



To: Plan Commission

From: Daniel Ritter, AICP, Community and Economic Development Director
Atefa Ghaznawi, AICP, LEED AP, City Planner

Date: November 13, 2025

Re: 2227 Parkrose Street (Stanley Gustafson Park) Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision; Special Use for an Existing Park/Playground (Case # SU-25-4-11-1); and Multiple Variations Request from Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance and Crest Hill Code of Ordinances (Case # V-25-4-11-1)

Project Details

Project:	Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision; Special Use for an existing public park/playground known as Stanley Gustafson Park, and multiple variations requested from the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance and the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances
Applicant:	City of Crest Hill
Requests:	Special approvals from the City of Crest Hill Subdivision, Zoning Ordinance, and City Code to subdivide the subject property into two (2) lots; a special use permit for an existing park/playground; multiple variations from Table 1 Residential Zoning Districts and Standards for non-residential uses in the R-1 Single-Family Residence District, and Section 8.3-8 Permitted Obstructions in Yards of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance; and a variation from Section 15.12.067 On Premises Signs, Chapter 15.12 Sign Code of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances, to bring the existing conditions of the subject property into compliance. No site improvements are proposed in this application.
Location:	2227 Parkrose Street (the "Subject Property")

Site Details

Lot Size:	Approximately 8,176 sq-ft
Existing Zoning:	R-1 Single-Family Residence District
Existing Improvements:	Lot 1: Stanley Gustafson Park: Recreational structures/equipment and sign on the public right of way facing Parkrose Street Lot 2: City of Crest Hill Well #4: 766 sq-ft 1-story block building used as water utility, and approximately 968 sq-ft paved driveway and sidewalk

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use Summary

	Land Use	Comp Plan	Zoning
Subject Parcel	Public Park/Playground and Water Utility	Single-Family Detached and Utility	R-1
North	Single-Family Residence	Single-Family Detached	R-1
South	Single-Family Residence	Single-Family	R-1
East	Single-Family Residence	Single-Family Detached	R-1
West	Single-Family Residence	Single-Family Detached	R-1

Exhibits

Application documents submitted by Applicant include:

- Exhibit C – Application for Development 2025-10-24
- Exhibit D – Legal Description 2025-10-24
- Exhibit E – List of Requested Variations 2025-10-24
- Exhibit F – Subject Property Photos of Existing Condition 2025-10-24
- Exhibit G – Response to Standards for Special Use 2025-10-24
- Exhibit H – Response to Standards for Variations 2025-10-24
- Exhibit I – Final Plat of Subdivision and Plat of Survey Prepared by Robinson Engineering LTD. 2025-09-22

Application Background and Project Summary

The Subject Property is a corner lot and consists of an existing public park/playground known as Stanley Gustafson Park, and a 1-story block building used as City water utility (Well #4), located at south corner of Parkrose Street and Webb Street, facing Webb Street. The entire Subject Property is owned by the City of Crest Hill, and the existing public park/playground is maintained by the Lockport Township Park District. The original development and ongoing maintenance of the park has been done via an informal agreement for many years. However, the Park District has requested the formal transfer of the land as it ensures they have proper maintenance, insurance, and control of the land. It also allows them to potentially obtain grants or other public money to improve the land in the future. The transfer benefits the City as well to avoid any legal complications of owning the underlying land that is controlled by another taxing body.

Figure 1: Aerial View of 2227 Parkrose St (the Subject Property) and Its Surroundings



Figure 2: Stanley Gustafson Park Photo of Existing Condition



At this time, the applicant City of Crest Hill is proposing to subdivide the subject property into two (2) lots to separate the existing public park/ playground from the City water utility structure; request a special use approval for the existing public park/ playground; and request multiple variations from the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance and the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances to bring the existing conditions of the subject property into compliance. No site improvements are proposed in this application. If the Final Plat of Subdivision, special use, and variations requests are approved by the City Council, the ownership of the existing public park/ playground is to be formally transferred to the Lockport Township Park District under a separate agreement.

