



**AGENDA**  
**City of Fergus Falls Planning Commission Meeting**  
**January 27, 2025**  
**5:15 PM in City Council Chambers**

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1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes
3. Welcome New Commissioner!
4. Election of Officers
5. New Business
  - a. Public Hearing and Request to Consider a Variance
    - **V-2025-1: Fergus Falls Habitat for Humanity. Variance to Split Lot in R-1 District into two Nonconforming lots.** Parcel ID: 71002990677000
6. Old Business
  - a. Shoreland Management Ordinance Update
7. Council Update
8. Adjourn

If you have special needs for accommodations, please call 332-5436 or TDD 1-800-627-3529 (Minnesota Relay Service).

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**November 25, 2024**

The Fergus Falls Planning Commission held a regular meeting on November 25, 2024 in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Chair Kilde called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM. Present were Laurel Kilde, Nate Kunde, Wayne Schuett, Sarah Duffy, Mike Walls, and Paul Vukonich. Absent was Ryan Fullerton. Staff present: Klara Beck and Jill Hanson.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Duffy made a motion to approve the minutes from September 23, 2024. It was seconded by Commissioner Kunde. Passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion to approve the agenda by Commissioner Kunde and seconded by Commissioner Schuett. Passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**4a. SHORELINE ORDINANCE UPDATES**

Klara Beck reminded the commission that the City must be in substantial compliance with municipal shoreland management standards and criteria established by the State of Minnesota (DNR) and must hold a public hearing before adopting changes to the ordinance.

The most recent changes to the ordinance:

- Removes two basins from the zoning map and list of waters that the City and DNR chose not to classify;
- Corrects a section reference and updates a section header;
- Adds missing open space criteria required by the DNR;
- Adds missing design criteria required by the DNR; and
- Corrects an open space percentage to match DNR requirements of 50%.

It was noted that we currently have a 40% open space requirement in PUDs but the DNR requires a 50% setback in PUDs in a shoreland management area.

Chair Kilde opened the public hearing at **5:25 PM**. With no comments, she closed the hearing at **5:26 PM**.

It was suggested that language could be further updated to note the difference in PUD language between PUDs in a shoreland management zone and other PUDs.

Klara stated that she thinks updating our ordinance will be an on- going process.

Commissioner Vukonich made a motion to recommend approval of the Shoreline Ordinance updates. It was seconded by Commissioner Kunde. Motion passed.

**DECEMBER MEETING SCHEDULE**

**5a.** Klara stated that if no public hearings or other business arise, the December meeting may be canceled.

**STAFF UPDATES**

**6a.** Klara Beck highlighted the work the PC did in 2024, noting some of the items that are still open for possible review in 2025. Klara mentioned a few new items that could possibly be presented in 2025. There was some discussion about

cannabis licensing in Otter Tail County.

Klara mentioned that Chair Kilde's term on the PC is over at the end of December, and she will be moving to the City Council. Commissioner Walls and Commissioner Schuett's terms are also up at the end of December, but they are both eligible to do another term if they wish. There was some discussion about how opening are filled on the commissions.

The meeting adjourned at **6:10 PM.**



## Planning Commission Staff Report

**To:** City of Fergus Falls Planning Commission  
**Respectfully Submitted:** Klara Beck, Community Development Director  
**Date:** January 22, 2025  
**Subject:** V-2025-1

### REQUESTED ACTION

Review a request for a variance to create two nonconforming lots at a parcel located at 911 Springen Ave.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

<b><i>Applicant</i></b>	Habitat for Humanity	<b><i>Planning Commission Hearing</i></b>	January 27, 2025
<b><i>Property Owner</i></b>	Habitat for Humanity	<b><i>City Council Meeting</i></b>	February 3, 2025
<b><i>Address</i></b>	911 Springen Avenue	<b><i>Application Date</i></b>	January 6, 2025
<b><i>Parcel Number(s)</i></b>	71002990677000	<b><i>60-Day Expiration Date</i></b>	March 7, 2025
<b><i>Zoning</i></b>	R-1		

### BACKGROUND

#### Site Information & Current Conditions

The parcel is a vacant lot with dimensions of approximately 109 feet by 228 feet.

