

Plan Commission Meeting – August 10, 2022
Agenda Item 3

934 Longwood Road
Special Use Permit – Berm Exceeding Seven Feet in Height

Staff Report
Vicinity Map
Air Photo

Materials Submitted by the Petitioners

Application
Survey
Site Plan



STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

TO:	Chairman Dixon and members of the Plan Commission
DATE:	August 10, 2022
FROM:	Catherine J. Czerniak, Director of Community Development
SUBJECT:	<i>Special Use Permit to Allow a Berm Exceeding Seven Feet on a Residential Property</i>

PROPERTY OWNER

John and Margaret Burke
934 Longwood Road
Lake Forest, IL

PROPERTY LOCATION

934 Longwood Road

ZONING DISTRICT

R-2 Single Family Residential

Representative: Tom Swarthout

Description of Request

This is a request for a Special Use Permit to allow construction of an earthen berm on a single family residential property for the purpose of providing some buffering from the adjacent railroad tracks. Section 159.045(L)(3)(c) of the City of Lake Forest Code requires a Special Use Permit for berms on residential properties.

“Artificial mounds or berms for landscaping purposes exceeding seven feet in height above the natural elevation of the surrounding land.”

Description of Property and Background

The Burke property is located at the east edge of the Sunset Hills Estates Subdivision, on the north side of Longwood Drive, in a neighborhood of single family homes. The Burke property totals approximately 40,330 square feet and is larger than the average property in this neighborhood which is about 21,000 square feet. Larger properties are located to the north.

To the east, the property is adjacent to what was originally intended as right of way for an extension of Western Avenue south of Westleigh Road. The extension of Western Avenue never happened. The right of way was vacated over the course of several years to each adjoining property owner, primarily properties fronting on Beverly Place. Western Avenue from the south, off of Old Elm Road, dead ends into the Burke property.

The Union Pacific railroad right of way and railroad tracks are located along the east edge of the Burke property. Metra commuter trains travel on the railroad tracks between Kenosha and the City of Chicago, with stops in the Lake Forest Central Business District, hourly and at peak times, more frequently.

The opportunity to construct a berm on the property arose as a result of discussions about the Burr Oak stormsewer project that is currently underway at the north end of Western Avenue. The Burkes and their representative became aware of the opportunity to take advantage of a significant amount of dirt that will be excavated from north Western Avenue in preparation for the installation of a storm trap, a large, underground vault which will retain stormwater during heavy storms to mitigate the potential for flooding in that area. The storm sewer project was long planned and recently, a grant was obtained to allow the project to proceed. As noted, the project is underway

and excavation for the storm trap phase of the project is imminent. Transporting the dirt to an in town location is viewed as beneficial to the community in that the travel distance for disposing of the dirt will be shorter than if the dirt is transported outside of the City thereby allowing the work to proceed more efficiently.

And, the Burkes also benefit from the availability of material locally to construct a large berm.

Key Points

- A berm taller than seven feet above existing grade in a residential district may only be approved through a Special Use Permit process.
- This is not the first instance of approval of a berm to mitigate impacts of an adjacent transportation corridor. A Special Use Permit was previously granted for a berm to mitigate the impacts of Route 41 on property located at 385 Onwentsia Road.
- The opportunity to build the berm using spoils from a local construction project provided the initiative for moving forward with this project at this time.
- The petitioners contacted owners of other properties that border the railroad tracks to assess interest in a larger project but at this time, there was no interest.
- Detailed plans pertaining to drainage, grading, tree removal and landscaping will be required prior to the issuance of permits. Once a decision on the Special Use Permit is finalized, work on the additional plans will proceed.
- Time is of the essence given that the Burr Oak Storm Sewer project is underway.

Public Notice

Public notice of this request was published in a newspaper of local circulation. Notice of the Commission's public hearing was mailed to surrounding property owners. The agenda for the meeting was posted at various public locations and on the City's website. As of the date of this writing, no correspondence has been received.

