

**PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 6, 2020 AT 12:15 PM  
CORDOVA CENTER EDUCATION ROOM**

**Chair**

Tom McGann

**Commissioners**

Scott Pegau

John Baenen

Nancy Bird

Chris Bolin

Trae Lohse

Mark Hall

**City Planner**

Leif Stavig

**AGENDA**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ROLL CALL**

Chair Tom McGann, Commissioners Scott Pegau, John Baenen, Nancy Bird, Chris Bolin, Trae Lohse, and Mark Hall

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**4. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS**

**5. COMMUNICATIONS BY AND PETITIONS FROM VISITORS**

a. Audience comments regarding agenda items (3 minutes per speaker)

**6. NEW/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

a. Variance Request – Jeremiah and Kristie Beckett .....Page 2

**7. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

**8. COMMISSION COMMENTS**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**



**AGENDA ITEM # 6a**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Date: 2/6/20**

**PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATION FORM**

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**FROM:** Planning Staff  
**DATE:** 1/30/20  
**ITEM:** Variance Request – Jeremiah and Kristie Beckett  
**NEXT STEP:** Decide Whether to Grant Variance

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INFORMATION  
 MOTION  
 RESOLUTION

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**I. REQUEST OR ISSUE:**

Requested Actions: Decide Whether to Grant Variance  
Applicant: Jeremiah and Kristie Beckett  
Address: 317 First Street  
Legal Description: Lot 17a, Block 2, Railway Addition  
Zoning: Medium Density Residence District  
Lot Area: 10,448 sq. ft.  
Attachments: Location Map  
Application with Drawings

Jeremiah and Kristie Beckett are requesting a variance for the construction of a garage and a covered entry that would not meet the minimum front yard requirement for the Medium Density Residential District. If the variance is granted, Jeremiah and Kristie Beckett would be able to build their garage four feet from the front property line and a covered entry up to the front property line.

**II. RECOMMENDED ACTION / NEXT STEP:**

“I move that the Planning Commission grant the variance request by Jeremiah and Kristie Beckett and to adopt and incorporate the findings within the staff report.”

Staff recommend the Planning Commission grant the variance request.

**III. FISCAL IMPACTS:**

Increased property value and tax base.

**IV. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Applicable Code:**

*18.24.040 - Front yard.*

*There shall be a front yard in the R medium density district of not less than ten feet from curb line.*

*18.64.020 - Variances.*

*A. An application for a variance shall be filed in writing and verified by the owner of the property concerned.*

*1. The application shall contain the following data with respect to the property and the applicant:*

- a. A legal description of the property involved,*
- b. Plot plans showing the location of all existing and proposed buildings or alterations, elevations of such buildings or alterations, and such other data as may be required,*
- c. Evidence of the ability and intention of the applicant to proceed in accordance with the plans within six months after the effective date of the variance;*

**Suggested Findings:**

- a. That there are exceptional physical circumstances or conditions applicable to the property or to its intended use or development which do not apply generally to the other properties in the same land use district.*

This condition has been met. The Medium Density Residential District encompasses a wide range of properties; however, this lot is exceptionally challenging to develop due to its topography, access, and adjacent road surface. The lot is situated at a significantly lower grade than First Street, which is the only way the lot can be accessed. While the west side of lot is adjacent to an alley and the Railroad Avenue right of way, the terrain is very steep and would be infeasible to construct a driveway on. Off-street parking is nearly infeasible on the lot. Granting the variance for the garage allows the applicant to meet the off-street parking requirements.

- b. That the strict application of the provisions of this title would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship.*

This condition has been met. Adhering to the required front setback would require the garage to be located further from the road, leading to significant structural and developmental difficulties which have the potential to make the garage infeasible. The added off-street parking would lessen the congestion on the street, which

alleviates some of the practical difficulties of the lot.

- c. *That the granting of the variance will not result in material damage or prejudice to other properties in the vicinity nor be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare.*

This condition has been met. All other setbacks are met by the proposed development, so there are minimal impacts to the adjacent properties. Several properties nearby also do not meet the front setback requirement. The applicant will have to comply with DOT requirements for the driveway. The off-street parking will lessen the on-street parking in the area. The proposed building has been professionally designed and will meet current building codes. Per the variance process, letters were mailed to all properties within 300 feet of the proposed variance.

