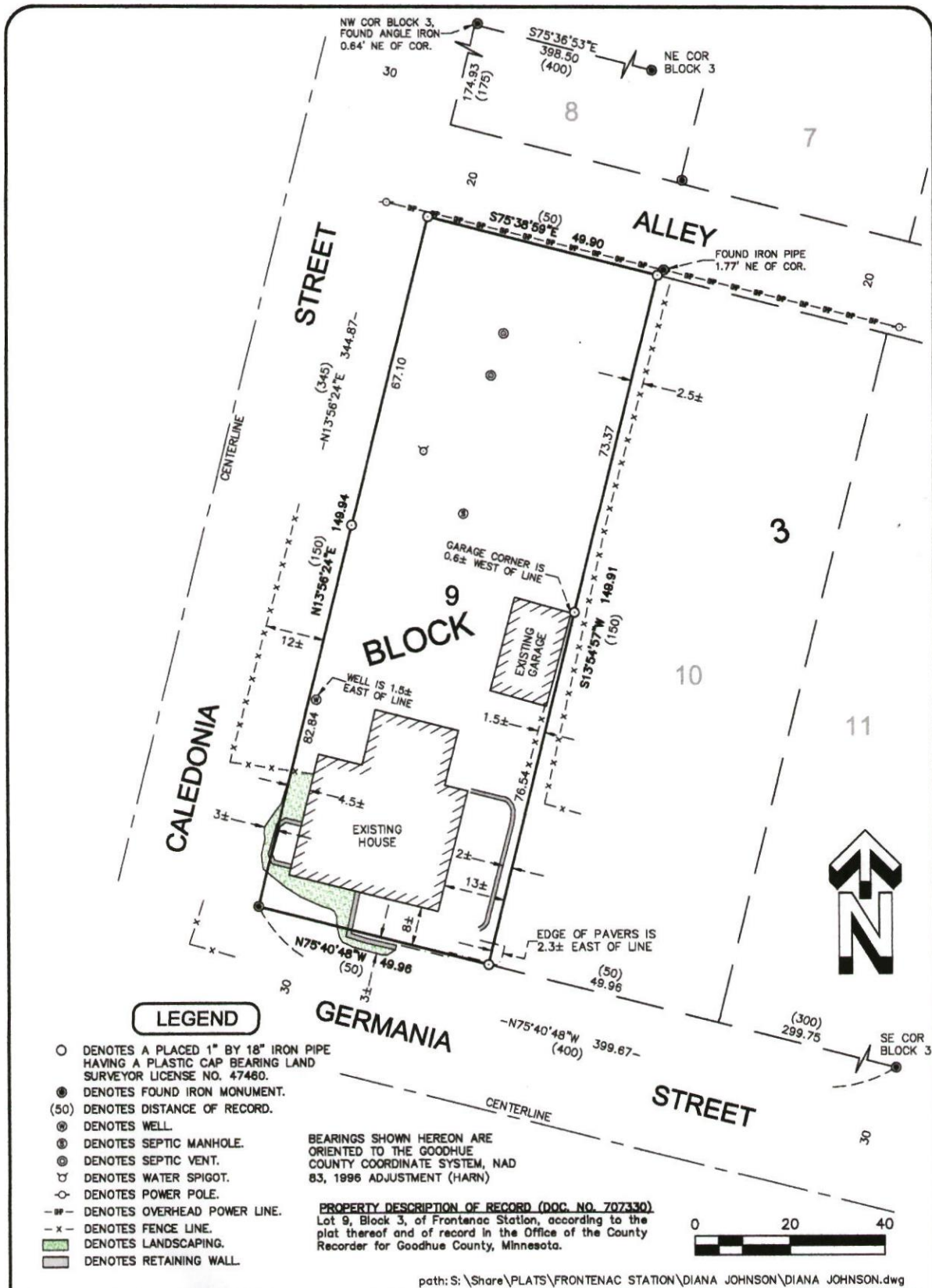
Client: Johnson, S.
Title: Exterior Layout
Scale: 1/4" = 1' 0"
For Concept Only