#### Adjacent Zoning

R-1, One-Family Residence District, R-4, Multiple-Family Residence District

#### Adjacent Uses

Church, YMCA, multifamily and single-family housing.

#### Proposed Project

The applicant proposes splitting the lot into two smaller lots, approximately 54 feet wide by 228 feet deep, to accommodate two new single-family homes built by Habitat for Humanity.

#### Public Notification & Comments

Notice of the case and public hearing was sent to property owners within 350 ft of the parcel in question. Notice was also published in the Fergus Falls Daily Journal on January 18, 2025; no comments received at the time of this report.

### PROPOSED FINDINGS

§154.017(B)(4)(b) of the City Code states the Planning Commission and City Council consider the following criteria when evaluating a variance request:

1. **Special conditions apply to the structures or land in question that are particular to the property and do not apply generally to other land or structures in the district or vicinity in which the land is located.**

Criteria met. The lot at 911 Springen Ave is the largest single-family parcel in the neighborhood. Its substantial size allows for a division into two lots, each approximately 54 feet in width and 228 feet in depth. Even with the proposed split, the resulting lots would not be the smallest in the area. The variance is in harmony with the existing neighborhood, maximizes infill potential, and grows the housing tax base.

**2. The granting of the proposed variance will not be contrary to the intent of this chapter [meaning Chapter 154, Zoning and Subdivisions].**

Criteria met. Zoning provisions are adopted for the purpose of conserving the value of properties (and in this case, improving) and encouraging the most appropriate use of land. In an R-1 zone, two new homes are the highest and best use.

**3. The special conditions or circumstances do not result from the actions of the owner/applicant.**

Criteria met. The existing large lot size was not created by the applicant but presents a practical opportunity for the proposed lot split.

**4. The granting of the variance will not merely serve as a convenience to the applicant, but is necessary to alleviate practical difficulties in complying with the zoning provisions of this code. *M.S. §462.357, Sub. 6 defines practical difficulties as: "the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the zoning ordinance; 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."***

Criteria met. The variance facilitates the reasonable development of two homes on a lot underutilized in its current state, aligning with the community's housing needs without altering the neighborhood's character.

**5. The variance requested is the minimum variance necessary to alleviate the practical difficulty.**

Criteria met. The proposed lot width of 54.36 feet is the least deviation necessary to achieve the intended development.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the variance request and forward on to City Council for final action.

