

TO: Board of Adjustment
FROM: Land Use Management
MEETING DATE: May 18th, 2026
REPORT DATE: May 8th, 2026

PUBLIC HEARING:

Request for Variance, submitted by Nancy Rowell and Jennifer Thames-Lee (Applicant’s/Owner’s) for the construction of an addition to their dwelling that is proposed to be less than the required 25-foot setback from the Wood Ave Right-of-Way.

Application Information:

<u>Applicant(s):</u>	Nancy Rowell and Jennifer Thames-Lee (Applicant’s/Owner’s)
<u>Address of zoning request:</u>	29065 Wood Ave, Frontenac MN, 55026
<u>Parcel:</u>	32.130.1340
<u>Abbreviated Legal Description:</u>	Lots 9, 10 and 11 of Block 35
<u>Township:</u>	Florence Township signed the Township Zoning Application with no additional comments.
<u>Zoning District:</u>	R-1 (Suburban Residential District)

Attachments:

- Application
- Staff prepared aerial view of the property
- Property legal description
- Goodhue County Zoning Ordinance: [zoning_ordinance.pdf \(goodhuecountymn.gov\)](http://goodhuecountymn.gov/zoning_ordinance.pdf)

Background:

Nancy and Jennifer want to build an addition onto their dwelling which is proposed to be 20 feet by 36 feet on the north side of the dwelling. This addition will consist of a master bedroom, bathroom, and laundry/office area.

Variance Standards:

Variations 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. Variations 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 Right-of-Way 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 approximately 21,131 square feet and meets the minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet for lots created prior to 2019 in the R-1 District.
- The applicants proposed use as a residential addition is a permitted use in the R-1 District.
- The addition and its location will not have an impact on the parcel or on the surrounding properties. There are other dwellings in the area that are also nonconforming with Right-of-Way setbacks. The parcel to the north (owned by Jeffrey Winters) had a variance approved in 2025 for a new dwelling to be 6 feet from the Wood Ave Right-of-Way.
- This request is in harmony with the purpose and intent of the official control.

2) Is the variance request consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan:

- The Goodhue County Comprehensive Plan supports the development and use of property in 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 construct a dwelling addition is a reasonable use of property in the R-1 District.
- The dwelling was constructed around 1868 which was prior to any zoning ordinances. It is currently 6 feet from the Wood Ave Right-of-Way. The location of the existing well and septic system limits alternative options on the west and south sides of the dwelling
- 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.**
- Dwelling additions 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;
 - adopt the findings of fact;
 - accept the application, testimony, exhibits, and other evidence presented into the record;
- and

Approve the request for variance, submitted by Nancy Rowell and Jennifer Thames-Lee (Applicant's/Owner's) for the construction of an addition to their dwelling that is proposed to be 16 feet setback from the Wood Ave Right-of-Way.

Variance Application

For Staff Use Only	
Permit #	726-0043
\$450 Receipt #	18898
DATE:	4/17/26

SITE ADDRESS, CITY, AND STATE			ZIP CODE:	
29065 Wood Ave Frontenac Mn			55026	
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:				
Lots 9, 10, 11 Bk 35 Old Frontenac Westervelt Platt in Florence Twp				
PID#	ZONING DISTRICT	LOT AREA (SF/ACRES)	LOT DIMENSIONS:	STRUCTURE DIMENSIONS (if applicable):
32.130.1340	R1	21,000 sf	150 x 140 ft	20 x 36 ft

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT'S NAME	
NANCY G. ROWELL & JENNIFER A. THAMES-LEE	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
29065 Wood Ave	
Frontenac, MN 55026	
	EMAIL:

PROPERTY OWNER'S NAME:	
Same as Above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
PROPERTY OWNER'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
same	
	EMAIL:

CONTACT FOR PROJECT INFORMATION:	
Same as Above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
	EMAIL:

VARIANCE REQUESTED TO: (check all that apply) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Property Line Setbacks <input type="checkbox"/> % Lot Coverage <input type="checkbox"/> Height Limits <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shoreland or Bluff Setbacks <input type="checkbox"/> Lot Width &/or Area <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision Regulations	CURRENT OR PREVIOUS USE:
	Residential
	PROPOSED USE:
	Residential
	BUILDING APPLICATION PERMIT NO. (if filed):
	Not yet 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
	Nathan Opedahl	3-18-26
		Attached <input type="checkbox"/>

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: Nancy Rowell / Jennifer Thames-Lee Date: 3/15/26

REQUEST SUMMARY

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

Article: 24 Section: 5 Title: Suburban Residence District

Article: 31 Section: 11, +2 Title: S, Shoreland Reg so

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:

see Attached

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

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:

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

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

Nancy G Rowell & Jennifer A. Thames-Lee
29065 Wood Ave
Frontenac, MN 55026

Currently: This two-story house occupies Lots 9-10-11 of Block 35 of the Original Town, Old Frontenac. Facing east on the northwest corner of Wood Avenue and Wells Street, the rectangular gable roof dwelling rests on a stone and concrete foundation. The roof is grey composite shingles with wood siding and trim. On the west there is a small shed roof kitchen with gable roof entry. Windows are of various types and ages including double hung six-over-six and one-over-one. The east face has a full width shed roof screened porch trimmed with Queen Anne details.

