
To: Board of Adjustment
From: Land Use Management
Meeting Date: July 27th, 2026
Report Date: July 17th, 2026

Agenda Item:

Request for Variance, submitted by Peggy A. Simonson (Applicant/Owner) for the construction of a new retaining wall to replace the existing retaining wall that is proposed to be within the Bluff Land Impact Zone.

Application Information:

<u>Applicant</u>	Peggy A. Simonson
<u>Address of zoning request</u>	31383 Lakeview Ave Red Wing MN 55066
<u>Parcel</u>	43.210.0460
<u>Abbreviated Legal Description</u>	Wacouta Beach Lot-001 Block-004
<u>Township Information</u>	Wacouta Township
<u>Primary Zoning District</u>	R-1 (Suburban Residential)
<u>Overlay Zoning Districts</u>	Floodplain and Shoreland

Attachments and Links:

Application and submitted project summary

Site Map

Goodhue County Zoning Ordinance: [zoning_ordinance.pdf \(goodhuecountymn.gov\)](https://www.goodhuecountymn.gov/zoning_ordinance.pdf)

Background:

Peggy Simonson is looking to replace the existing retaining wall with a new retaining wall. The new wall will be in the same location as the existing wall, which is located at the Top of the Bluff. The applicant has stated that the old retaining wall was built around 1969 and is beginning to fail. Soil is giving way beneath the rotting wood, causing parts of the back yard to drop several feet and is beginning to affect the deck. Wacouta Township has signed off on the variance application with no comments made.

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 that “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:

The purpose and intent of the Bluff Land Protection cited in Article 12, Section 1 is to protect and preserve the sensitive physical features of the bluffs by regulating development, preventing erosion and controlling the cutting of timber on slopes and tops of the bluffs. The property consists of one parcel containing approximately 24,000 square feet. The minimum lot size in the R-1 District for lots created prior to 2019 is 20,000 square feet, and 2 acres for lots created after 2019. The retaining wall is proposed to be 0 feet from the top of the bluff. The County historically has not required retaining walls to meet setback standards for the Shoreland District and has not required them to meet property line setback standards as well. The retaining wall will not have any negative effect on the surrounding properties. The Applicant's proposal appears 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 individual use of residential property and the preservation of bluff lands in Goodhue County. The Applicant's request to rebuild a retaining wall appears consistent 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 construct a new retaining wall is a reasonable use of property in the R-1 District. The wall is starting to fail and the back yard is beginning to settle to the point it's affecting the deck. The retaining wall is located zero feet from the top of the bluff. A review of the existing development pattern in the vicinity shows medium-density residential development along with other properties that also have retaining walls. The request for variance 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.

Retaining walls are permissible in the R-1 district. This does not constitute a use variance.

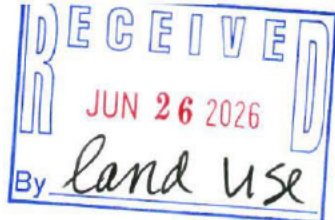
The draft Findings of Fact shall be amended to reflect concerns conveyed at the Board of Adjustment meeting and public hearing. The Board should specify the facts and reasons that are the basis of the Board's determination. In granting a variance, the Board of Adjustment may impose conditions directly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

Staff Recommendation:

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

APPROVE the request submitted by Peggy A. Simonson (Applicant/Owner) for the construction of a new retaining wall to replace the existing retaining wall that is proposed to be zero feet from the top of the bluff, with the following conditions:

1. Applicant must apply for a building permit
2. Must follow the standards in Article 31. Shoreland Regulations, Section 11. Shoreland Alterations.



For Staff Use Only	
Permit #	Z 26-0069
\$450 Receipt #	18958 DATE: 6/26/26

Variance Application

SITE ADDRESS, CITY, AND STATE				ZIP CODE:	
31383 Lakeview Ave Red Wing MN				55066	
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:					
1st 1 BLK 4 Wacouta Beach					
PID#	ZONING DISTRICT	LOT AREA (S/ACRES)	LOT DIMENSIONS:	STRUCTURE DIMENSIONS (if applicable):	
482100460	R1	.70 acres	75' x 410'	Retaining Wall	

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT'S NAME	
Peggy A. Simonson	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
31383 Lakeview Ave Red Wing, MN 55066	

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

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

VARIANCE REQUESTED TO: (check all that apply) ☐ Property Line Setbacks ☐ % Lot Coverage ☐ Height Limits ☒ Shoreland or Bluff Setbacks ☐ Lot Width &/or Area ☐ Other (specify) ☐ Subdivision Regulations	CURRENT OR PREVIOUS USE: Residential	
	PROPOSED USE: Residential	
	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
<i>Franklin Pless</i>	ZONING ADMINISTRATOR	6/26/26

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: Peggy A. Simonson

Date: 6-23-2026

REQUEST SUMMARY

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

Article: 12 Section: 4 Title: _____
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:

Wooden 75' retaining wall circa 1969 is giving way. Need
to replace.