Summary of Requested Petitions

To subdivide the subject property into two (2) lots and bring the existing conditions of the subject property into compliance, the Applicant is seeking approvals of the following petitions:

- (i) Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision to subdivide the subject property into two (2) Lots.
- (ii) SU-25-4-11-1: Special Use for an existing park/playground known as Stanley Gustafson Park in the R-1 Single-Family Residence District.
- (iii) V-25-4-11-1:
 - 1. Two variations from Table 1 Residential Zoning Districts and Standards for non-residential uses in R-1 Single-Family Residence District of the [Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance](#) that decrease the minimum required lot area from 10,000 sq-ft to 4,426 sq-ft; and minimum lot width from 75-feet to 60-feet.
 - 2. Variations from Section 8.3-8 Permitted Obstructions in Yards, of the [Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance](#) that allow open fencing to be located in required front and corner side yard setbacks and recreational structures and equipment in required front, corner side, and interior side yard setbacks.
 - 3. A variation from Section 15.12.067 On Premises Signs, Chapter 15.12 Sign Code of the [Crest Hill Code of Ordinances](#) that allows an existing off-premises sign to remain on the public right of way.

Staff Analysis

Overall, staff believe that the Subject Property represents a unique circumstance within the R-1 Single-Family Residence District due to the property's specific physical characteristics, community context, and public benefit. The parcel's size, shape, and location limit its suitability for residential construction while making it ideally suited for low-intensity public park/ playground use. This distinct condition differentiates the Subject Property from typical residential lots within the R-1 Single-Family Residence District. Additionally, the surrounding neighborhood benefits from the presence of a small, accessible public park/playground that enhances the quality of life for nearby residents without introducing incompatible land uses or adverse impacts. The existing park's design, scale, and operation are consistent with the residential character of the area and serve as a complementary amenity rather than a conflicting use. These factors together create a unique and practical justification for permitting Stanley Gustafson Park as a special use within R-1 Single-Family Residence District, as it balances community needs with land-use compatibility and upholds the intent of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance to promote public health, safety, and welfare.

Staff feedback on specific aspects of the requested approvals:

1. Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance (ZO) Table 1 Residential Zoning Districts and Standards for non-residential uses in R-1 Single-Family Residence District
 - Minimum required lot area for non-residential uses in R-1 Single-Family Residence District is 10,000 sq-ft. *Lot area for the existing public park/playground is 4,426 sq-ft.*
 - Minimum required lot width for non-residential uses in R-1 Single-Family Residence District is 75 feet. *The lot width for the existing public park/playground is 60 feet.*
2. Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance (ZO) Section 8.3-8 Permitted Obstructions in Yards
 - Fences, natural, 50% open: not greater than four (4) feet in height nor closer than five (5) feet from front and corner side lot lines. *Existing fence at front and corner side yards is 50% open, four (4) feet in height, and with no setbacks.*
 - Recreational structures and playground equipment, not greater than seven (7) feet in height, are permitted in the rear yard. Required front yard setback is 30 feet, required corner side yard setback is 20 feet, and required interior side yard setback is 10 feet. *Existing recreational structures and playground equipment are located in the required front, corner side, and interior side yard setbacks.*
3. Crest Hill Code of Ordinances Section 15.12.067 On-Premises Signs of Chapter 15.12 Sign Code
 - Only on-premises signs are permitted in any zoning district and must comply with the regulations set forth in this chapter. Off-premises signs are not permitted, except when approved by City Council. *An existing off-premises sign for the identification of a public park/playground is located on the public right-of-way.*

Staff reviewed the existing conditions of the Subject Property with respect to the applicable City regulations. The Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance classifies parks and playgrounds as Special Use in residential districts. To bring the existing conditions and use of the Subject Property into compliance, the existing public park/ playground must be formally established as a special use in the R-1 Residence District, and the above-mentioned variations are required from the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance and Code of Ordinances to address the existing non-conformities associated with the property's specific physical characteristics. No site improvements are proposed in this application.

Special Use Approval Standards and Findings

Section 12.7-2 of the Zoning Ordinance states the Plan Commission shall recommend, and the City Council shall grant a special use only when it shall have been determined, and recorded in writing, that all of the following standards are complied with. Staff has drafted the following findings of fact identified in bold italic font. These drafted findings can be modified or changed as the Plan Commission deems fit and based on the specific findings from the public hearing.