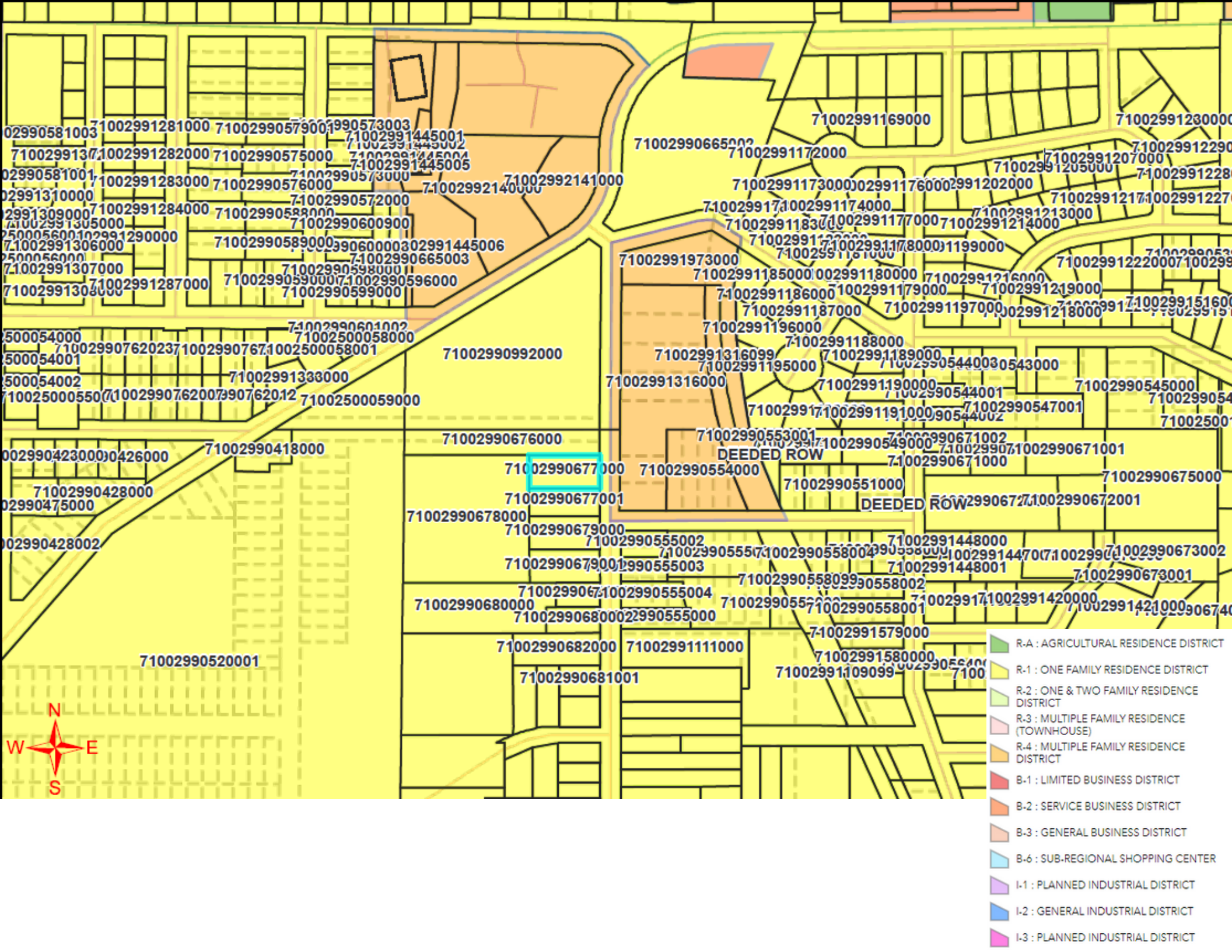
### ATTACHMENTS

1. Context Map
2. Zoning Map
3. Application & Supporting Materials









- R-A : AGRICULTURAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R-1 : ONE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R-2 : ONE & TWO FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R-3 : MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENCE (TOWNHOUSE)
- R-4 : MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- B-1 : LIMITED BUSINESS DISTRICT
- B-2 : SERVICE BUSINESS DISTRICT
- B-3 : GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- B-6 : SUB-REGIONAL SHOPPING CENTER
- I-1 : PLANNED INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT
- I-2 : GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT
- I-3 : PLANNED INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT



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## Variance

Application fee should be made payable to The City of Fergus Falls upon submittal of completed application. Please complete the application by typing or printing in ink. Use additional paper if necessary.

### 1. Property Owner Information:

Company name: FERGUS FALLS AREA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY AFFILIATE INC.

Last name: CARIGNAN First name: STANLEY

Address: 225 W. CAVOUR ST. H City/State/Zip: FERGUS FALLS, MN 56537

Phone number: 218-736-2905 Email address: FERGUS HABITAT @ GMAIL.COM

### 2. Applicant Information: (if different from above)

SAME.  
Company name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Address(es) of Property Involved: (if different from above)

911 SPRINGWATER AVE.

### 4. Zoning Designation: R-1

5. Statement of Intent: State exactly what is intended to be done on or with the property which does not conform to City Code requirements.

SPLIT THE LOT INTO TWO LOTS APPROXIMATELY 54.36'  
X 228.40' EACH.