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

Soil is giving way beneath the rotting wood so yard has dropped
several feet. This is beginning to affect the deck attached to the house
which is beginning to drop

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:

Property is on bluff above the Mississippi.

Discuss alternatives you considered that comply with existing standards. If compliant alternatives exist, provide your reasoning for rejecting them:

We brought in loads of huge rock to put along the bluff bottom/
beach ~~at~~^a few yrs ago. It continued to sink.

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

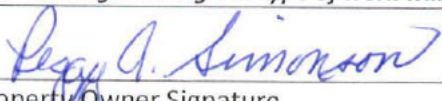
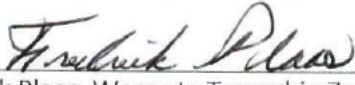
We discussed w/ landscapers about just replacing the wood.
Was told that wouldn't last more than a few yrs.

TOWNSHIP ZONING APPLICATION

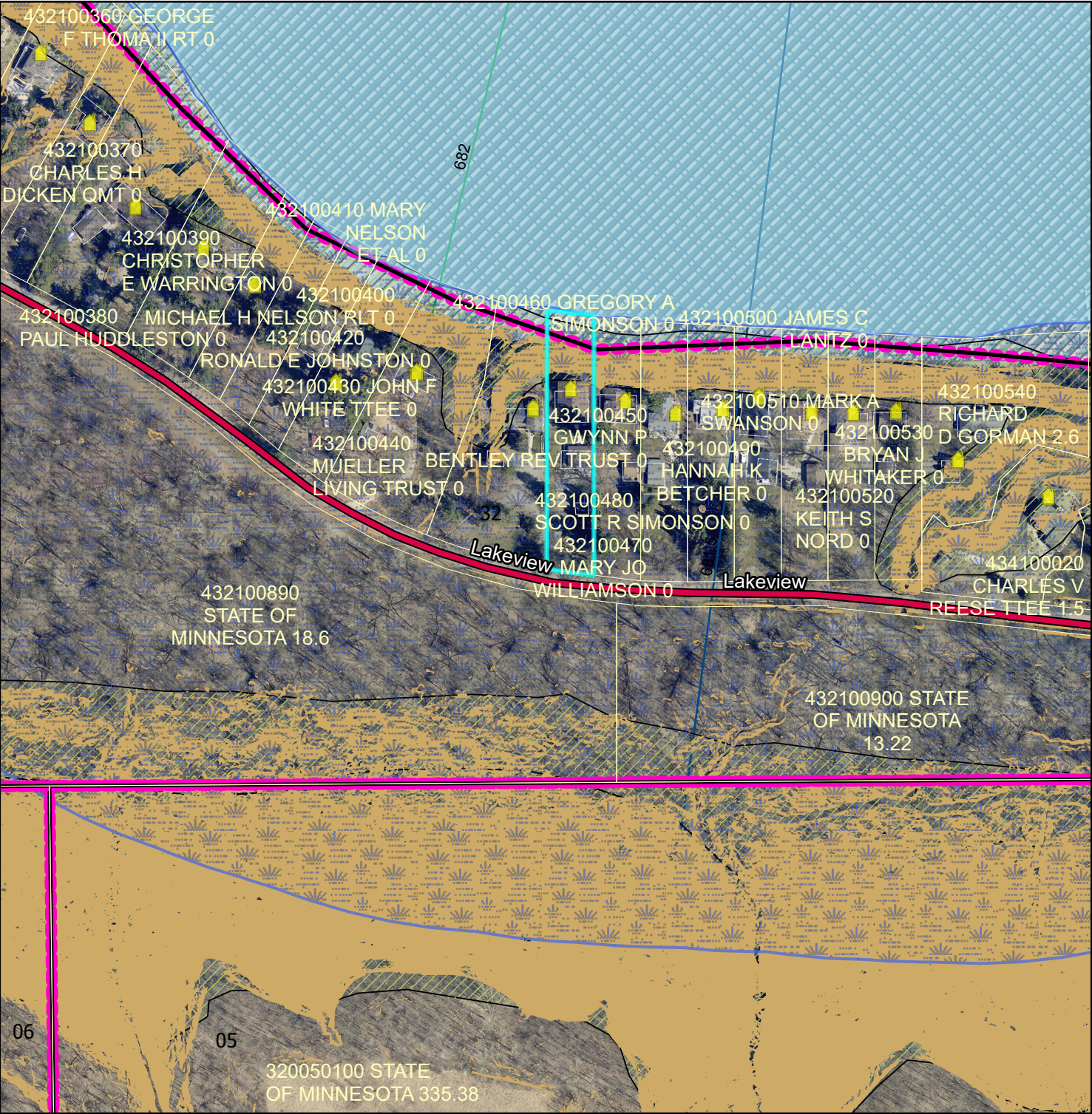
TOWNSHIP NAME: WACOUTA TOWNSHIP

Goodhue County

Parcel # _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION					
Last Name <u>SIMONSON</u>		First <u>PEGGY</u>		M.I. _____	
Street Address <u>31383 LAKEVIEW AVE</u>				Phone _____	
City <u>RED WING</u>		State <u>MN</u>		Zip <u>55066</u>	
PROJECT INFORMATION					
Site Address <u>31383 LAKEVIEW AVE</u>					
Type of Project <u>INSTALL AN ENGINEERED RETAINING WALL</u>					
<u>Type Of Project</u> ☐ New Construct ☐ Addition ☐ Relocation ☐ Remodel ☐ Foundation Only ☐ Roofing/Siding ☐ Other _____	<u>Structure Type</u> ☐ Residence ☐ Garage ☐ Ag Bldg. ☐ Warehouse ☐ Office ☐ Boathouse ☐ Deck ☐ Pool	<u>Proposed Use</u> ☐ Single Family ☐ Multiple Family ☐ Agricultural ☐ Public ☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Other _____	<u>Type of Const.</u> ☐ Wood/Frame ☐ Masonry ☐ Metal ☐ Pole Bldg. ☐ On-Site Prefab ☐ Off-Site Prefab	<u>Structure Dimensions</u> Length (ft)= _____ Width (ft)= _____ Height (ft)= _____ Total Sq Ft= _____	<u>Zoning District</u> <i>(check all that apply)</i> ☐ Agricultural A1 A2 A3 ☐ Residential ☐ Business B1 B2 ☐ Industrial ☐ Wild & Scenic River ☐ Flood Fringe ☐ Floodway ☐ General Flood Plain