History: According to respected local sources, after acquiring the lots from the Gerrards, this dwelling was built in 1868 by Johan and Rebecca Friedericks who lived there until 1885. Per recorded history, the house appears to have been lived in continuously by a succession of owners who carefully cared for the house and grounds. There are two well-known early photographs. One taken in 1910 shows the gable roof, 3 bay facade with offset entry including 3 east windows on the second story. A 1920 photo shows house now with the screened porch and Queen Anne details.

Planned Addition: The current owners are sisters in their 70's who hope to age in place in this delightful home. To ensure this is possible, a 500sq ft single-story gable roof addition, consisting of a master bedroom, bathroom and laundry/office area is planned on the north side with inner access centrally located. The foundation will be a full block and concrete basement. Additionally, a 12 ft-by-12 ft. gable roof screened porch will face west toward the alley. Exterior siding, windows and trim, as well as interior details and colors, will match the existing materials and colors as closely as possible.

In planning the addition, inspiration was taken from 4-5 similar older homes with additions in Old Frontenac.

Alternatives: Due to construction in 1868, the 80ft width of Wood Ave and the strong vintage feel of the house, alternatives are limited.

However, various options were considered including:

- a. Placing the addition back further to the west on the north side would potentially disrupt the well which is at the northwest corner of the house and would cause awkward dysfunctional inner access to the addition.
- b. Placing the addition on the south side would disrupt the septic drain field and cause awkward dysfunctional inner access to the addition.
- c. The east and west faces were not considered due to present configuration and proximity to Wood Ave on the east.
- d. Should it not be possible to construct the addition, the owners must sell the property and seek a more adaptable situation elsewhere.

4/22

Nancy G Rowell & Jennifer A Thames-Lee
29065 Wood Ave
Frontenac, MN 55026

Building Materials and Colors

Architect Neal Binner has taken pains to locate and specify exterior siding, roofing, and trim to match the existing elements as we desire to achieve a seamless appearance between the old and new structures.

1. Siding and Trim:

LP Smartside 38 Series smooth lap siding with 3 1/4 inch exposure will match existing wood in size and overlap. The various existing trim types and sizes will be matched by appropriate LP Smartside trims. See architectural plans for LP specifications regarding each specific different trim placement.

2. Roof:

The same composite grey shingles on the existing roof will be utilized for the addition.

3. Windows:

The existing double hung windows are a mix of very old, old and new including 6-over-6 and single pane over single pane. As a coherent look is desired, Anderson 400 series Woodwright double hung windows will be utilized.

4. Landscape:

Shrubs, flowers, grass and flagstones will be replaced to blend with the existing yard.

To: Goodhue County Board of Adjustment
From: N. G. Rowell & J. Thames-Lee
Date: 4-14-2026

Re: Request by owners to approve the variance related to Wood Ave setback and to proceed with application process without a new survey of property

1. Side yard setbacks

In 2025-26 a new home was constructed on the neighboring property immediately to our north at 29039 Wood Ave. The metal survey markers are in place and were utilized by the lot owner's contractor to layout the new home next to ours. The distance from our planned addition north edge to our north side property line is clear, easily measurable and exceed regulations at 30 feet. This is more than enough to meet the Goodhue County requirement of 8 feet for side yards for property zoned R1.

2. Setback from Wood Ave:

The house was built onsite in 1868. When built the front (east) perimeter of the house was about 16 feet from the 80 feet wide Wood Ave. Photographs show that prior to 1920 the screened porch was constructed making the east house edge about 6 feet from the Wood Ave right of way.

Due to external and internal structures of the existing house, the proposed front (east) facing edge of the addition will be placed approximately 10 feet 4 inches to the rear (west) of the house, making the attached addition front edge about 16 feet 4 inches from Wood Ave.

Addition or no addition, the structure will continue to be nonconforming unless picked up and moved. All efforts have been made by the owners and the architect to minimize the amount of nonconformity of the addition and retain external visual balance, vintage appearance and internal flow.

Additionally, please note that the house located next door to the north at 29039 Wood Ave referenced above, was approved and built in 2025-26 facing Wood Ave in line with our house, i.e. 6 feet from Wood Ave right of way. This approval allowed for a harmonious look to our historic block and historic community as well as effective use of their lot.

3. The project does not affect the east side facing Wells Street or the West side facing the rear yard and alley.

4. Frontenac Historic Commission and Frontenac Planning and Zoning Commission have signed off on the project without a survey. They are recommending approval of the project as planned to Florence Township Board on April 20.