**7. Additional Required Information: a. Legal Description and PIN:** Provide the Parcel Identification Number(s) 71-002-99-0677-000

**The complete legal description(s) of the property involved or write "see attached"**

SECT. 35, TWP-133, RANGE-043, KALLING SUB OF N.E. 1/4  
S 108.7' OF N 191.22' OF E 228.4' OF LOT 9

**b. Practical Difficulty:** The applicant should fully explain the "practical difficulty" that justifies the departure from the strict application of the Code.

1. Is the variance in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance?

YES. SEE ATTACHED.

2. Is the variance consistent with the comprehensive plan.- Not Applicable, no city plan.

3. The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the zoning ordinance?

YES. SEE ATTACHED.

4. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner?

YES. SEE ATTACHED.

5. The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality?


TRUE. SEE ATTACHED.

6. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties, are there other reasons for the need for the variance?

YES. SEE ATTACHED.

**c. Proposed Plans:** A site plan is required, a landscape plan, grading and drainage plan and other plans may be required by the city/planning commission. Such plans shall be on 8½"x 11" or 11"x 17" paper or in PDF digital format. In cases of multiple variances, the applicant may be required to submit a property boundary and building survey.

**8. Signature(s):** By signing below, you attest that the information above and attached is true and correct to the best of your knowledge.

Property Owner:  Date: NOV. 21, 2022  
Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# 911 Springen Avenue Variance Narrative

Submitted by Fergus Falls Area Habitat for Humanity

Date: November 21, 2024

1. Is the variance in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance?

**Yes.**

- (A) Protecting the public health, safety, morals, convenience and general welfare.

**There is no threat to public health, safety, morals, convenience or the general welfare.**

- (B) Lessening congestion in the public rights-of-way.

**The addition of a housing unit will not appreciably increase the congestion on Springen Avenue.**

- (C) Securing safety from fire, panic and other dangers.

**The addition of a housing unit will not lessen safety from fire, panic and other dangers.**

- (D) Providing adequate light and air.

**The addition of a housing unit will not decrease adequate light and air.**

- (E) Preventing the overcrowding of land.

**The addition of a housing unit will not create overcrowding in this neighborhood.**

- (F) Avoiding undue concentration of population.

**The addition of housing unit will not appreciably create a concentration of population in the neighborhood.**

- (G) Facilitating the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements.

**The addition of a housing unit will make good use of the existing public infrastructure.**

- (H) Conserving the value of properties and encouraging the most appropriate use of land.

**The addition of two new housing units will increase the property values in the neighborhood. Splitting the lot and allowing the construction of two housing units will make good use of existing infrastructure. Both housing units will appraise for approximately \$200,000 each.**

2. NA



3. The Property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the zoning ordinance?

**Yes. We intend to build two housing units which follows the zoning designation for the neighborhood.**

4. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.

**911 Springen is a large lot that is conducive to splitting and creating two housing units vice one. The smaller frontage of approximately 55' is offset by the deep lot of 228' that allows for activities in the rear of the lot. Although slightly less than the 60' of frontage required by current city zoning codes, 55' is adequate for a modest home. The side setbacks will remain 10' ensuring that each homeowner will have 20' between their dwellings. Even with the "small" size of our houses, they are 3-bedroom designs with 2 bathrooms and an attached, heated garage. The lot's depth of 228' allow for a nice backyard of over 100' for families to enjoy.**

5. The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality?

**No. Although this lot is zoned as R1, there is multi-family apartments across the street less than a block away. The neighborhood is also characterized by a large church, the YMCA, a wetland and the public school. The addition of two housing units will increase the feeling of a neighborhood.**

6. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practice difficulties, are there other reasons for the need for the variance?