DISCLAIMER					
<i>I hereby apply for a zoning permit and I acknowledge that the information above is complete and accurate, that the work will be in conformance with the ordinances and codes of Goodhue County. The applicant also understands by signing this application he/she could be held responsible as representative of this project for any violation of compliance with all applicable laws and ordinances of Goodhue County. This permit may be suspended or revoked if the permit has been issued in error or on the basis of incorrect information supplied or in violation of any ordinance or regulation of Goodhue County. All provisions of law and ordinances governing this type of work will be complied with whether specified herein or not.</i>					
				<u>JUNE 26, 2026</u>	
Property Owner Signature				Date	
TOWNSHIP APPROVALS					
I, <u>FREDERICK PLAAS</u> , acting on behalf of the Township of <u>Wacouta</u> in capacity of <u>Wacouta Township Zoning Administrator</u> hereby certify that the above described project has been approved according to the Wacouta Township Zoning Ordinance. Also that the above named property owner certifies that the structure and use must meet all Wacouta Township Codes & Ordinances and must be constructed as indicated.					
				<u>JUNE 26, 2026</u>	
Frederick Plaas, Wacouta Township Zoning Administrator				Date	
Application Fee <u>\$ 200.00</u>			Receipt Number _____		

MAP 02: VICINITY MAP



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Public Hearing
July 27, 2026

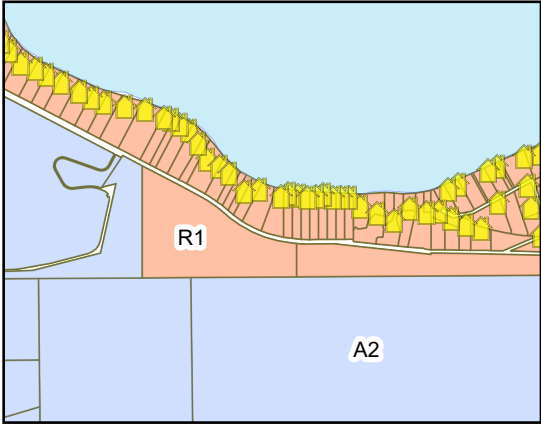
Peggy Simonson (Owner)
R-1 Zoned District.

Wacouta Beach Lot-001 Block-004
in Wacouta Township.

Request for a variance to bluff land setback standards to allow the construction of a retaining wall that will replace an existing retaining wall.