Proposed Debuild
of entrance/sidewalk



House

Client: Johnson, S.
Title: Modified Layout
Scale: 1/4" = 1' 0"
For Concept Only



CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY FOR:

DIANA JOHNSON



JOHNSON & SCOFIELD INC.
SURVEYING AND ENGINEERING

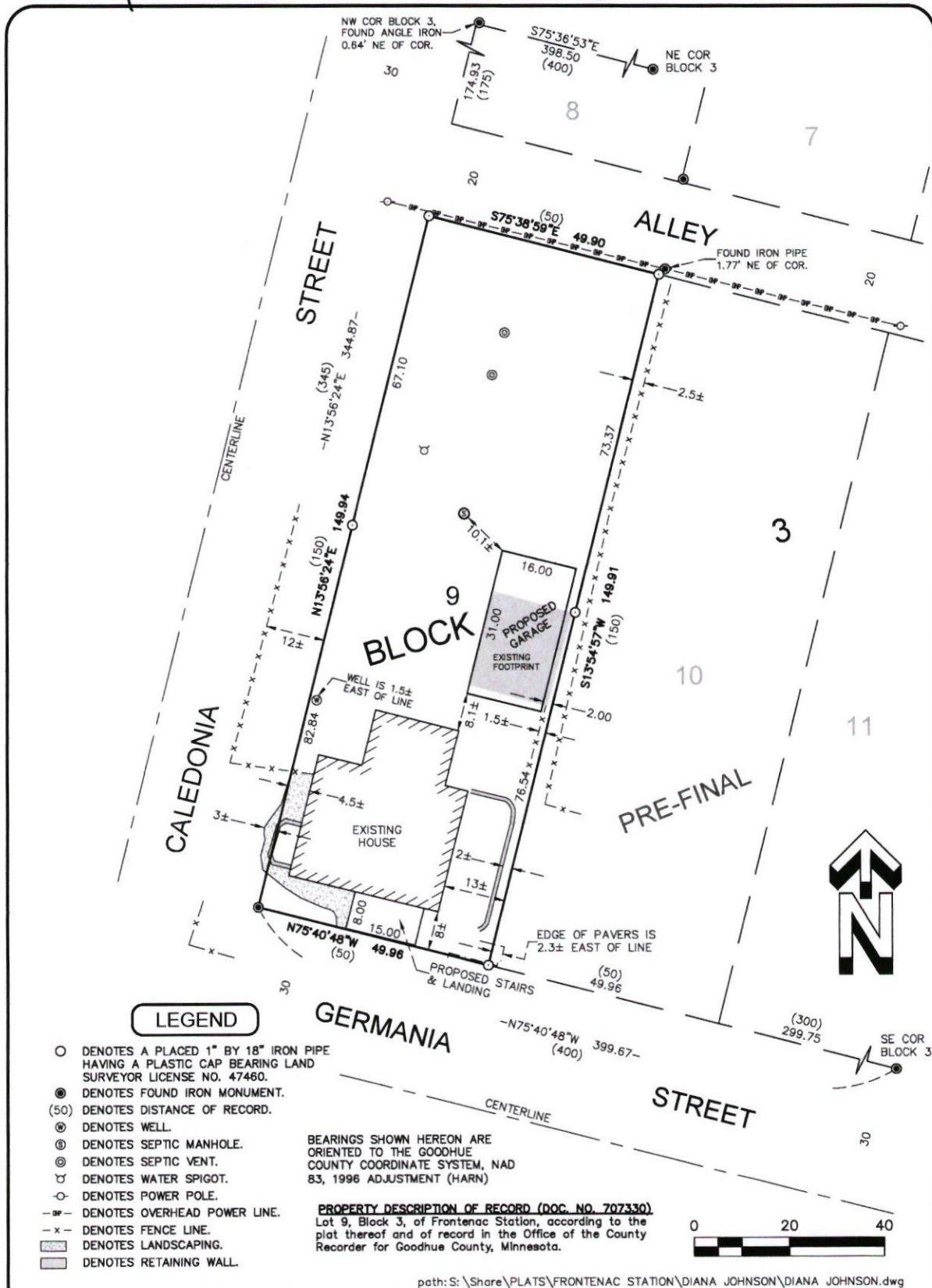
1203 MAIN STREET, RED WING, MN 55066
 (651) 388-1558

I hereby certify that this survey, plan or report 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.