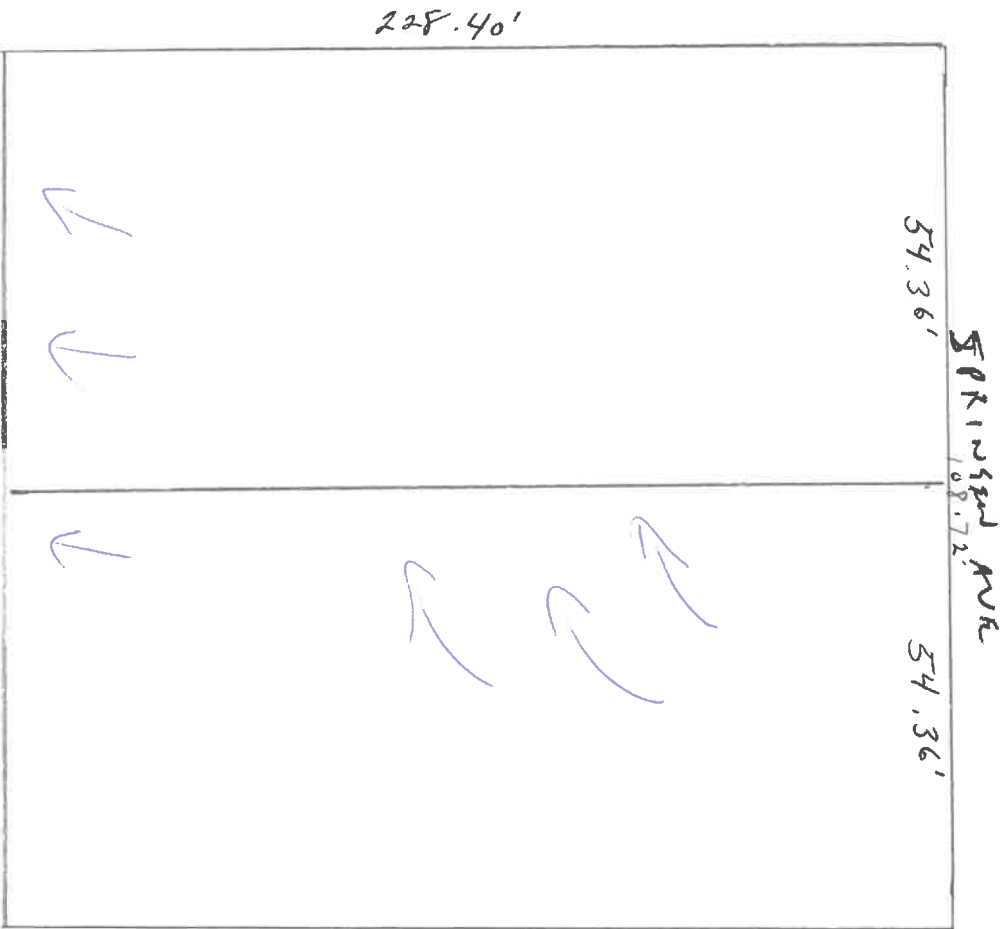
**Yes. Granting this variance will allow us to build an additional single-family housing unit. Fergus Falls has an old and aging single family housing stock. Building new homes in older neighborhoods such as on Springen Avenue helps to stabilize and revitalize the neighborhood. It will put an additional owner-occupied home in a relatively older, modest area, increasing the city's tax base without additional infrastructure cost.**

**While not the primary reason, economic considerations are a part of every home builder's calculation. Building new homes is not possible without being economically viable – this is true even for a non-profit such as Habitat for Humanity. Finding and purchasing existing lots is challenging in Fergus Falls as there have been few single-family developments in the past 20 years. If we can split this parcel, it would save us the \$10,000 - \$20,000 required to buy another lot. In addition, our experience of building six homes on Lenore Way has demonstrated the effectiveness and efficiency of building on lots that are adjacent to each other. With only one tool trailer, it makes it difficult to work in two separate geographic areas. It is also easier to have an extra lot to park the trailer off the street, as well as stack building materials and supplies. Building single family homes is our goal and we hope that the City of Fergus Falls will assist us in that mission.**

# 911 SPRINGEN AVE VARIANCE SITE PLAN

N

Gleason Methodist  
Church



71-002-99-0677-000

W.R. V. (K)

LINDA ARNETT  
829 SPRINGEN