Conclusion: We understand the need to follow rules in pursuit of orderly growth and development in most situations. However, in this situation the only property line affected and possibly questionable is clearly identified and clearly met. The north focused nature of our project shows the south and west lines to be irrelevant. And finally, due to long standing unchangeable nonconformity in regard to Wood Ave frontage, a survey would only waste time and money without providing information relevant to this project. As to the Wood Ave setback, the variance does not harm the appearance of the neighborhood, or affect the right of way more than it has been for 158 years.

Thank you for considering our requests.

6/22

To: Goodhue County Board of Adjustment

From: N. G. Rowell & J. Thames-Lee

Date: 4-14-2026

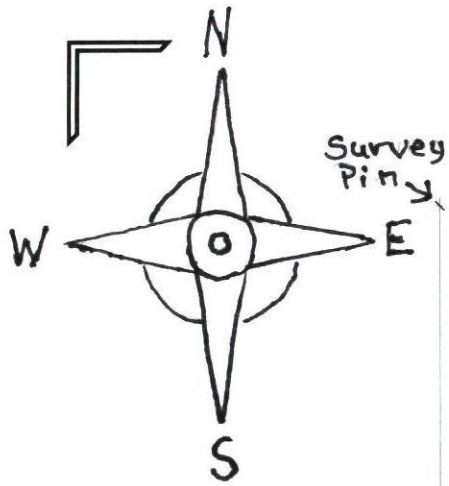
Re: Shore land variance

We request approval of the project despite being inside the shore land for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project involves a small proportion of the lot which is sited deep within the bounds of Old Frontenac. The area surrounding the addition will be graded and replanted with grass and shrubs to blend harmoniously with the present landscape.
2. The additional roof runoff will be dealt with appropriately via gutters, downspouts and appropriate grading and planting as it is for the main house.
No change to present flood potential or damage is anticipated by the project for the above reasons.
3. The single family dwelling will continue as a single family dwelling but with features that render the dwelling safer and more convenient for the aging occupants. These changes include moving the washer/dryer to the ground floor from the basement, moving the master bedroom and bath to the ground floor, providing domestic storage in-house as opposed to the present garage attic and offsite storage. These changes do not negatively affect the septic or well use or capacity, both of which are deemed safe and adequate as shown by the attached certifications.

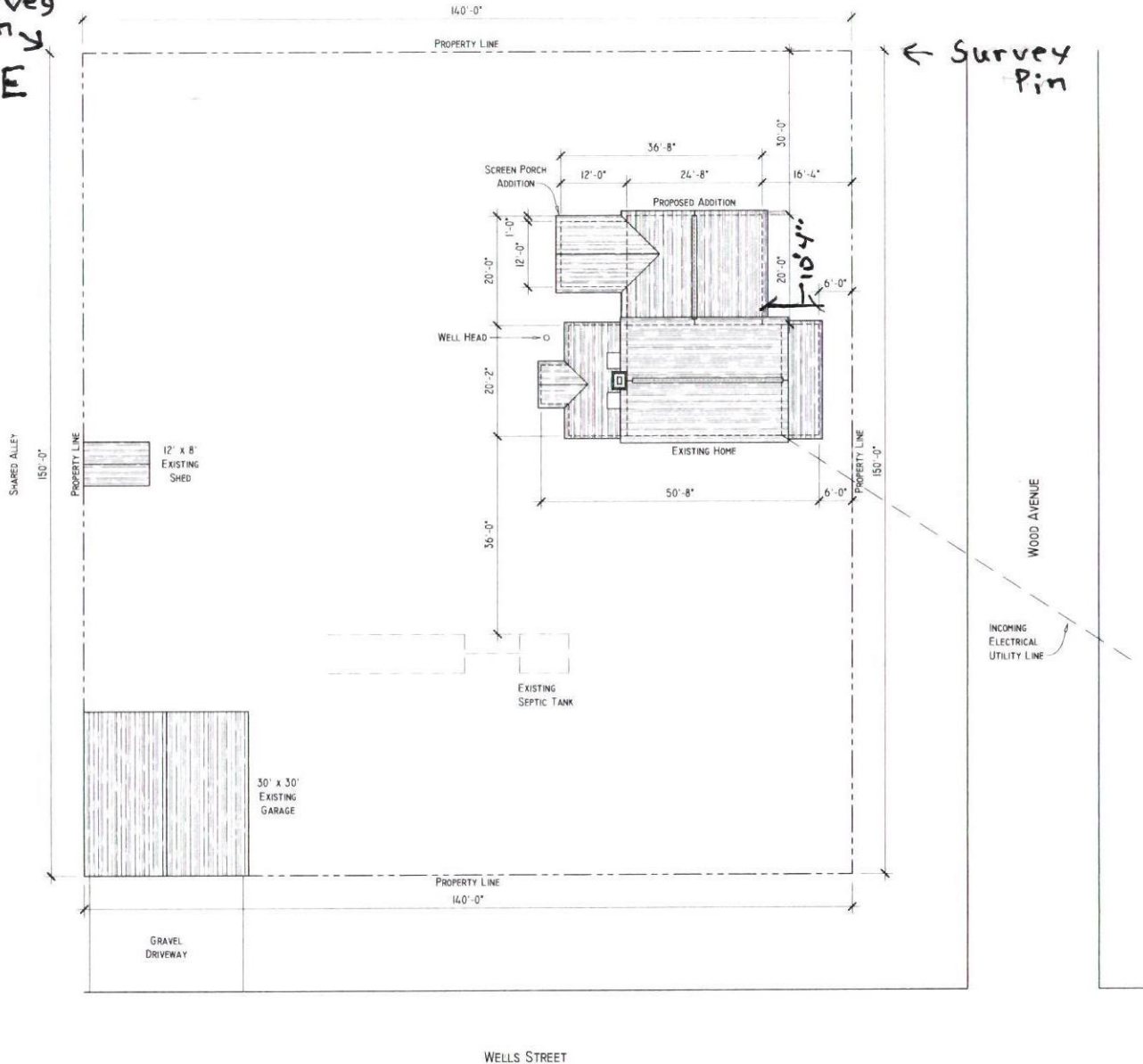
Conclusion: It is believed that our project will have minimal impact on any of the factors that negatively impact healthy shore land.