Findings in Support of the Request

The following findings are offered in support of the request for a Special Use Permit to allow a berm of up to 13 feet in height to be constructed along the east side of the property addressed as 934 Longwood Road, along the railroad tracks.

Special Use Permit Criteria #1: The establishment, maintenance or operation of the special use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare.

The proposed berm is intended to mitigate to some extent the impact of trains traveling along the railroad tracks located adjacent to the property. The berm will be constructed in conformance with applicable engineering standards to assure stability of the slopes of the berm. The berm will not endanger public health or safety and in fact may benefit the property and the neighborhood by creating a barrier along the railroad tracks.

Special Use Permit Criteria #2: The special use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted and will not substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood.

The proposed berm will not negatively impact the enjoyment or values of other properties in the neighborhood. The berm may offer some benefit to other properties in the neighborhood by offering some screening of the railroad tracks.

Special Use Permit Criteria #3: The establishment of the special use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district. In business districts, the special use will not negatively affect the overall character of the area or detract from the primary retail nature of the district.

The surrounding area is already developed. The proposed berm will not impede redevelopment of properties in the neighborhood in the future.

Special Use Permit Criteria #4: The exterior architectural appearance and functional plan of any proposed structure will not be incompatible with existing buildings, sites, the larger neighborhood or district so as to cause a substantial depreciation in the property values.

No new buildings are proposed. The berm will not be highly visible from the larger neighborhood.

Special Use Permit Criteria #5: Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and or necessary facilities have been or are being provided.

A detailed drainage plan is required prior to the issuance of permits to allow construction of the berm. The plan will be subject to the review and approval of the City Engineer. The drainage plan must demonstrate that storm water will continue to move through the area appropriately and that the berm will not cause any back up of storm water on to the Burke property or on to neighboring properties.

Special Use Permit Criteria #6: Adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress.

Existing roads provide sufficient access to the site for purposes of constructing the berm. Once the berm is completed, it will not result in any increase in traffic in the area or impact traffic patterns.

Special Use Permit Criteria #7: The special use shall conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the City Council as part of the Special Use Permit.