Legend

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



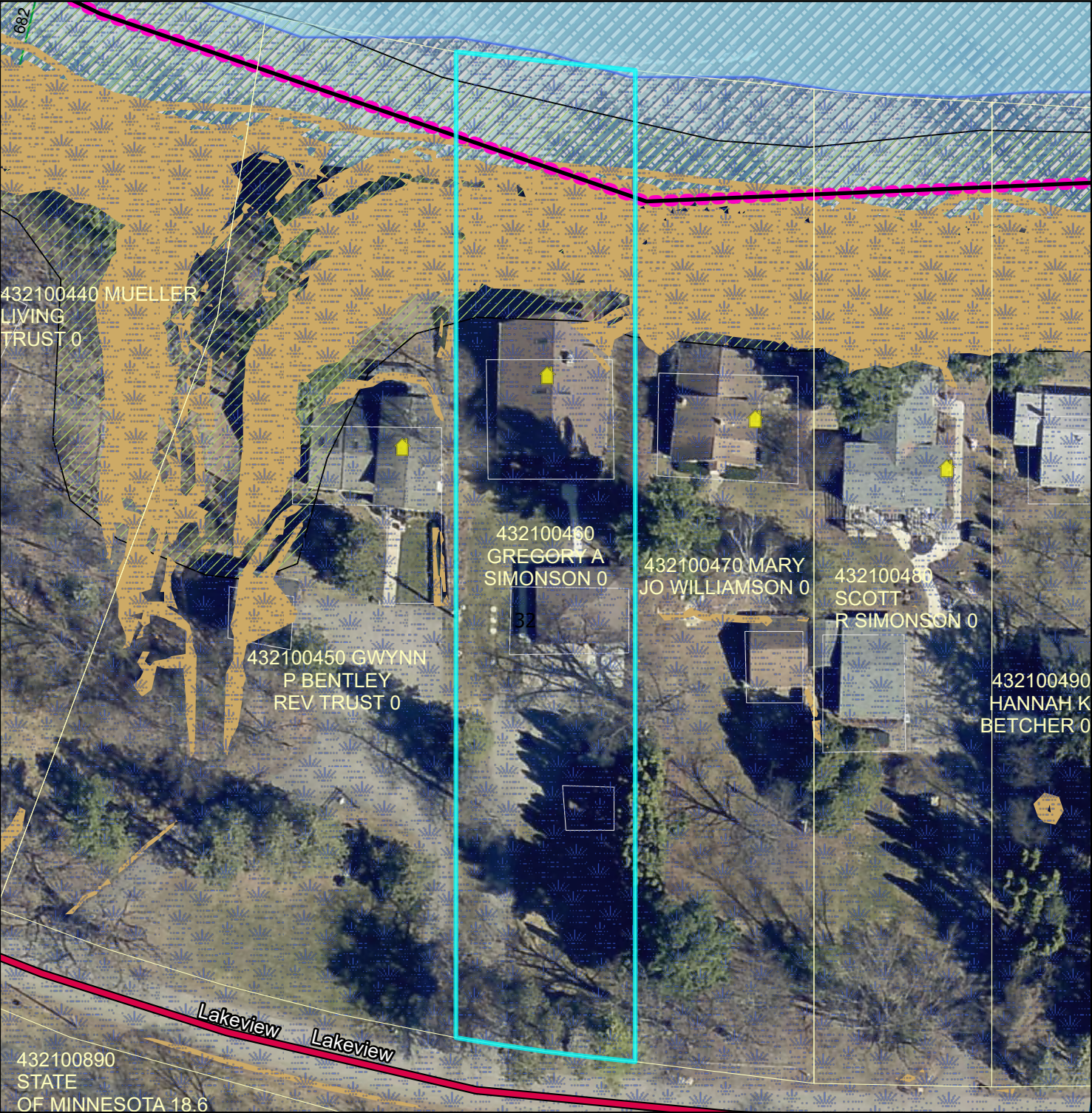
0 85 170 340 510
US Feet

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2024 Aerial Imagery
Map Created July, 2026 by LUM



MAP 01: PROPERTY OVERVIEW



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Public Hearing
July 27, 2026

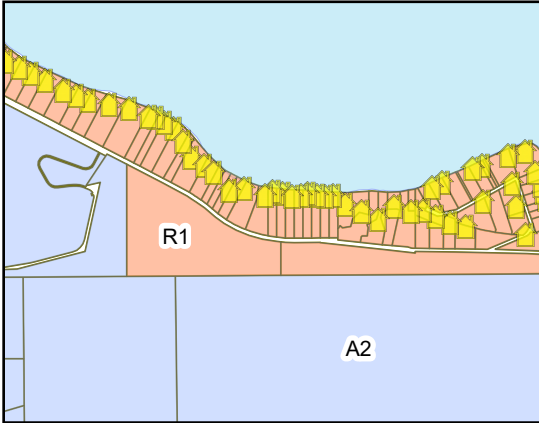
Peggy Simonson (Owner)
R-1 Zoned District.