Thank you for considering our request.



Survey Pin

Nancy G. Rowell
 & Jennifer A. Thames-
 Lee
 29065 Wood Ave.
 Frontenac, MN
 55026



← Survey Pin

THE DRAWINGS AND SPECIFIC
 USED AS A GUIDE FOR GENERAL
 WHO ARE KNOWN EVIDENCE AT
 LOCAL CODES AND STANDARDS
 THEY ARE NOT INTENDED TO
 EQUIPMENT MEANS OR METHOD
 TO MAINTAIN THE SUITABILITY
 FIRE RESISTANCE DURABILITY
 OF THE STRUCTURE IN PART
 PLANS TO CORRECT ANY ERRORS
 THE HOMEOWNER BUILDING OR
 CONSTRUCTION BUT ASSUMES
 ALL ALTERATIONS OR IMPROPER
 DISCLAIMS ANY RESPONSIBILITY
 PROPERTY WHICH MAY BE CALLED
 THE USE OF THESE PLANS AT
 SUITS THAT MAY ARISE FROM
 STRUCTURE OR ANY TIME THE

8/22

SITE PLAN
 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

THE DESIGNER IS NOT AN ARCHITECT
 AND CONSTRUCTION FROM THIS
 WITHOUT A CONSTRUCTION PERMIT
 ALL STRUCTURAL DESIGN REVISIONS
 ARE TO BE VERIFIED BY THE
 REGISTERED ENGINEERING DESIGNER
 DESIGNER



DISCLOSURE STATEMENT: LOCATION MAP

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1. Page _____ of _____ pages

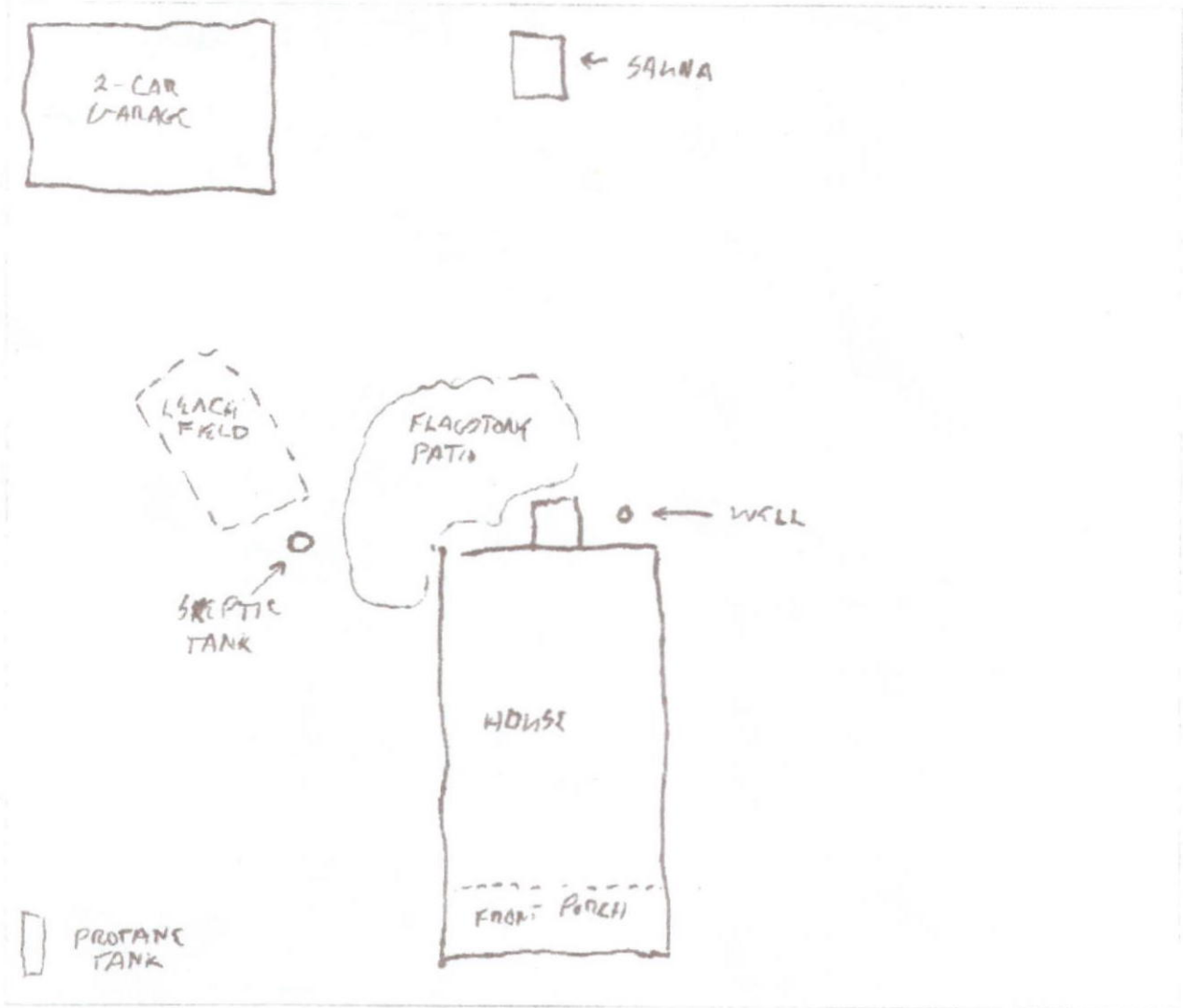
2. Please use the space below to sketch the real property being sold and, to Seller's knowledge, the approximate location of any of the following on the property.