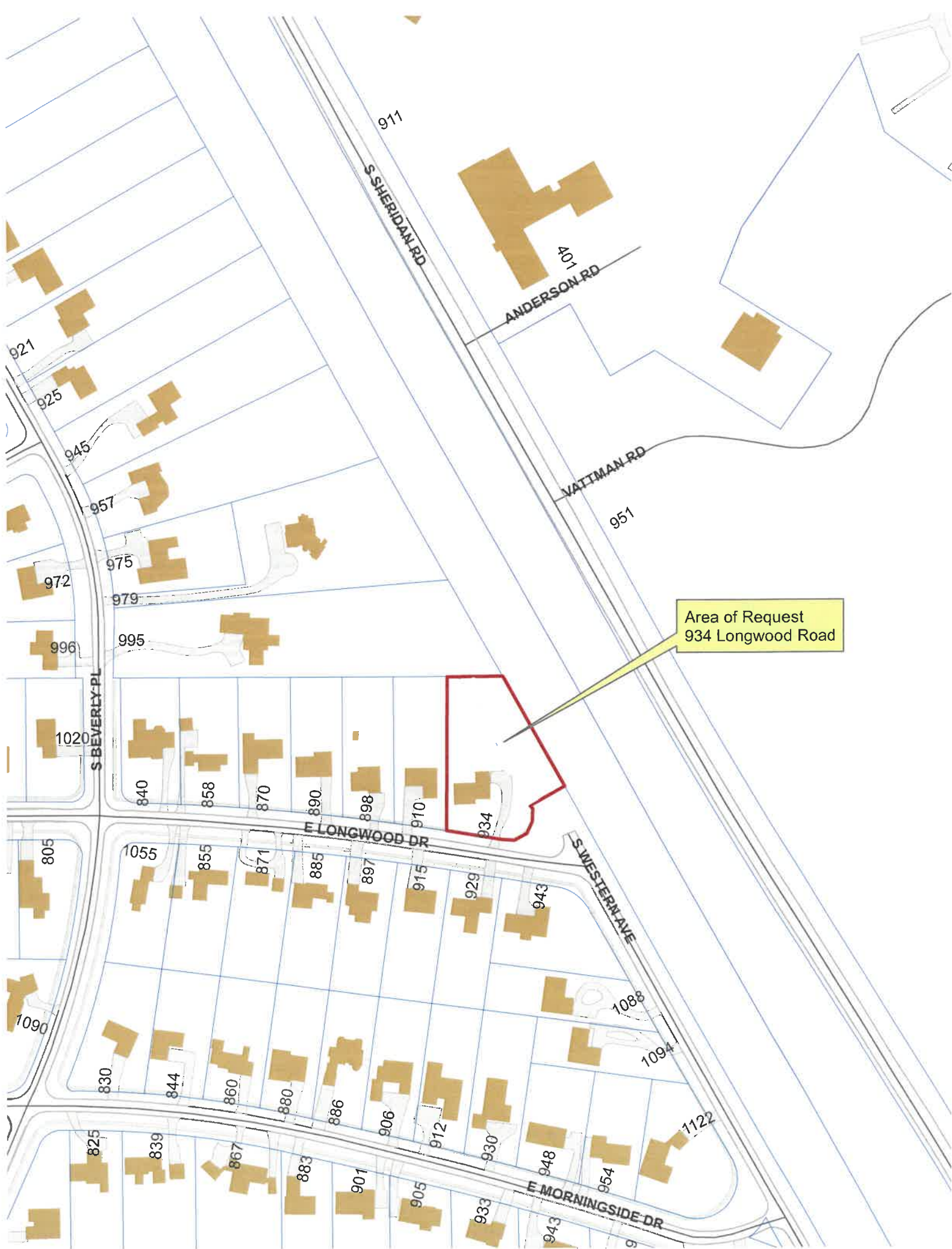
The property will continue to conform to all regulations of the R-2 zoning district and will be used solely for single family residential purposes.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the information presented by the petitioner, review of applicable sections in the City Code and based on the findings detailed above, staff finds that the applicable Special Use criteria are satisfied. Staff recommends approval of a motion in support of granting a Special Use Permit to allow construction of a berm no more than 13 feet above existing grade on property addressed as 934 Longwood Road. The recommendation is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. A detailed drainage and grading plan shall be submitted to the City and will be subject to review and approval by the City Engineer.

2. Information shall be submitted detailing how the slopes of the berm will be stabilized.
3. A tree survey shall be submitted to the City which provides the species, size and condition of all trees that will need to be removed to allow construction of the berm for the purpose of determining the required replacement tree inches.
4. A landscape plan shall be submitted detailing how the berm will be landscaped and reflecting where replacement trees will be planted. If all required tree replacement inches cannot be accommodated on the property using good forestry practices, a payment in lieu of on site plantings will be required to support plantings in the parkways in the surrounding neighborhood.





Area of Request
934 Longwood Road



**The City Of Lake Forest
PLAN COMMISSION**

Application for Special Use Permit - - Berm or Pond

PROPERTY ADDRESS 934 LONGWOOD RD **ZONING DISTRICT** R-2

EXISTING USE SINGLE FAMILY

PROPOSED USE NEW BERM

EXPANSION OF EXISTING USE YES ☐ NO ☒

VARIANCE REQUIRED YES ☒ NO ☐

APPLICANT

Name THOMAS SARTORI

Address 770 N. WESTERN

LAKE FOREST

Phone 847-987-8962

Relationship to Property REPRESENTATIVE
(Owner/Attorney/Representative)

PROPERTY OWNER (if different from applicant)

Name JOHN & MAURIE BURKE

Address 934 LONGWOOD (BURKE)

LAKE FOREST

Phone 847-721-0905 (BURKE)

BENEFICIAL INTERESTS

Corporation _____ (see exhibit A)
Partnership _____ (see exhibit B)
Trust, land or other _____ (see exhibit C)

I have read the complete application packet and understand the Special Use Permit process and criteria.
I understand that this matter will be scheduled for a public hearing when a determination has been made
that my application is complete.