Wacouta Beach Lot-001 Block-004
in Wacouta Township.

Request for a variance to bluff land setback standards to allow the construction of a retaining wall that will replace an existing retaining wall.

Legend

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



0 20 40 80 120 US Feet

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2024 Aerial Imagery
Map Created July, 2026 by LUM



MAP 03: ELEVATIONS



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Public Hearing
July 27, 2026

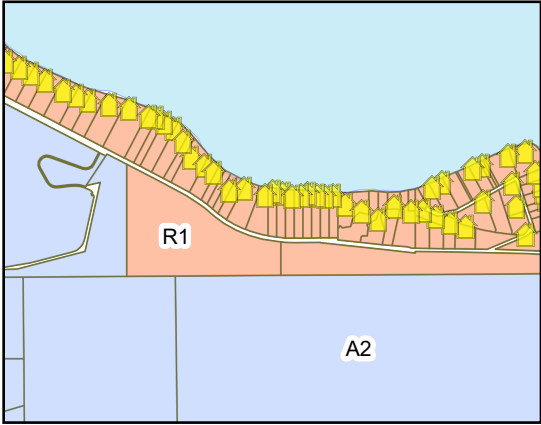
Peggy Simonson (Owner)
R-1 Zoned District.

Wacouta Beach Lot-001 Block-004
in Wacouta Township.

Request for a variance to bluff land setback
standards to allow the construction of a
retaining wall that will replace an existing
retaining wall.

Legend

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



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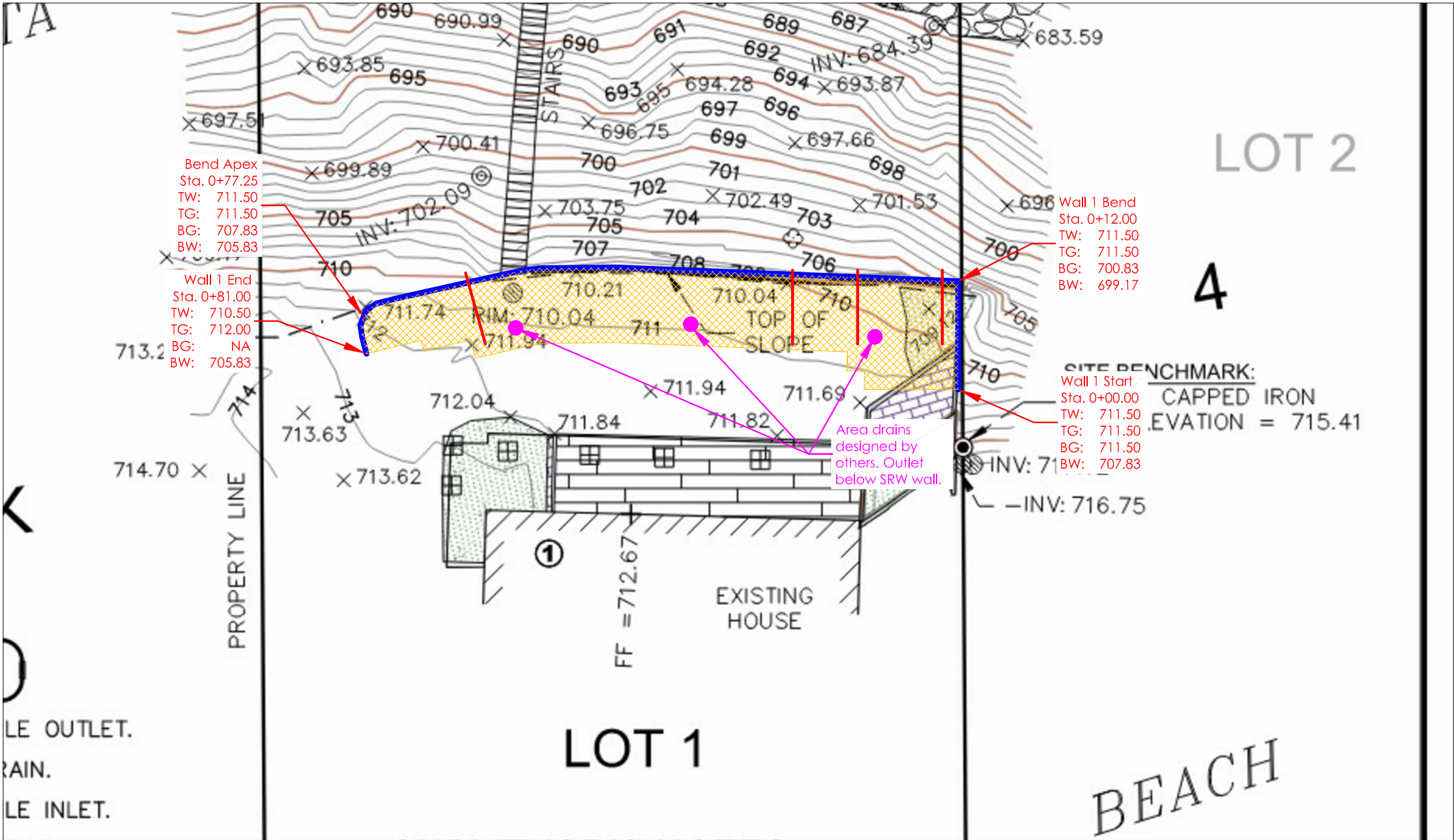
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NO liability for the accuracy or completeness of this map
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or consequential damages that may result from its use
or misuse. Goodhue County Copyright 2026.