4. SUBSURFACE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM WELL METHAMPHETAMINE PRODUCTION AREA
(Check all that apply.)

5. Include approximate distances from fixed reference points such as streets, buildings and landmarks.

6. Property located at 29065 Wood Ave Frontenac MN 55026

7. TOWN OF FRONTENAC ID# 32-0160-12400 DOC #346361 LOTS 9 10 AND 11 BLK 35



8. ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS AS NEEDED.

9. Seller and Buyer initial:

<u>JAL</u>	<u>7/26/2023</u>	<u>AR</u>	<u>08/24/23</u>
<small>(Seller)</small>	<small>(Date)</small>	<small>(Buyer)</small>	<small>(Date)</small>

10.

<u>ESL</u>	<u>7/26/2023</u>		
<small>(Seller)</small>	<small>(Date)</small>	<small>(Buyer)</small>	<small>(Date)</small>

11.

ORIGINAL COPY TO LISTING BROKER; COPIES TO SELLER, BUYER, SELLING BROKER

MN-IM (8/21)



13/22

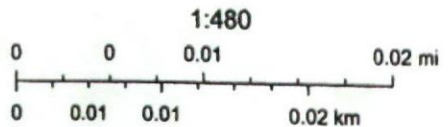
ArcGIS WebMap



August 7, 2023

- GoodhueCo_PLSS
- Municipal Boundary
- Goodhue County Roads
- CEM; ; OCTY; OCRLN; CTRLN