- d. *That the granting of the variance will not be contrary to the objectives of the comprehensive plan.*

This condition has been met. The 2019 Comprehensive Plan identifies “limited stock of affordable housing” as a key issue of the plan. The proposed variance is for a new single-family house, which will add to the existing housing stock. The property has several challenges that make it difficult to develop. The applicant has made a significant investment to acquire the property and plan a high-quality development on property that may have remained undeveloped for a long time.

**V. LEGAL ISSUES:**

N/A

**VI. CONFLICTS OR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:**

N/A

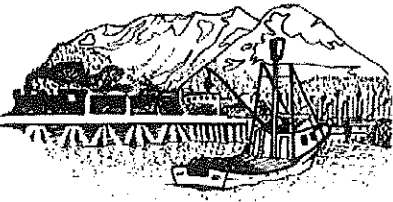
**VII. SUMMARY AND ALTERNATIVES:**

The variance can be granted, denied, or special conditions may be added by the commission.

Location Map



# CITY OF CORDOVA



## VARIANCE APPLICATION

City of Cordova, Alaska

INSTRUCTIONS	PERMIT TYPE	FEE
Print or type requested information. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant and will delay processing of the request. Applications must be received by the Planning Department 21 days prior to the next Planning Commission Regular Meeting, which is scheduled the second Tuesday of each month.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Variance	\$250

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name:	Jeremiah and Kristie Beckett
Mailing Address:	PO Box 36
City/State/Zip:	Cordova, AK, 99574
Phone Number:	907-424-7147
Email Address:	beckettcdv@gmail.com

### OWNER INFORMATION

Name:	
Mailing Address:	
City/State/Zip:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	

Only complete this section if owner is different from applicant.

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Address:	317 First Street, Cordova AK 99574
Legal Description:	Lot 17a Block2 Railway Addition
Tax Lot No.:	02-060-429 (was combined with 02-060-431)
Zone District:	MDR (Medium Density Residence) District

Planning Department can assist if unknown.



REQUEST DESCRIPTION
Please describe your request in detail and identify which provision(s) of the code you are seeking a variance from.
Please see attached
<b>With this application you must also include:</b> 1. Plot plans showing the location of all existing and proposed buildings or alterations and the elevations of such buildings or alterations. 2. Evidence of the ability and intention to proceed in accordance with the plans within six months after the effective date of the variance.
Planning Department staff recommend that you provide any additional documents which will help the Planning Commission better understand the request, such as a cover letter, drawings, maps, or photographs.
VARIANCE CONDITIONS
The Planning Commission may only approve a variance if the commission finds that <b>ALL</b> of the following four conditions are met. You must include a statement and adequate evidence showing that each of the conditions has been met. Use additional pages if needed.
<b>CONDITION 1: There are exceptional physical circumstances or conditions applicable to the property or to its intended use or development which do not apply generally to the other properties in the same land use district.</b>
Please see attached
<b>CONDITION 2: The strict application of the provisions of this title would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship.</b>
Please see attached

**CONDITION 3: The granting of the variance will not result in material damage or prejudice to other properties in the vicinity nor be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare.**

Please see attached

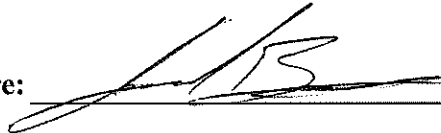
**CONDITION 4: The granting of the variance will not be contrary to the objectives of the comprehensive plan.**

Please see attached

**APPLICANT CERTIFICATION**

*By the signature attached hereto, I certify that I am the owner or duly authorized owner's agent and that the information provided within this application and accompanying documentation is correct. Furthermore, I hereby authorize the City and its representatives to enter the property associated with this application for purposes of conducting site inspections.*

**Applicant Signature:**



**Date:**

1/15/2020

**Print Name:**

Jeremiah Beckett



## 317 Variance Application Descriptions

### Request Description

We are seeking a setback variance to a medium density residential front yard lot requirements defined in code 18.24.040 for Lot 17a Block 2 Railway Addition located along First Street. An approved variance for the front yard setback will allow us to build a garage for off street parking and a covered entry way for improved access safety. Due to the property location and lot elevation relative to First Street we can only have off street parking by building an elevated garage that will require a bridge for access. Shortening the distance between the garage and street reduces the overall costs and construction challenges with building the bridge for off street parking.

