

STAFF REPORT

DATE: May 12, 2026
TO: Zoning Board of Appeals
FROM: Francisco Jimenez, Planner
RE: Petition Number: 2026-28
Applicant / Owner: Brian Contreras
Location: 556 Ward Ave (COUNCIL DISTRICT #4)
Request: 2026-28: Repeal of a Variation of Use (Ordinance #12065) to allow a 4-unit residence, an R-4 (multifamily residential) use, in an R-3 (one-and-two-family residential) Zoning District

Purpose

The applicant is requesting to repeal a previously approved Variation of Use (Ord. 12065) that allowed an R-4 (multi-family) use in an R-3 (one-and-two family) zoning district.

The Variation of Use request must be considered by the City Council following the recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Site Specific Information

The City Council approved a Variation of Use (Ord. 12065) in 1998 that allowed the reduction from five units to four units within this two-story building in the R-3 (one-and-two family residential) zoning district. The building had one unit on the first floor and three units on the second. The building suffered extensive fire damage in 2024 and has remained vacant since that time. The petitioner has submitted building permits for the building and will be remodeling and updating the units when permits are approved.

Surrounding Zoning, Land Use and Character

North: Railroad, I-2 (General Industrial) District
South: Single Family, R-2 (Single-Family Residential) District
East: Single Family, R-2 (Single-Family Residential) District
West: Single Family, R-2, (Single-Family Residential) District

Applicable Regulations

- Section 47.7.1 Permitted Principal Uses
- Section 47-17.28: Variation of Use

Section 47-17.28: Variation of Use: *A "variation of use" shall be defined to mean relief from strict compliance with the use limitations of this Ordinance regarding the classification, regulation, and restriction of the location where trades, industries, businesses, and residences may exist.*

Discussion

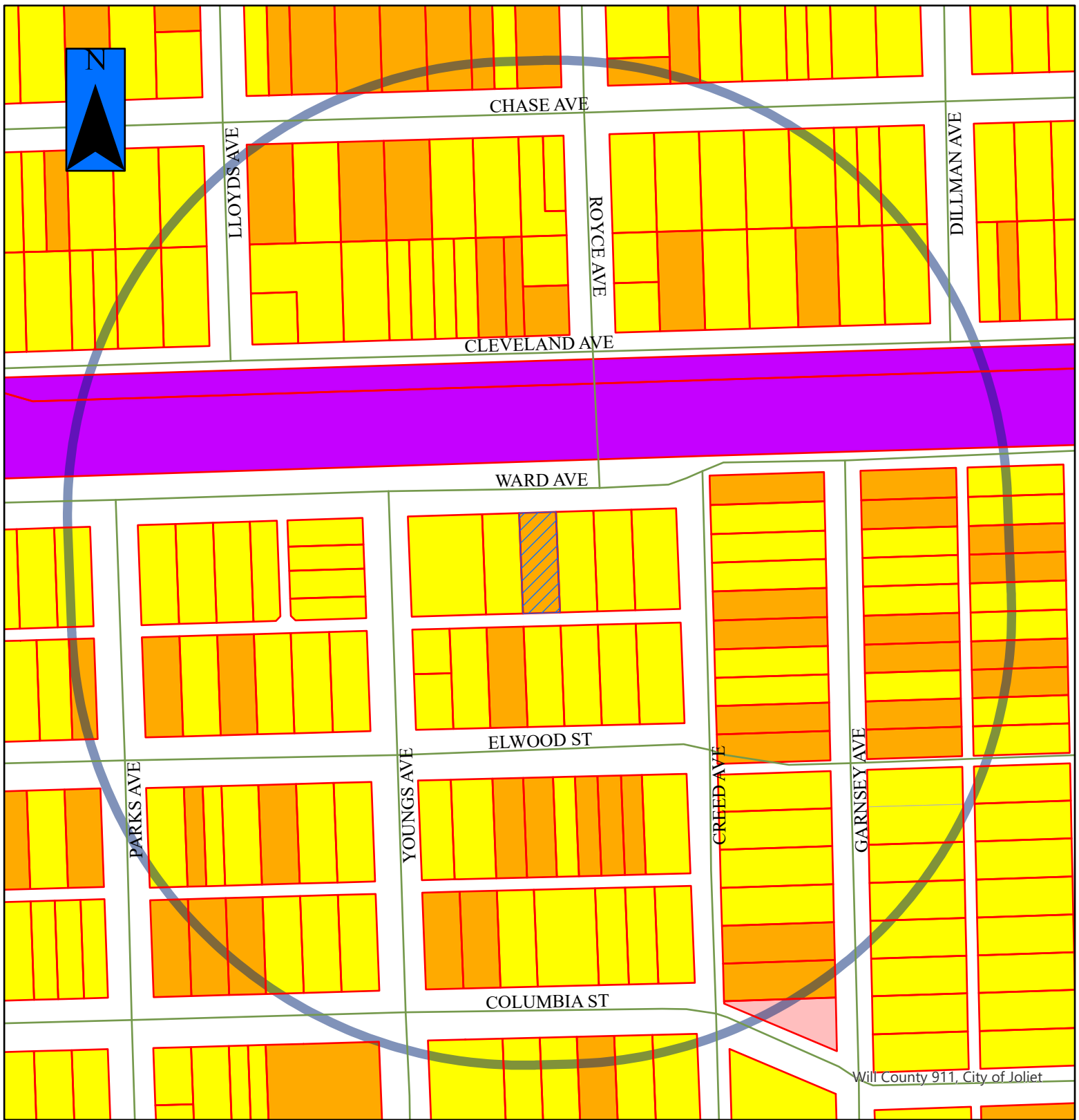
The petitioner has applied for the repeal of the previously approved Variation of Use that allowed an R-4 (multifamily) use in an R-3 (one-and-two-family) residential district. The petitioner has stated in their application that they are planning to convert the existing, but vacant, four unit building into two units. They stated that by having two units instead of four, they will be able to make the individual units larger, and the building would be more in character of the neighborhood. The property has a paved parking area in the rear that is accessed via an alley and provides the required number of spaces. The surrounding properties are all single-family homes.

