

City Planning Commission

Staff Report

October 7, 2021

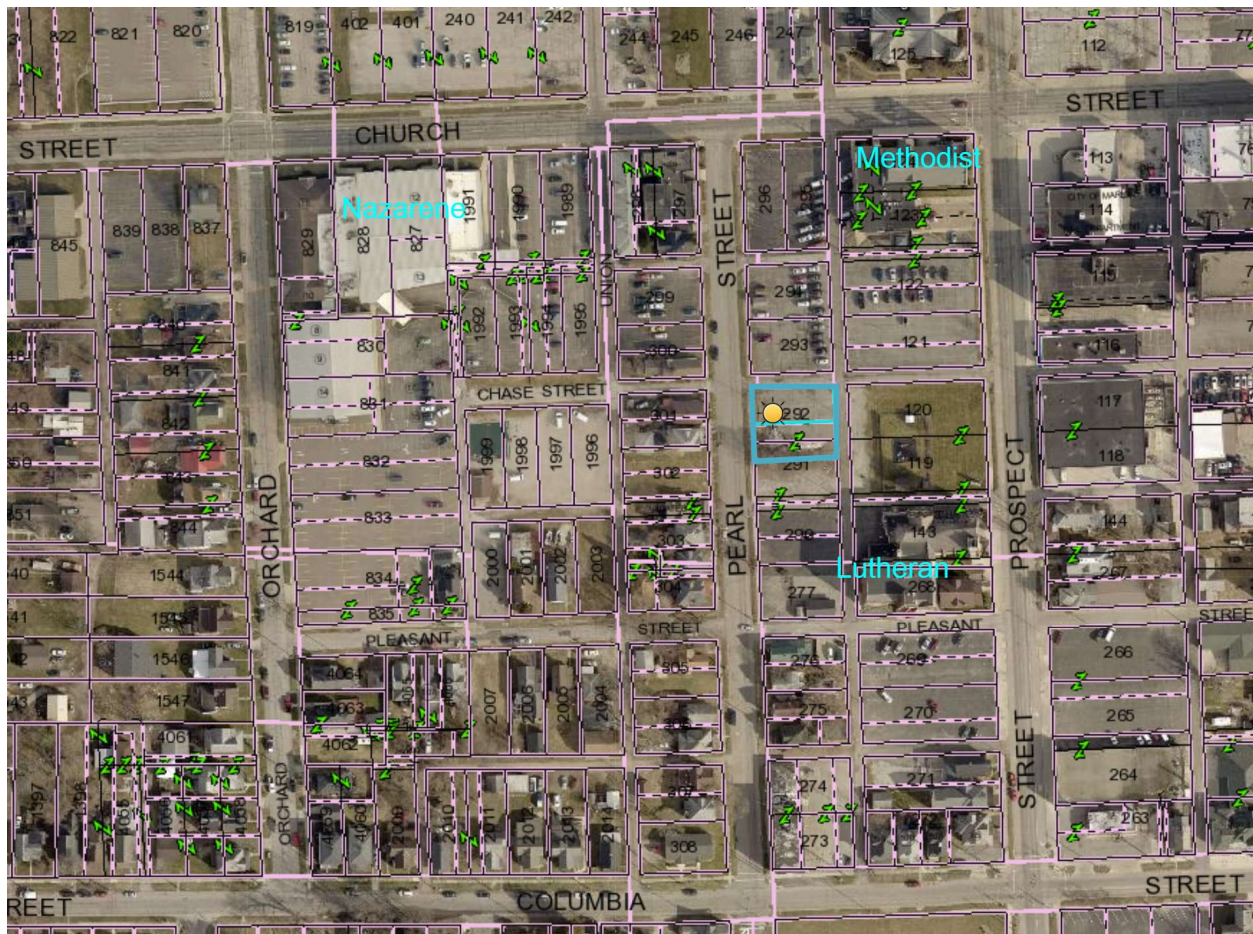
APPLICANT: John Row, Trustee Chair, Prospect United Methodist Church

PROPERTY OWNER: First United Methodist Church, 185 S. Prospect St.

LOCATION: Empty Lot #292 on Pearl St. south west of the Prospect Methodist Church building and its parking lots.

REQUEST: Build a 16' x 10' stage, 8' x 18' storage building, and future basketball court on the Pearl St. facing parcel # 292 to promote neighborhood involvement and outreach.

ZONING: R-3 Multifamily Residential



BACKGROUND:

The block of S. Prospect St. between W. Church St. and W. Pleasant St. used to have three churches in a row. The middle

church was demolished and the land was divided up between Prospect St. United Methodist to the north and Emanuel Lutheran Church to the south. Emanuel Lutheran purchased the former church site, now a grassy lot, to develop a playground for its preschool. The Methodist Church acquired some of the parking lots facing Pearl St. The two churches and their numerous parcels of parking make up most of this block.

Prospect St. United Methodist Church owns lots #121-124 on S. Prospect St. and lots # 292, 293 & 294 facing Pearl St. Most of the church parcels are zoned C-4 (Central Frame Business District) and the southernmost lot 292 facing Pearl is R-3 Multi-family.

The church wishes to beautify the neighborhood by adding greenspace, landscaping and opportunities for sports and performing arts. The application is to review the proposed accessory uses on the former parking lot.

COMMENTS:

Churches and their accessory structures are permitted in all of the residential districts. The proposed uses would be categorized as accessory to the principal use of the church. The local churches like the Prospect United Methodist, Emanuel Lutheran, First Presbyterian, and First Church of the Nazarene are the main anchor institutions of this residential neighborhood.

Filling in the asphalt void with greenspace and investment promoting outdoor community activity will have a positive impact on the neighborhood. It will be one of several collaborations that are occurring within a block or two of the subject property. The Land Bank will be demolishing three blighted houses on Pearl St. in conjunction with Emanuel Lutheran. The Nazarene Church and Habitat for Humanity will be building a new home on W. Pleasant St.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

In an older area of town that has seen decades of disinvestment and deterioration, it is encouraging to see new amenities being proposed. Approve the proposal to build a stage, storage unit and basketball court on the Pearl St. facing lots (combined size 88' wide by 100' deep. Maintain required front yard setback of 30 feet from Pearl St. and keep structures 10 feet from the alleys to provide clear visibility at the mid-block alley intersections.