- House Number
- PIN
- Full Name
- Parcels



PUBLIC NOTICE: NEIGHBORHOOD MAILING MAP

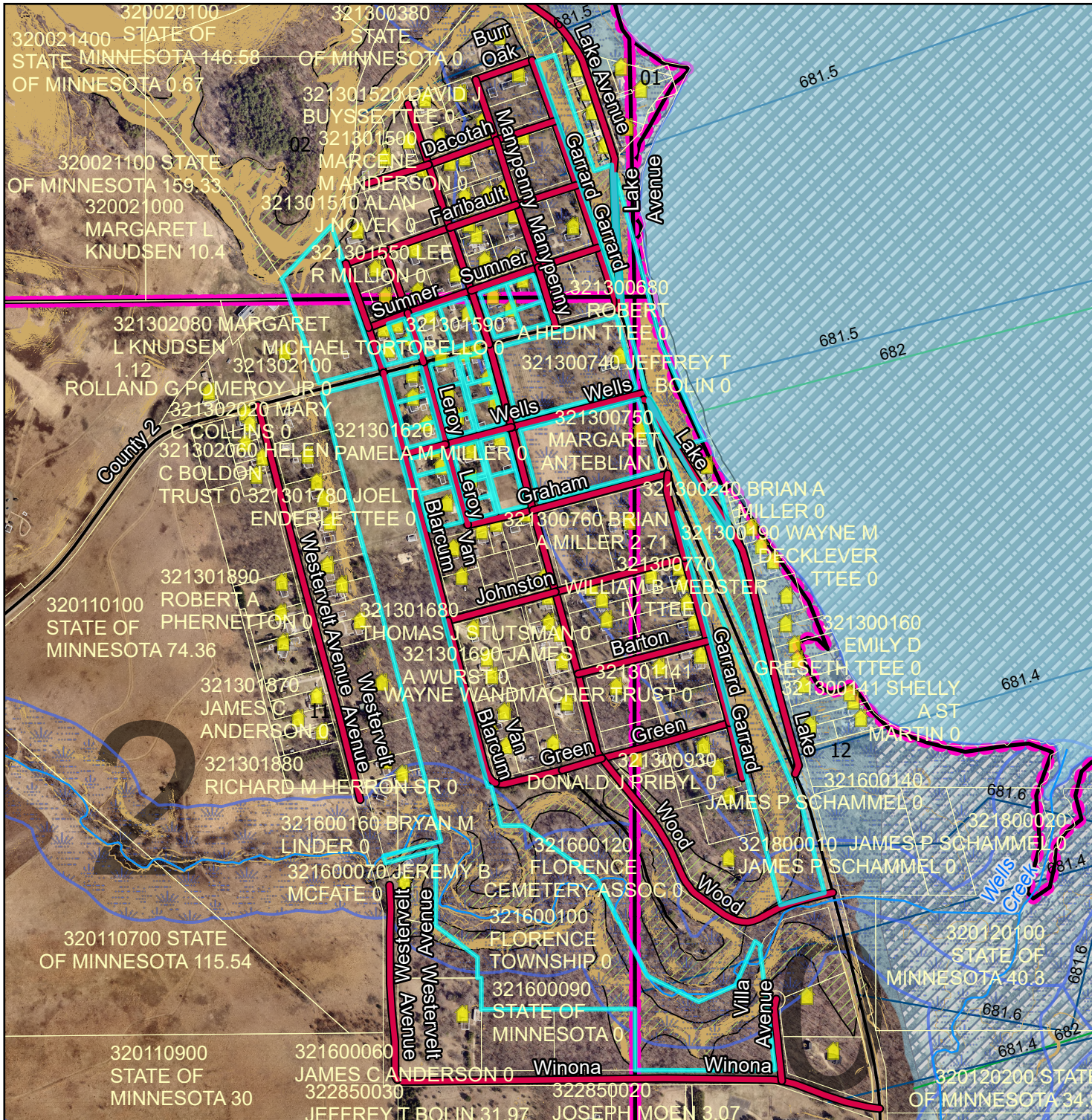
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Public Hearing
May 18th, 2026

Nancy Rowell and Jennifer Thames-Lee
(Owner's) R-1 Zoned District.

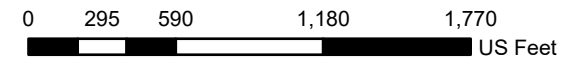
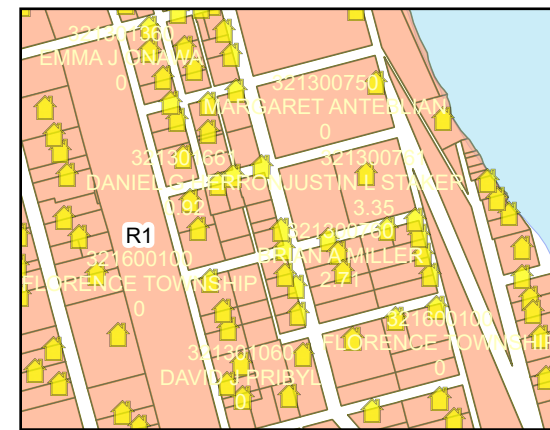
Lots 9, 10 and 11 of Block 35 in
Florence Township.

Request for variance to construct an
addition to their dwelling that is proposed
to be less than the required 25-foot
setback from the Wood Ave Right-of-Way.