Condition 1 – Exceptional physical conditions which do not generally apply to other properties in area

- 1) Lot 17a sits roughly 10' below the street elevation and the only way to provide off street parking is to construct an elevated garage with a bridge to the street.
- 2) Most residential properties nearby have no off-street parking.
- 3) There is no other road access to the property other than First Street

Condition 2 – rule would create practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships

- 1) Parking on First Street is very congested and becomes a safety issue in the winter
- 2) Not having access to off street parking creates street congestion, vehicle maintenance constraints, and unnecessary safety risks in the winter.
- 3) Having to build a 10' or longer bridge vs 4' is considerably more expensive creating an unnecessary financial hardship for new construction and long-term maintenance

Condition 3 – granting of variance will not result in damage or prejudice to other properties

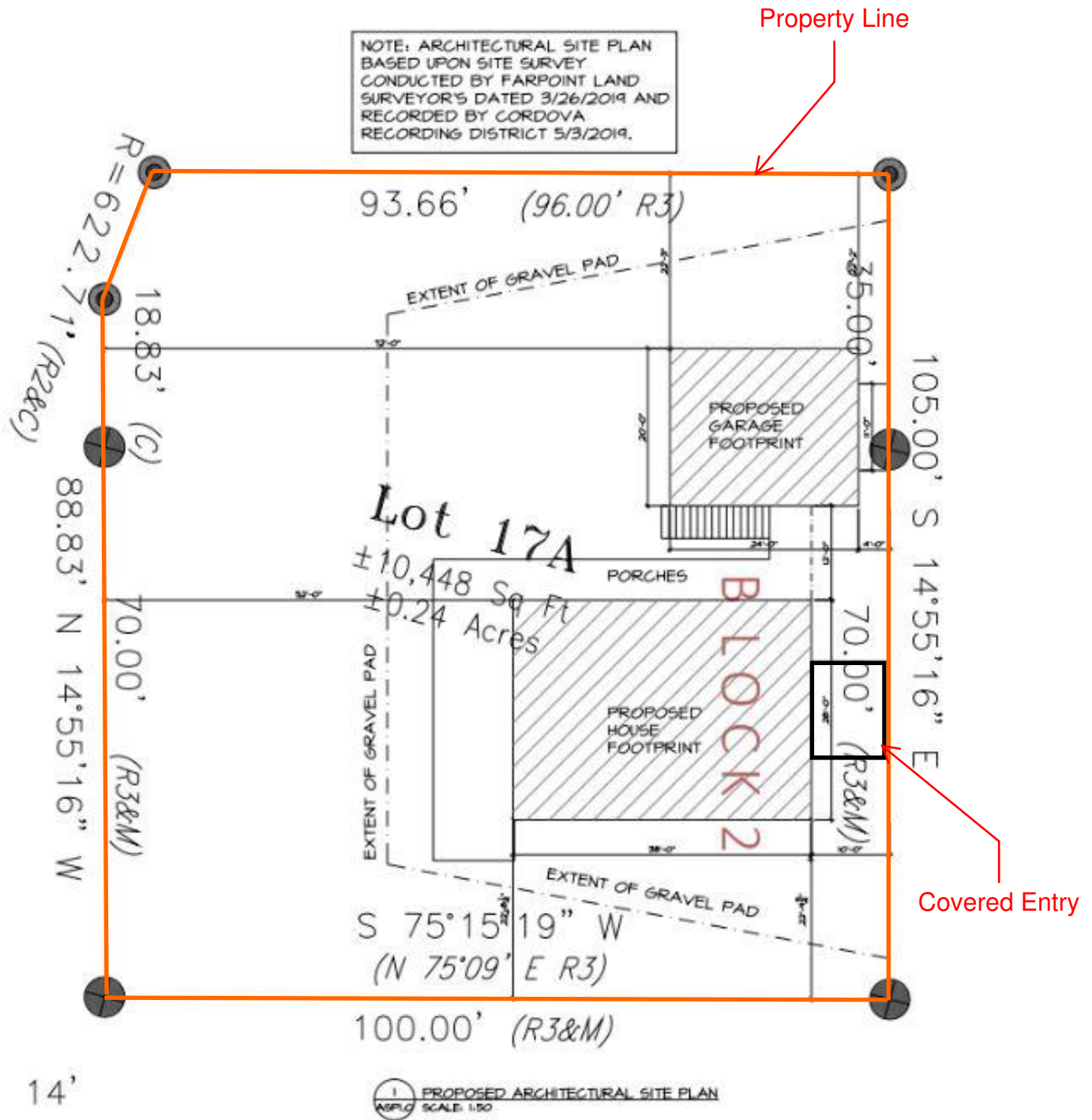
- 1) The most recent house built in the area was approved for a setback variance
- 2) Most houses in this historic area of Cordova do not conform to the setback variance
- 3) Public safety and winter maintenance of First Street will be improved by approving this variance request