Recommended Action

Staff recommends approval of the repeal as it would align the proposed two-unit residential use of this property with the two-unit zoning designation for this property. The repeal also enables the property to better fit the zoning and land use of nearby properties and should not alter the character of the surrounding area.



Conditions

1. That all necessary building permits shall be obtained prior to the Certificate of Occupancy being issued;
2. That the property shall be enrolled in and comply with the City's Rental Inspection Program;
3. That the use of the property shall not be expanded in the future;
4. Should the property be declared a public nuisance, it may be subject to rehearing and possible revocation of the Variation of Use.



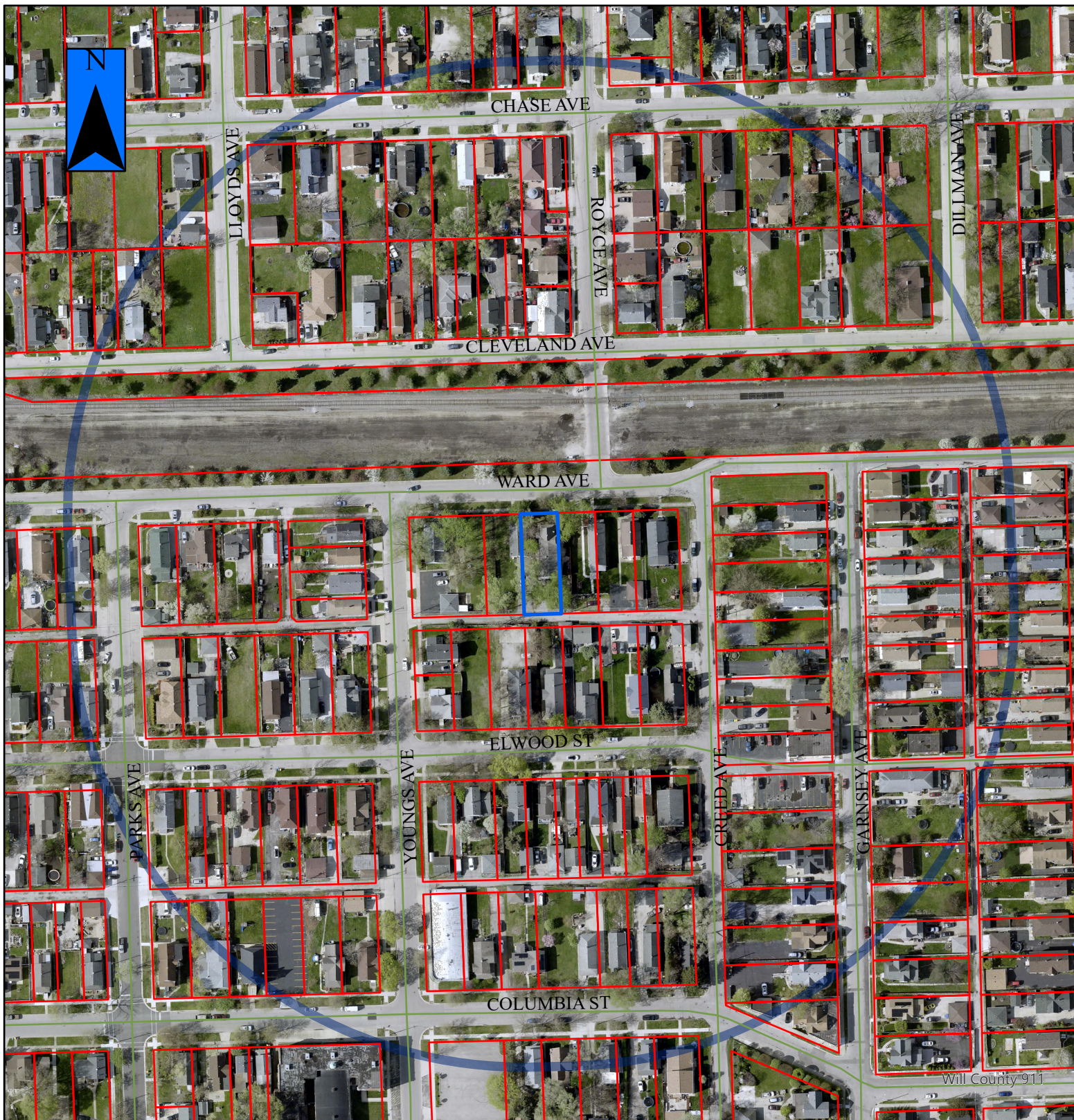
2026-28



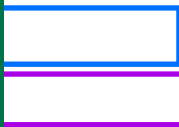
 = Property in Question
 = 600' Public Notification Boundary

Legend			
	B-1		R-2
	B-2		I-TA
	B-3		R-2A
	I-1		R-3
	R-1		R-4
	I-2		R-1A
	I-T		R-1B
			R-5
			R-B

Will County 911, City of Joliet



2026-28a



= Property in Question / Propiedad en cuestión
= 600' Public Notification Boundary /
Límite de notificación pública de 600 ft (180 m)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Verified by Planner (please initial): _____

Payment received from: _____

Petition #: _____

Common Address: _____

Date filed: _____

Meeting date assigned: _____

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
JOLIET, ILLINOIS

PETITION FOR VARIATION/APPEAL

City of Joliet Planning Division, 150 W. Jefferson St., Joliet, IL 60432
Ph (815)724-4050 Fax (815)724-4056

ADDRESS FOR WHICH VARIATION IS REQUESTED: 556 Ward Ave Joliet IL 60432

PETITIONER'S NAME: Brian Contreras

HOME ADDRESS: [REDACTED] ZIP CODE: 60432

BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE: (Primary) [REDACTED] (Secondary) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: [REDACTED] FAX: _____

PROPERTY INTEREST OF PETITIONER: Owner

OWNER OF PROPERTY: Brian Contreras

HOME ADDRESS: [REDACTED] ZIP CODE: 60432

BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ FAX: _____

Any use requiring a business license shall concurrently apply for a business license and submit a copy with this petition. Additionally, if this request is for operation of a business, please provide the following information:

BUSINESS REFERENCES (name, address, phone or email):

OTHER PROJECTS AND/OR DEVELOPMENTS:

PERMANENT INDEX NUMBER (TAX NO. OR P. I. N.): 30-07-10-203-003-0000 ;
_____ ; _____ ; _____

Property Index Number/P.I.N. can be found on tax bill or Will County Supervisor of Assessments website

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY (an attached copy preferred):

LOT 4 IN BLOCK 21, IN DURHAM AND ENGLISH'S ADDITION TO JOLIET, BEING A
SUBDIVISION OF THE WEST 1/2 OF THE NORTHEAST 1/4 OF SECTION 10, TOWNSHIP
35 NORTH, RANGE 10 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN IN WILL COUNTY
ILLINOIS.

LOT SIZE: WIDTH: 50' DEPTH: 132' AREA: _____

PRESENT USE(S) OF PROPERTY: Existing 4- unit residential building (currently under renovations)

PRESENT ZONING OF PROPERTY: Residential (R-3 / R-4 - to be verified by Planning Department)

VARIATION/APPEAL REQUESTED: Requesting a zoning variation to convert an existing 4-unit
Residential building into a 2-unit residential building. The proposed units will be larger in size and
Upgraded to improve overall livability, safety, and property value.

RESPONSE TO VARIATION CRITERIA

The Zoning Board of Appeals is authorized to grant or recommend relief only when it has received adequate evidence to establish a practical difficulty or hardship. The evidence must support each of the following three conditions:

- (a) The property in question cannot yield a reasonable return by use permitted and subject to the conditions allowed by the regulations in the particular district or zone.
- (b) The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances.
- (c) The variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

Please describe how this request meets the criteria by responding to the following questions in your own words.

1. How do the applicable zoning regulations prevent the property in question from yielding a reasonable return?
The current layout as a 4-unit building does not allow for optimal use of space or modern
living standards. Converting the property into two larger units will significantly improve rental
potential, increase long-term value, and allow the property to yield a reasonable return.