1. That the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the special use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare.
The formal establishment, maintenance, and operation of Stanley Gustafson Park promote the public health, safety, and general welfare in several ways. The park provides easily accessible open space for physical activity, relaxation, and outdoor recreation. The existing park/ playground's landscaped areas, trees, and vegetation also improve local air quality and contribute to a healthier neighborhood environment.

A well-maintained park enhances neighborhood safety by activating public space and encouraging regular community presence. Increased pedestrian activity and visibility provide natural surveillance (“eyes on the street”), which can deter crime and vandalism. Furthermore, designated recreational areas within the existing park/ playground offer safe spaces for children and families, reducing the need to play or gather near roadways or private properties. The existing park/ playground serves as a focal point for neighborhood interaction, fostering a sense of community identity and social connection among residents. It enhances the aesthetic quality and livability of the area, supporting a balanced mix of land uses that align with community development goals. The Special Use allows this use to continue and be expanded upon.

2. That the special use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood.

The formal establishment, maintenance, and operation of Stanley Gustafson Park enhances the enjoyment and desirability of surrounding properties by providing an attractive, accessible, and well-maintained open space for recreation and community gathering. The park’s landscaped areas and greenery improve the visual character of the area and create a more pleasant environment for residents and visitors alike. Proximity to parks is consistently associated with increased property satisfaction and higher real estate values. Homes and businesses located near parks benefit from improved aesthetics, reduced noise and heat from added vegetation, and the appeal of convenient outdoor amenities. The existing park/ playground also strengthens neighborhood cohesion and community pride, further contributing to the area’s stability and attractiveness.

3. That the establishment of the special use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.

The formal establishment of Stanley Gustafson Park promotes the normal and orderly development of the surrounding area by introducing a well-planned public amenity that complements existing and future land uses. Parks are integral components of balanced community design, providing open space that enhances neighborhood character, supports residential development, and encourages compatible infill and redevelopment.

4. That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and/or other necessary facilities have been or are being provided.

The existing public park/ playground has adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and/or other necessary facilities.

5. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

The existing park has adequate ingress and egress. Additionally, Stanley Gustafson Park helps minimize traffic congestion on public streets by providing a nearby neighborhood-oriented recreational and gathering space that residents can easily access by walking or biking, rather than driving to more distant parks. By serving the local neighborhood, the existing park/ playground reduces the need for short vehicle trips, thereby lowering traffic volumes and parking demand on surrounding roadways.

6. That special use shall in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of this Ordinance and other applicable City regulations, except as such regulations may in each

instance be modified by the City Council pursuant to the recommendation of the Plan Commission.

The existing park/ playground use is consistent with the intent and permitted special uses of the R-1 Single-Family Residence District, which encourages the provision of public open space and recreational amenities that enhance community livability. Furthermore, the operation and maintenance of Stanley Gustafson Park will adhere to the city codes governing public facility upkeep, hours of operation, and public safety. Through compliance with these regulations, the existing park/ playground integrates seamlessly into the surrounding neighborhood while supporting the goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance.

Variation Approval Standards and Findings

Section 12.6-2 of the Zoning Ordinance states the Plan Commission shall recommend, and the City Council shall grant a variation only when it shall have been determined, and recorded in writing, that all of the following standards are complied with. Staff has drafted the following findings of fact identified in bold italic font. These drafted findings can be modified or changed as the Plan Commission deems fit and based on the specific findings from the public hearing.

1. That the property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations in that zone.

The subject property cannot yield a reasonable economic return if limited solely to the uses permitted under the R-1 Single-Family Residence District. Due to its size, shape, and location, the site is not well-suited for residential development. The limited lot area and potential constraints related to access and setbacks make the construction of other uses economically infeasible. In contrast, the existing public park/ playground represents a viable and beneficial adaptive use that provides substantial community value while respecting surrounding residential character. The existing public park/ playground utilizes the parcel efficiently, eliminates a potential vacant or underutilized lot, and enhances the livability of the neighborhood. Therefore, allowing the property to be used as a public park/ playground rather than for single-family residential purposes is justified, as it enables productive use of the land that is consistent with community objectives and provides a reasonable return in the form of public benefit rather than private economic gain.