Condition 4 – granting is aligned with Cordova comprehensive plan

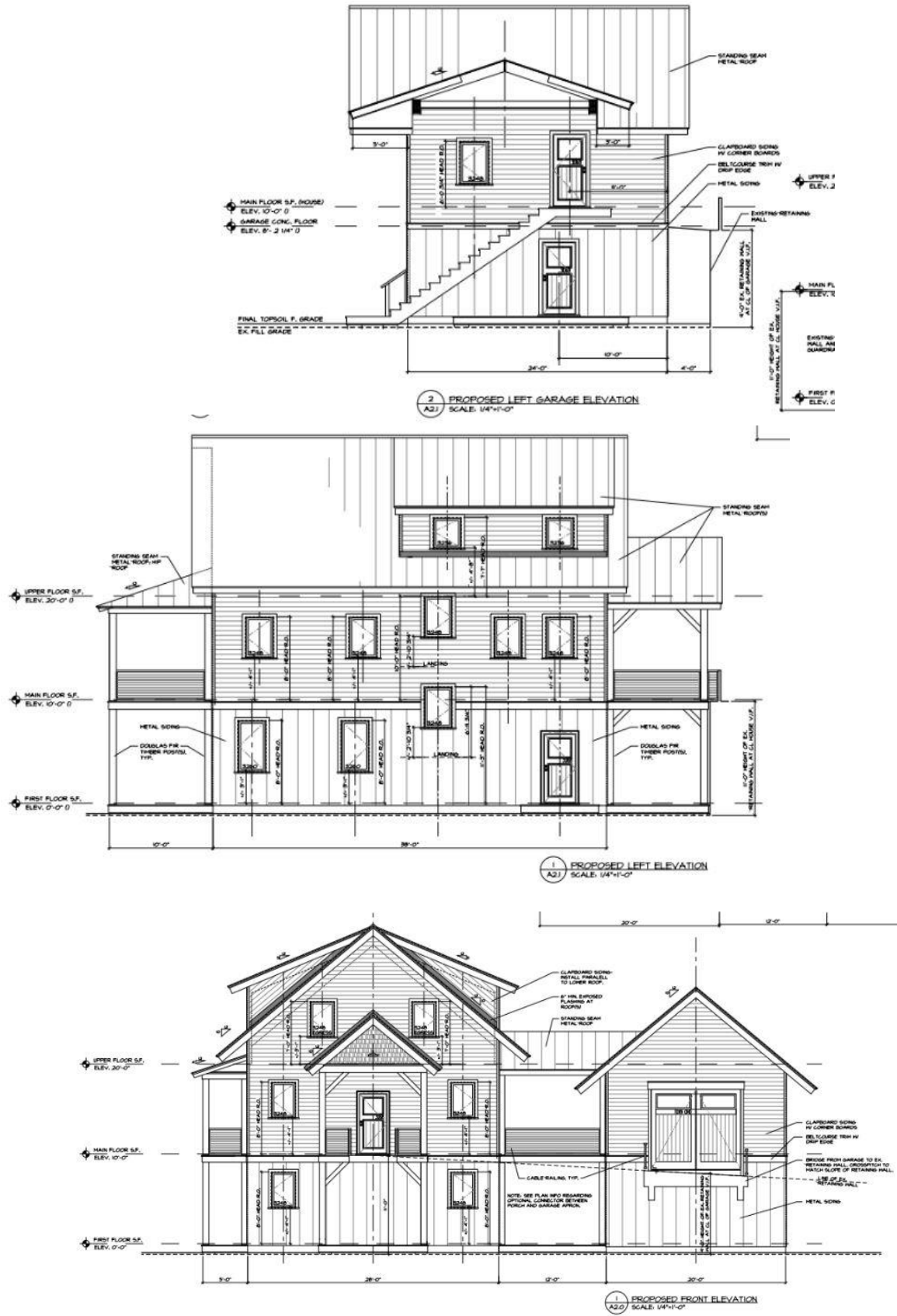
- 1) City code 18.48.060 requires off street parking for residential houses. Not approving this variance request would be contrary to Cordova's building objectives.
- 2) The City of Cordova promotes housing development that stimulates local jobs and tax revenues.
- 3) The comprehensive plans seeks to improve public works maintenance and safety within the community, enabling off street parking supports this.

01/15/2020

Lot 17a Proposed Site Plan



Lot 17A Proposed Buildings Elevation Views



01/15/2020