SIGNATURES

Owner [Signature]

Date 5/23/22

Owner [Signature]

Date 6/8/2022

Applicant [Signature]

Date 5/23/2022

APPLICANT'S REPRESENTATIVES

ARCHITECT _____

FIRM _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

ATTORNEY CRAIG PIERSON

FIRM Piereson Strachan

ADDRESS 33 N. HAWKESAN
LAKE BLUFF, IL 60044

PHONE 847-234-0099

ENGINEER MIKE BLECK

FIRM BLECK ENGINEERING

ADDRESS 1375 N. WESTERN
LAKE FOREST

PHONE 847-295-5200

BUILDER HIGHVIEW GROUP

FIRM TOM SKEITH

ADDRESS 778 N. WESTERN
LAKE FOREST

PHONE 847-987-8962

SURVEYOR BILL BLECK

FIRM BLECK ENGINEERING

ADDRESS 1375 N. WESTERN
LAKE FOREST

PHONE 847-295-5200

LANDSCAPE ARCH. TBD.

FIRM _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

ARBORIST _____

FIRM _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

OTHER _____

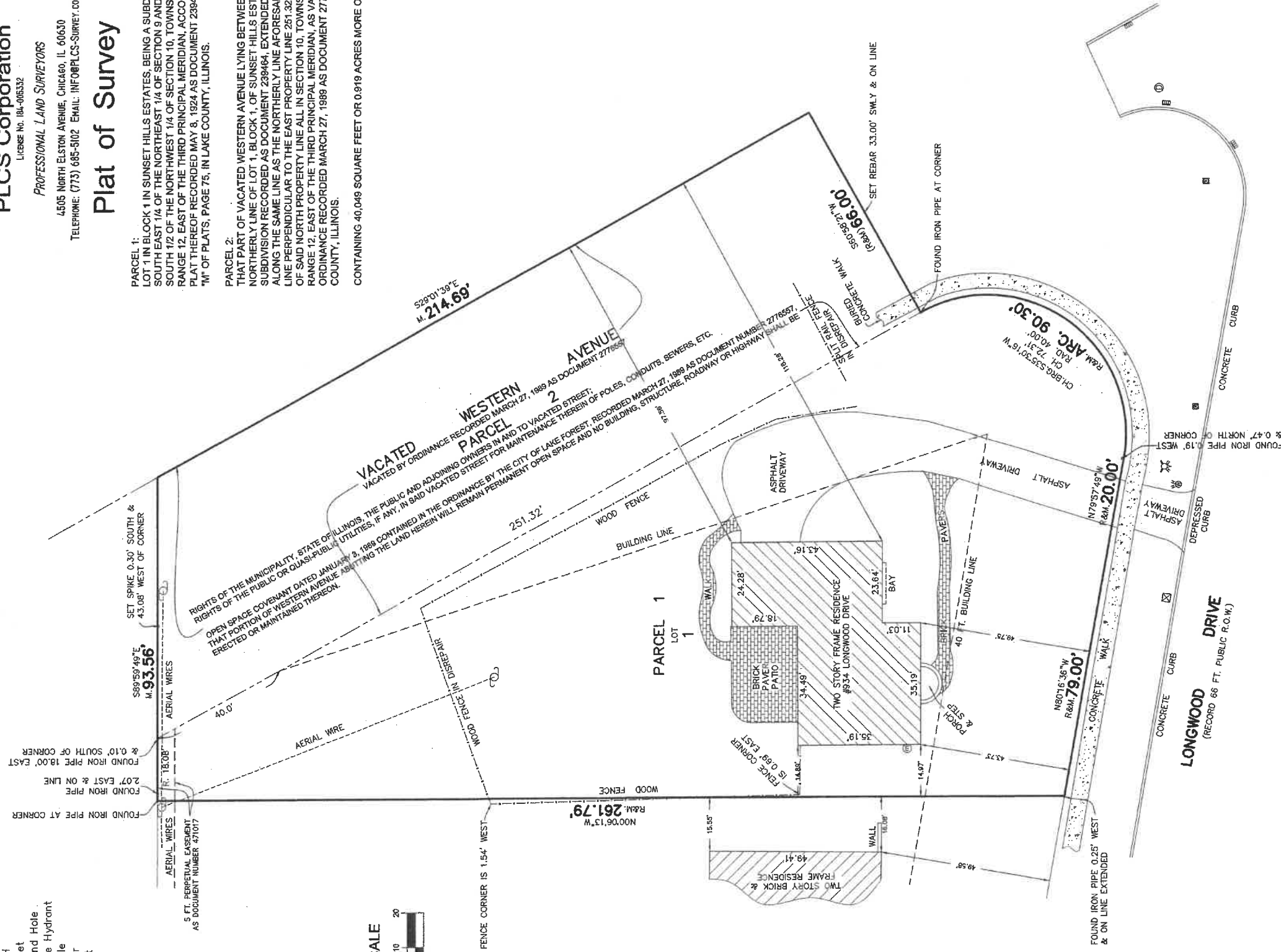
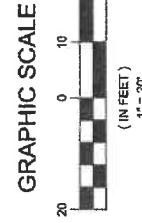
FIRM _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