2. That the plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances.

The existing park/ playground represents a unique circumstance within the R-1 Single-Family Residence District due to the property's specific physical characteristics, community context, and public benefit. The parcel's size, shape, and location limit its suitability for residential construction while making it ideally suited for low-intensity public park/ playground use. This distinct condition differentiates the site from typical residential lots within the district. Additionally, the surrounding neighborhood benefits from the presence of a small, accessible public park/ playground that enhances the quality of life for nearby residents without introducing incompatible land uses or adverse impacts. These factors together create a unique and practical justification for permitting Stanley Gustafson Park to be permitted on its own lot; as it balances community needs with land-use compatibility and upholds the intent of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance to promote public health, safety, and welfare.

3. That the variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.
Stanley Gustafson Park enhances and strengthens the essential character of the locality by preserving and promoting the neighborhood's sense of community, livability, and visual appeal. The park's landscaped open space and playground complement the surrounding single-family residential environment by providing a peaceful, attractive setting that encourages outdoor activity and neighbor interaction. Rather than altering the existing residential character, the park reinforces it—serving as a natural extension of the neighborhood's identity. Its design and scale are compatible with nearby homes and land uses, and consistent with the area's quiet, family-oriented atmosphere. By introducing green space that improves aesthetics, fosters social connection, and enhances environmental quality, the existing park/ playground contributes positively to the locality's charm, cohesion, and overall sense of place—thereby advancing the community's long-term vision and strengthening its essential character.

In addition, Section 12.6-2 of the Zoning Ordinance further suggests that the Plan Commission supplement the above standards by taking into consideration the extent to which the facts listed on Exhibit A have been established by the evidence presented during the public hearing process and further support the approval of the Applicant's requests. Please refer to Exhibit G for a more detailed response to Standards for Variations.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the findings reflected in this staff report, the Staff recommends:

The Plan Commission recommends City Council conditional approval of the Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision to subdivide the subject property into two (2) lots; a Special Use for an existing public park/playground known as Stanley Gustafson Park, multiple variations from Table 1 Residential Zoning Districts and Standards for non-residential uses in the R-1 Single-Family Residence District, and Section 8.3-8 Permitted Obstructions in Yards of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance; and a variation from Section 15.12.067 on Premises Signs, Chapter 15.12 Sign Code of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances to bring the existing conditions of the subject property into compliance, subject to the project being implemented in substantial conformance with the application documents referenced in the November 13, 2025, Plan Commission Staff Report for petitions Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision, Case # SU-25-4-11-1, and Case # V-25-4-11-1.

Exhibit A**Supplemental Variation Approval Facts to Consider Per Zoning Ordinance Section 12.6-2**

1. *That the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical condition of the specific property involved will result in a particular hardship upon the owner, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the regulations were carried out.*
2. *The conditions upon which the petition for a variation is based are unique to the property owner for which the variation is sought and are not applicable, generally, to the other property within the same zoning classification.*
3. *That the alleged difficulty or hardship is caused by the Ordinance and has not been created by any person presently having an interest in the property.*
4. *That the proposed variation will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or substantially increase congestion in the public streets or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair property values within the adjacent neighborhood.*
5. *That the variation does not permit a use otherwise excluded from the particular zone except for uses authorized by the Plan Commission, subject to the approval of the City Council, as "similar and compatible uses."*
6. *That the variation granted is the minimum adjustment necessary for the reasonable use of the land.*
7. *That the granting of any variation is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and will not be injurious to the neighborhood, be detrimental to the public welfare, alter the essential character of the locality, or be in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan for development of the City.*
8. *That, for reasons fully set forth in the recommendations of the Plan Commission, and the report of the City Council, the aforesaid circumstances or conditions are such that the strict application of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance deprives the applicant of any reasonable use of his land. Mere loss in value shall not justify a variation; there must be a deprivation of beneficial use of land.*

Exhibit B**Supplemental Special Use Approval Facts to Consider Per Zoning Ordinance Section 12.7-6**

1. *That the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the special use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare.*
2. *That the special use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood.*
3. *That the establishment of the special use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.*
4. *That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and/or other necessary facilities have been or are being provided.*
5. *That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.*
6. *That special use shall in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of this Ordinance and other applicable City regulations, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the City Council pursuant to the recommendation of the Plan Commission.*