Legend

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

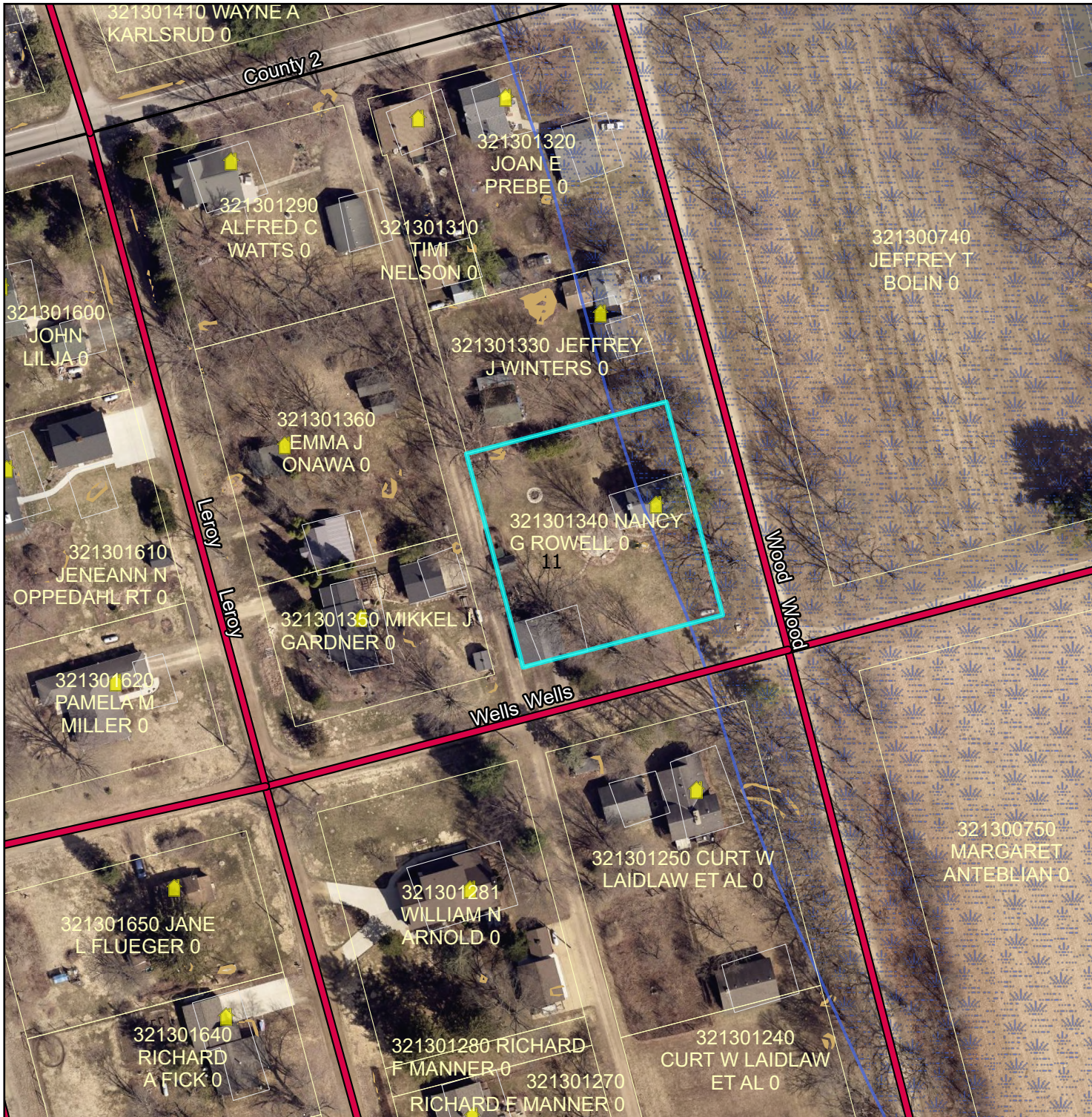


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Map Created April, 2026 by LUM



MAP 02: VICINITY MAP



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Public Hearing
May 18th, 2026

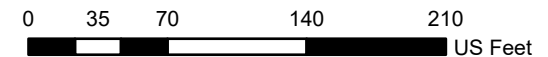
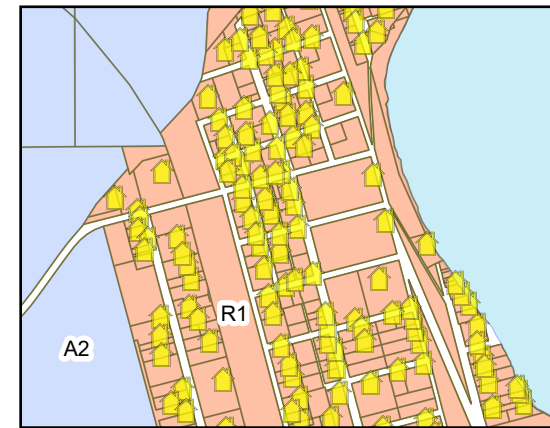
Nancy Rowell and Jennifer Thames-Lee
(Owner's) R-1 Zoned District.

Lots 9, 10 and 11 of Block 35 in
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Legend

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



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MAP 03: ELEVATIONS



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Public Hearing
May 18th, 2026

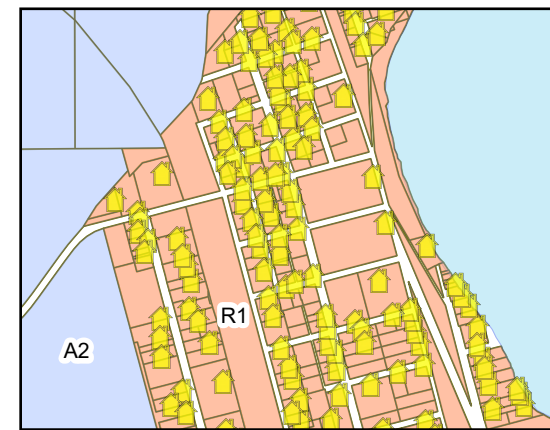
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Intermittent Streams	Bluff Impact Zones (% slope)
Protected Streams	20
Lakes & Other Water Bodies	30
Shoreland	FEMA Flood Zones
Historic Districts	2% Annual Chance
Parcels	A
Registered Feedlots	AE
Dwellings	AO
Municipalities	X