LEGEND

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| ① | Storm MH |
| ② | Storm Inlet |
| ③ | Water Hand Hole |
| ④ | Water Fire Hydrant |
| ⑤ | Utility Pole |
| ⑥ | Gas Meter |
| ⑦ | Sign Post |
| ⑧ | Mail Box |
| ⑨ | Iron Pipe |



REVISÉ BOUNDARY DECEMBER 8, 2021

ORDERED BY: SCHAIN BANKS	CHECKED: DRAWING:
ADDRESS: 954 LONGWOOD DRIVE	RL
	
GREIMLEY & BIEDERMANN	
PLCS, CORPORATION	
LICENSE NO. 184-005332	
PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS	
1505 NORTH ELSTON AVENUE, CHICAGO, IL 60640	
TELEPHONE: (773) 485-5002 EMAIL: INFO@PLCS-SURVEY.COM	
ORDER NO.	PAGE NO.
2020-28115-001	1 of 1
DATE: AUGUST 6, 2020	SCALE: 1"= 40 FEET

G:\CAD\2020\2020-28115\2020-28115-001.dwg

SURVEY NOTES:

SURVEYOR'S LICENSE EXPIRES November 30, 2022

Note R & M denotes Record and Measured distances respectively.

Distances are marked in feet and decimal parts thereof. Compare all points BEFORE building by same and at once report any differences BEFORE damage is done.

For assessments, building lines and other restrictions not shown on survey plat refer to your abstract, deed, contract, title policy and local building law regulations.

NO dimensions shall be assumed by scale measurement upon this plat.

Unless otherwise noted hereon the Bearing, Basis, Elevation Datum and Coordinate Datum if used is ASSUMED

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State of Illinois)
County of Cook)ss