2024 Aerial Imagery
Map Created July, 2026 by LUM

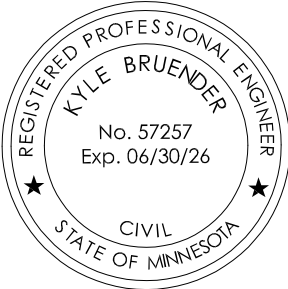


Simonson Residence

Segmental Retaining Wall (SRW) Design



Index:	
Plan Set	
Title Page	Sheet 1 of 5
Typical Cross Section	Sheet 2 of 5
Typical Details	Sheet 3 of 5
Project Specifications	Sheet 4 of 5
Wall Profile(s)	Sheet 5 of 5
Calculations	
Wall 1	10 page(s) (Attached)
Reference	
Sheet by Johnson & Scofield Inc. Land Surveying 1 page(s) (Attached)	



I hereby certify that this plan, specification, or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Professional Engineer under the laws of the State of Minnesota.
Print Name: Kyle Jordan Bruender
Signature:
Date: 6/11/2026 License # 57257

Excerpt(s) from Sheet titled *Topographic Survey* by Johnson & Scofield Inc. Land Surveying for Simonson Residence, dated 05/19/2026.
Alignments are shown at Top of wall. Contractor must consider wall batter [1H:8V] prior to wall construction.
Scale: None.

No.	Date	Revision



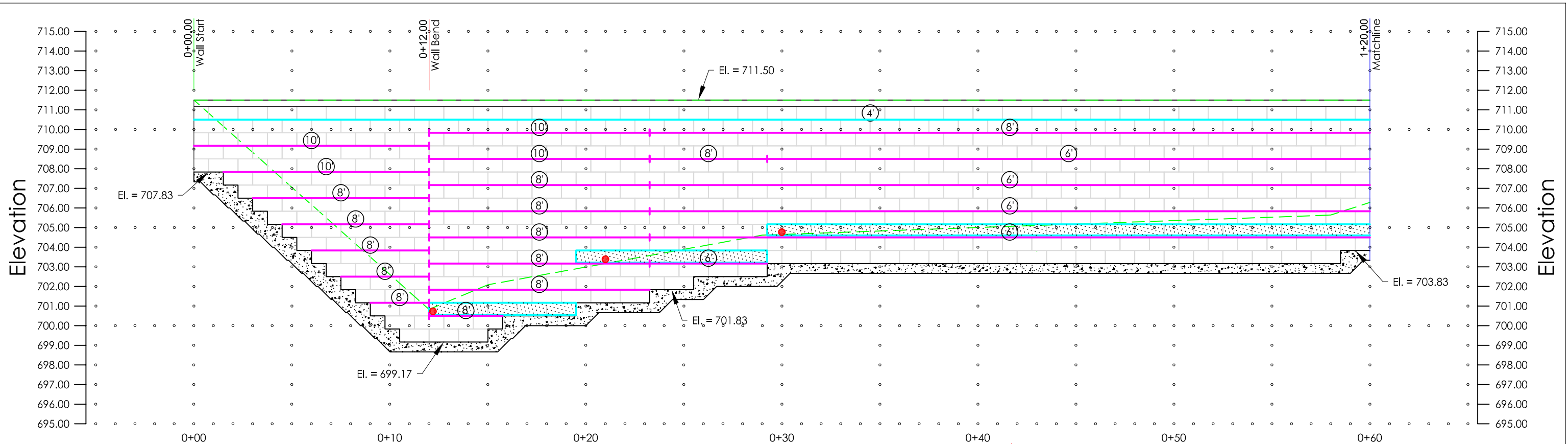
Mortarless Systems Engineering, Inc.
325 Alliance Place NE
Rochester, MN 55906
Phone: 507-535-3503
Fax: 507-529-2879