2. What unique circumstances exist which mandate a variance?

The property has unique, structural and layout limitations that make maintaining four functional units inefficient. The proposed redesign better aligns with buildings structure And allows for improved space utilization and livability.

3. What impact would the granting of this variance have upon the essential character of the general area? Please include both positive and negative impacts.

The proposed variant will positively impact the neighborhood by reducing density and Improving the overall quality of the property. The development will not alter the character Of the area, as similar 2-unit properties exist nearby, and the improvements will enhance Neighborhood stability.

REQUIRED SUPPORTING ATTACHMENTS

- Site plan / concept plan / floor plan / building elevation plan
- Joliet Ownership Disclosure form
- Business license application (if applicable)

NOTARIZATION OF PETITION

STATE OF ILLINOIS) ss
COUNTY OF WILL)

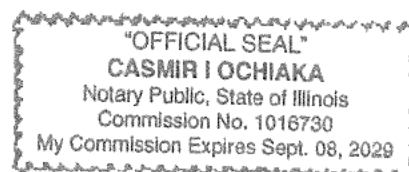
I, Brian Contreras, depose and say that the above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to be present in person or by representation when this petition is heard before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

[Redacted Signature]

Owner's Signature
(If other than petitioner)

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 10 day of April, 2026

[Redacted Notary Signature]



CITY OF JOLIET OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE FORM

The City of Joliet requires that applicants for zoning relief, subdivision approval, building permits and business licenses disclose the identity of all persons having an ownership interest in the business and the real property associated with the application. A copy of this form must be completed and submitted with other application materials. Failure to properly complete and submit this form may result in the denial of the application.

I. INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION

This form is submitted as part of an application for the following (check all that apply):

- Rezoning, Special Use Permit, Variation, or Other Zoning Relief (Complete Sections II and III)
- Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, or Record Plat of Subdivision (Complete Sections II and III)
- Building Permit (Complete Sections II and III)
- Business License (Complete All Sections)

II. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPERTY

The address and PIN(s) of the real property associated with this application are:

556 Ward Ave Joliet IL 60432

PIN(s) 30-07-10-203-003-0000

III. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Select the type of owner of the real property associated with this application and fill in the appropriate contact information below

- Individual:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of the individual owner(s)
- Corporation:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons holding 3% or more of the stock of the corporation and the percentage of shares held by such stockholders
- Limited Liability Company:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all members of the company along with the percentage of ownership held by each member
- Land Trust:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of the trustee(s) and all beneficiaries
- Partnership:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all partners
- Other type of organization:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons having a legal or equitable ownership interest in the organization or the right to direct the affairs of the organization

Brian Contreras

 _____

E-MAIL:  FAX: _____

IV. BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

If the owner of the business is different than the owner of the real property associated with the application, then the following information must be provided

Select the type of business owner associated with this application and fill in the contact information below:

- Individual:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of the individual owner(s)
- Corporation:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons holding 3% or more of the stock of the corporation and the percentage of shares held by such stockholders
- Limited Liability Company:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all members of the company along with the percentage of ownership held by each member
- Partnership:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all partners
- Other type of organization:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons having a legal or equitable ownership interest in the organization

E-MAIL: _____ FAX: _____

NOTE:

If a stockholder, member, beneficiary or partner disclosed in Section III or Section IV is not an individual, then the individuals holding the legal or equitable title to the real property or business associated with the application must also be disclosed. For example, if the real property associated with an application is owned by a land trust, and the beneficiary of the land trust is a limited liability company, then the members of the limited liability company must be disclosed. If one of the members of the limited liability company is a partnership, then the identity of the partners must be disclosed. If one of the partners is a corporation, then all persons owning 3% or more of the issued stock must be disclosed.

SIGNED _____

DATE: 04/10/2026 _____

Name, Title, and Telephone Numbers of Person Completing and Submitting This Form:

Brian Contreras (Owner) _____



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
CRITERIA FOR VARIATIONS

Section 47-19.8 of the Zoning Ordinance states:

A variation shall not be granted in any case unless the Board shall find and clearly state in its record of the case that:

	Does the evidence presented sustain this criteria?	Comments
(1) Reasons sustaining the contention that strict enforcement of the Ordinance would involve practical difficulties or impose exceptional hardship were found as follows: (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____ (list of reasons)		
(2) Adequate evidence was submitted to establish practical difficulties or particular hardship so that, in the judgment of the Board, a variation is permitted because the evidence sustained the existence of each of the three following conditions: (a) The property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations in the particular district or zone. (b) The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances. (c) The variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.		
(3) A public hearing was held on such variation of which at least 15 days and not more than 30 days notice was published in the _____ (name of newspaper) on _____ (date).		