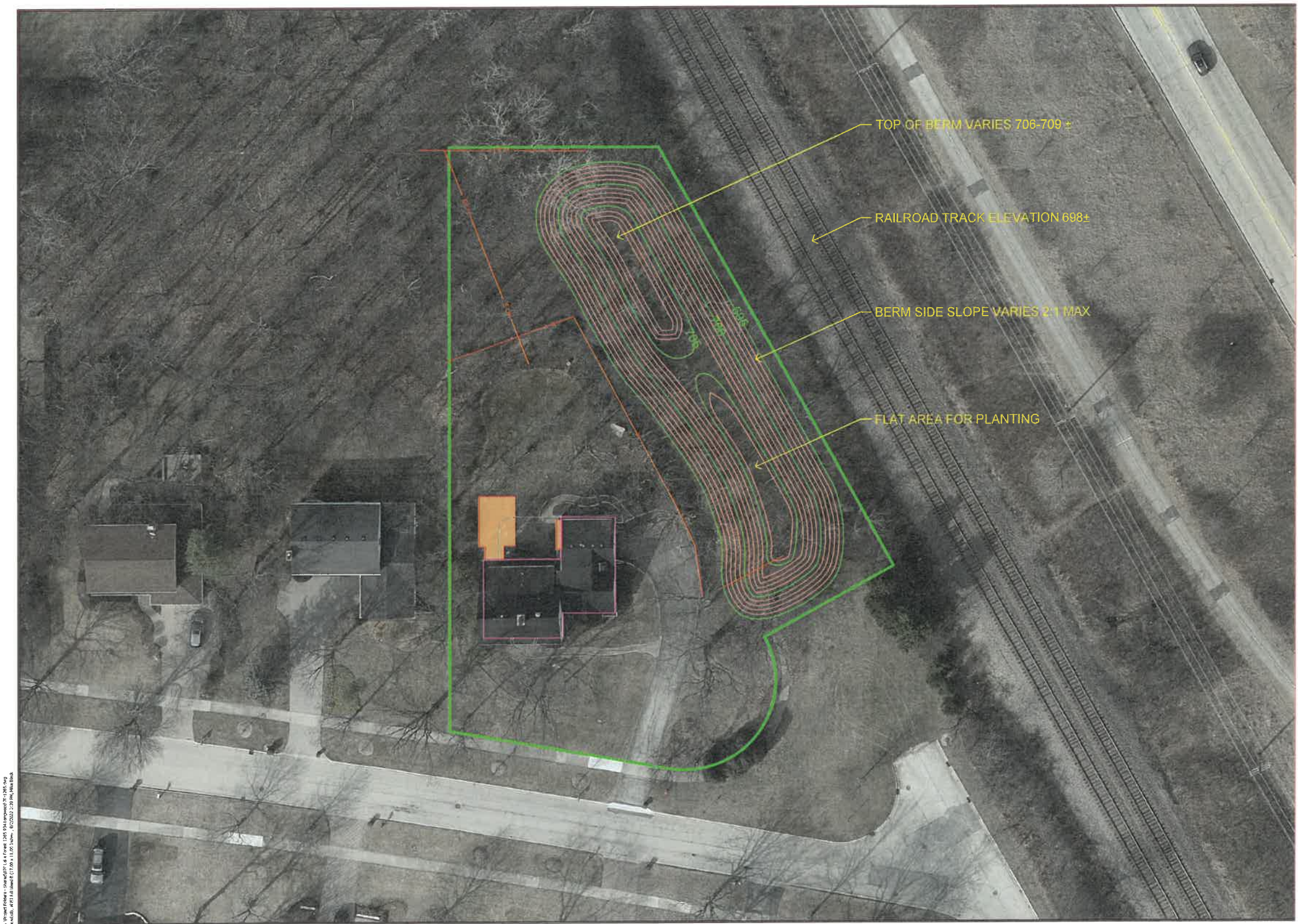
We, GREMLEY & BIEDERMANN, INC. hereby certify that we have surveyed the above described property and that the plat hereon drawn is a correct representation of said survey corrected to a temperature of 62° Fahrenheit.

Field measurements completed on August 5, 2020.

By:

Professional Illinois Land Surveyor No. 2802
This professional service conforms to the current boundary survey.





S:\Project Files\934 Longwood\934 Longwood.dwg
as noted, APT full issue 6/17/06, 11:05:10am, 6/27/2022 2:35:04 PM, Alex Dicks

BLECK
engineers | surveyors

Bleck Engineering Company, Inc.
1375 North Western Avenue
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045
T 847.295.5200 W bleckeng.com

934 Longwood
Lake Forest, IL

N

0' 10' 20' 30'

Scale 1" = 20'

ISSUED DATE	ISSUED FOR
<div><div></div>Issued Date</div>	<div>Issued For</div>

MM.DD.YYYY	REVISION #
© 2022 Bleck Engineering Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved Illinois Professional Design Firm 154.000911	

John Burke
934 Longwood
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

70-1265	Project No.
Drawn By	Drawn By
Checked By	Checked By
Drawing No	

1

Drawing Name
BERM CONCEPT PLAN