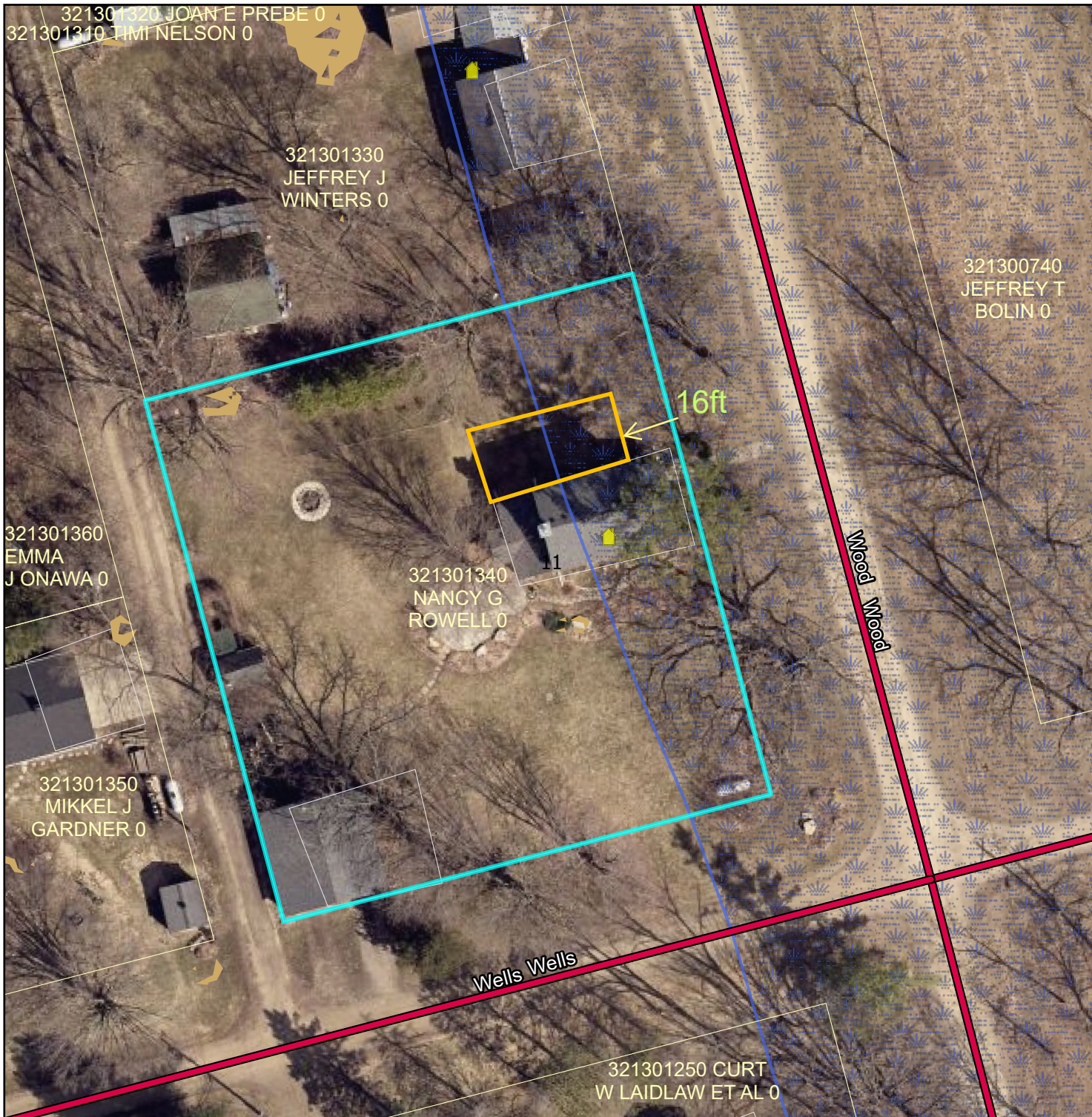
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US Feet

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MAP 01: PROPERTY OVERVIEW



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Public Hearing
May 18th, 2026

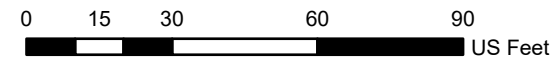
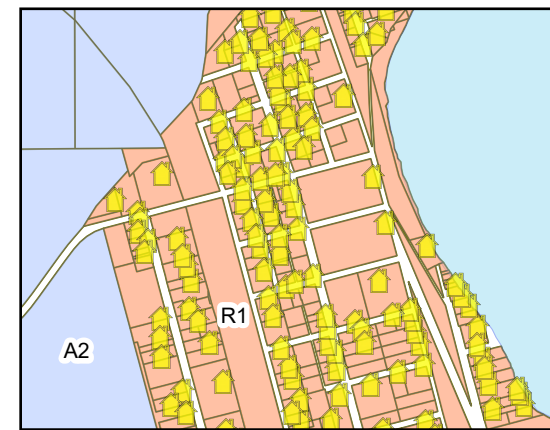
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	Registered Feedlots		AE
	Dwellings		AO
	Municipalities		X



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