Marcus S. Johnson
 Marcus S. Johnson
 Minnesota License No. 47460
 Date: September 30, 2025

BK. NA	PG. NA	W.O.#	DRAWING NUMBER
SHEET 1 OF 1 SHEETS	25-818	S-12215	

* Survey with front entry



CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY FOR:

DIANA JOHNSON



JOHNSON & SCOFIELD INC.
SURVEYING AND ENGINEERING

1203 MAIN STREET, RED WING, MN 55066
 (651) 388-1558

I hereby certify that this survey, plan or report 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.

Revised Date:
August 24, 2026

Marcus S. Johnson
 Minnesota License No. 47460
 Date: September 30, 2025

BK. NA	PG. NA	W.O.#	DRAWING NUMBER
SHEET 1 OF 1 SHEETS	26-642	S-12855	

MAP 02: VICINITY MAP



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Public Hearing
September 28, 2026

Diana Johnson (Owner)
R-1 Zoned District.

Lot 9, Block 3, Plat of Frontenac Station
Florence Township.

Request for variance to allow new front steps
to be zero feet from the Germania Street
Right-of-Way when 25 feet is required.

Legend

- Intermittent Streams
 - Protected Streams
 - Lakes & Other Water Bodies
 - Shoreland
 - Historic Districts
 - Parcels
 - Registered Feedlots
 - Dwellings
 - Municipalities
- Bluff Impact Zones (% slope)
- 20
 - 30
- FEMA Flood Zones
- 2% Annual Chance
 - A
 - AE
 - AO
 - X



DATA DISCLAIMER: Goodhue County assumes
NO liability for the accuracy or completeness of this map
OR responsibility for any associated direct, indirect,
or consequential damages that may result from its use
or misuse. Goodhue County Copyright 2026.

2024 Aerial Imagery
Map Created September, 2026 by LUM



MAP 01: PROPERTY OVERVIEW



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Public Hearing
September 28, 2026

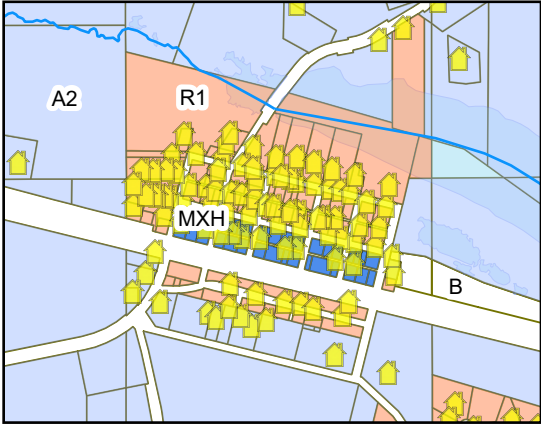
Diana Johnson (Owner)
R-1 Zoned District.

Lot 9, Block 3, Plat of Frontenac Station
Florence Township.

Request for variance to allow new front steps
to be zero feet from the Germania Street
Right-of-Way when 25 feet is required.

Legend

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Intermittent Streams | Bluff Impact Zones (% slope) |
| Protected Streams | 30 |
| Lakes & Other Water Bodies | |
| Shoreland | FEMA Flood Zones |
| Historic Districts | 2% Annual Chance |
| Parcels | A |
| Registered Feedlots | AE |
| Dwellings | AO |
| Municipalities | X |



0 12.5 25 50 75 US Feet

DATA DISCLAIMER: Goodhue County assumes
NO liability for the accuracy or completeness of this map
OR responsibility for any associated direct, indirect,
or consequential damages that may result from its use
or misuse. Goodhue County Copyright 2026.

2024 Aerial Imagery
Map Created September, 2026 by LUM