Legend	
	Wall Alignment
	Approximate Location of Heel Drain Outlet
	Approximate Extent of Geogrid
	TW - Top of Wall
	TG - Grade at Top of Wall
	BG - Grade at Base of Wall
	BW - Bottom of Wall

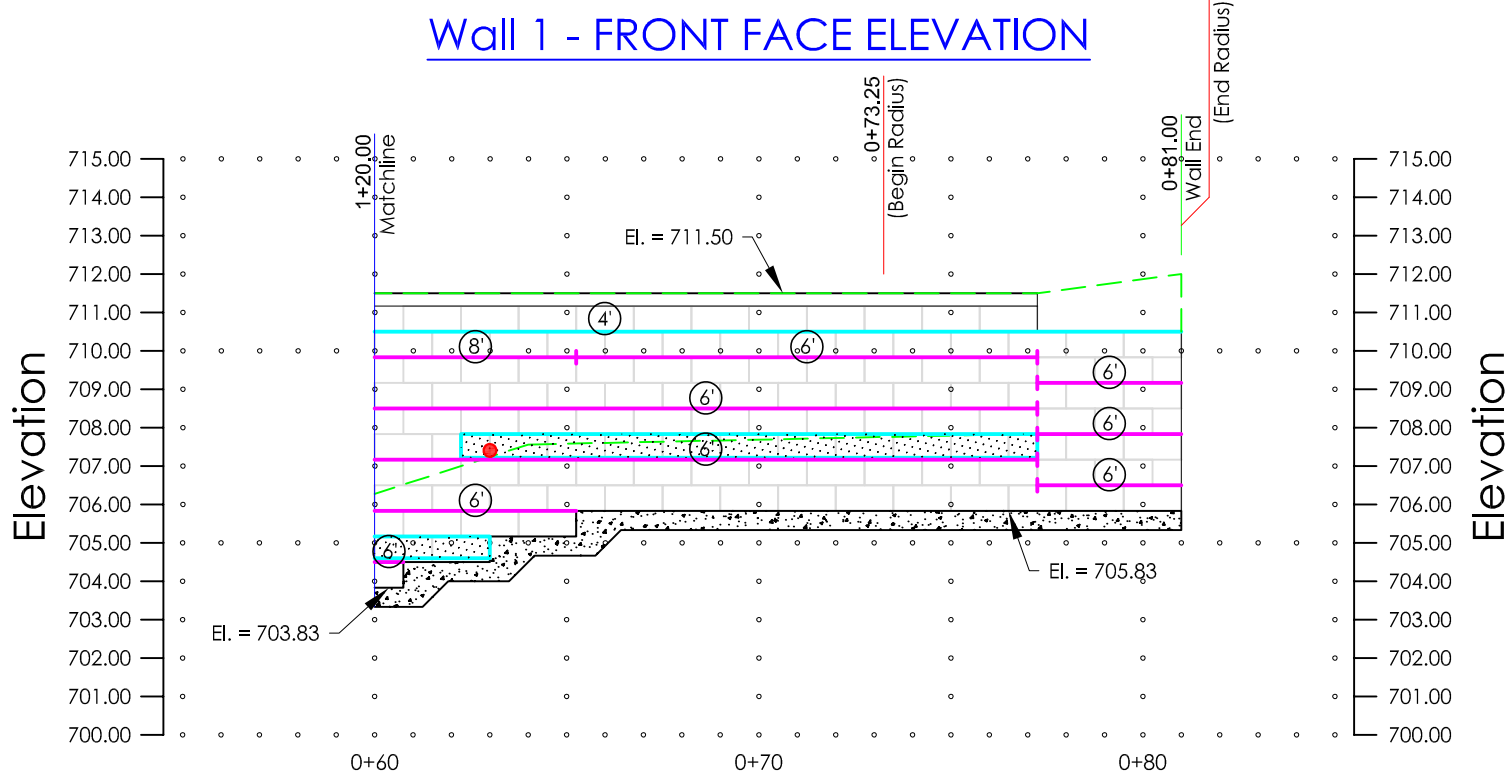
Project Name & Location:
Simonson Residence
31383 Lakeview Ave
Red Wing, MN 55066

Client: Lakeview Landscapes, LLC
Drawn By: JMS Checked By: KJB
Sheet: 1 of 5
Date: 6/11/2026
Project Number: 25-0480

Title Page

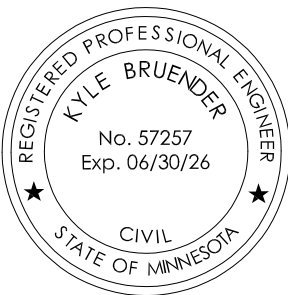


Wall 1 - FRONT FACE ELEVATION



Wall 1 - FRONT FACE ELEVATION

In order for the reinforced soil to transition from an at-rest to active earth pressure condition, the wall must rotate about the base. Lateral deflection at the top of the wall should be anticipated on the order of 0.005H to 0.02H. As such, gapping between units, especially at outside wall bends and curves, will likely occur.



I hereby certify that this plan, specification, or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Professional Engineer under the laws of the State of Minnesota.
Print Name: Kyle Jordan Bruender
Signature: *[Signature]*
Date: 6/11/2026 License # 57257

No.	Date	Revision



Mortarless Systems Engineering, Inc.
325 Alliance Place NE
Rochester, MN 55906
Phone: 507-535-3503
Fax: 507-529-2879

Legend	
	Leveling Pad
	Grid/Fabric Length (Measured from face of wall)
	Heel Drain with Outlet
	SRW 5 Series or equiv.
	Finish Grade
	Mirafi 140N or equiv.

Project Name & Location:		Client:
Simonson Residence 31383 Lakeview Ave Red Wing, MN 55066		Lakeview Landscapes, LLC
Drawn By:	JMS	Checked By: KJB
Sheet:	5 of 5	
Sheet Name:	Wall Profile(s)	
Date:	6/11/2026	
Project Number:	25-0480	

Scale:
H: 1" = 5'
V: 1" = 5'

LAKE

PEPIN

WACOUTA

LOT A

BLOCK

LOT 2

4

BEACH

SHORELINE LOCATED
APRIL 27, 2026

PROPERTY LINE

PROPERTY LINE

LOT 1

SURVEYOR'S NOTES:

① THE FINISHED FLOOR ELEVATIONS SHOWN ON THE EXISTING HOUSE ARE APPROXIMATE. THE ELEVATIONS WERE MEASURED AT THE BOTTOM OF DOOR THRESHOLD OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE.

PROPERTY LOCATION

Lot 1, Block 4, WACOUTA BEACH, Goodhue County, Minnesota.

31383 Lakeview Ave, Red Wing, MN 55066.

SITE BENCHMARK:
TOP OF CAPPED IRON
PIPE ELEVATION = 715.41

INV: 717.12
-INV: 716.75

FF = 712.67

EXISTING
HOUSE

LEGEND

- ⊙ DENOTES DRAIN TILE OUTLET.
- ⊖ DENOTES ROOF DRAIN.
- ⊗ DENOTES DRAIN TILE INLET.
- ⊞ DENOTES DECK PILLAR.
- ⊕ DENOTES 6" DIAMETER OAK TREE.
- ▨ DENOTES BUILDING.
- ▤ DENOTES PATIO.
- ▦ DENOTES LANDSCAPING.
- ▧ DENOTES RETAINING WALL.
- ▩ DENOTES PAVERS SURFACE.
- DENOTES ROCK RIP RAP AREA.

672.46 × DENOTES SPOT ELEVATION.
— 697 — DENOTES CONTOUR OF ELEVATION.



DATUMS

HORIZONTAL: GOODHUE COUNTY COORDINATE SYSTEM
NAD83 1996 ADJUSTMENT (HARN)

VERTICAL: NAVD 88

SITE BENCHMARK

TOP OF CAPPED IRON PIPE ELEVATION = 715.41

NOTE:

For Lot 1, Block 4, WACOUTA BEACH boundary information see survey completed by Johnson & Scofield for Peggy Simonson dated July 23, 2019.



path: S:\Share\PLATS\WACOUTA BEACH\BLOCK 4\ZACK PHILLIPS\ZACK PHILLIPS.dwg

TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY FOR:

ZACK PHILLIPS



*JOHNSON & SCOFIELD INC.
LAND SURVEYING*

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

Revised Date:
May 19, 2026

Marcus S. Johnson
Minnesota License No. 47460
Date: May 8, 2026

BK. NA	PG. NA	W.O.#	DRAWING NUMBER
SHEET 1 OF 1 SHEETS	26-387	S-12606	