LAGRANGE COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
JUNE 16, 2020

THE LAGRANGE COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS MET IN REGULAR SESSION ON TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE LAGRANGE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ROOM AT THE COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING

CALL TO ORDER: Tyler Young called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
ROLL CALL: Nick Wilson, Terry Holsinger, Tyler Young, Jim Bugg, Lynn Bowen. In attendance: Robbie Miller, Brittney Johnston and Dustin Glick.
ADOPT AGENDA: Lynn Bowen made a motion to approve the agenda, Nick Wilson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, motion carried.
MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Terry Holsinger made a motion to approve the previous minutes, Nick Wilson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, motion carried.
COMMUNICATIONS: None.

OLD BUSINESS
LAND USE VARIANCE

(Public Hearing)
Application is to operate a dog breeding facility in an A-1 zoning district.
 Robbie Miller introduced the petition and reviewed the site plan.
 Susan Troyer, 2675 E 050 N, LaGrange, was present on behalf of the petitioner. Ms. Troyer explained the need for the variance due to a neighbor not agreeing to sign the affidavit for the permit process.
 Tyler Young asked if there was anyone in favor of the petition.
 Milan Wingard, 5705 W 600 N, Shipshewana, informed the board of his support for the petition by stating he felt Nathan Yoder is a good kennel owner and that this approval would reinforce kennels being run in the correct manner.
 Tyler Young asked if anyone would like to remonstrate against the petition.
 Joy Sharp, Lewis & Lambright, INC., explained she had sold a neighboring property to the kennel. Mrs. Sharp clarified her clients wished to remonstrate but were not attending the meeting due to COVID-19 concerns, that her client’s concerns pertained to the lake’s water cleanliness, and that many of the other neighbors are not full time residents leading to a lack of representation against the dog kennel.
 Robbie Miller read aloud a letter of objection from Mary & Dennis Redden, Mrs. Sharp’s clients. Mrs. Miller explained this was the Reddens 3rd time remonstrating to the board. In the letter Mr. & Mrs. Redden shared their concerns pertaining to noise & water pollution.
 Susan Troyer, replied to the concerns stating the location is in an A-1 zone which has no decibel level restrictions, and the water reports referenced were 10 years old, therefore, current data wasn’t being used.
 The public hearing was closed.
 The board discussed the site plan at length.
 Lynn Bowen questioned if there would be a commercial septic system in place for the dog kennel.
 Robbie Miller stated there is not a septic, but an animal waste management system is in place.
Lynn Bowen made a motion for the conditions of this use, this owner, with a cap of 7 breeding females. Terry Holsinger seconded the motion. A vote was taken, motion carried.

A roll call vote was taken:

**Land Use Variance**

1. The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.
   The proposed dog breeding facility is located on a large parcel in an A-1 zone located adjacent to Buck Lake. The proposed site location is adequately suited for the proposed dog breeding operation and is adequately screened from the public and neighboring landowners. Petitioners will comply with USDA, ICAW and Indiana Board of Health Licensing Requirements ensuring safety of the operation and the public.

2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.
   The proposed facility will be located so as to not infringe on neighboring landowners’ use and enjoyment of their properties. There will not be any retail sales on the property removing any unnecessary traffic to the site. The property is clean, landscaped, and well maintained. Two (2) remonstrators appeared citing concerns regarding too many kennels in the county, noise concerns with dogs barking, smells emitting from property, and concerns regarding water runoff and contamination in the nearby lake. One party appeared in favor of the project, citing cleanliness and set-up of the breeding facility.

3. The need for the variance arises from some condition peculiar to the property involved.
   The geographical location of the property as it currently sits in an A-1 zone would prevent the proposed dog breeding business without signed affidavits of neighboring landowners, to which one landowner withheld their signature. The A-1 zone is the most appropriate location for a breeding facility and/or the housing of animals of this nature.

4. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will constitute an unnecessary hardship if applied to the property for which the variance is sought.
   The Petitioners would be unable to operate their proposed dog breeding facility at their homestead located in an A-1 zone without the proposed variance and they would be wholly unable to continue their work as dog breeders at the subject property.

5. The approval does not interfere substantially with the Comprehensive Plan.
   The comprehensive plan encourages rural home-based businesses similar to the proposed dog breeding operation and also encourages the housing and maintenance of animals in A-1 zones. Similar breeding facilities and other home-based businesses currently exist in the county.

For all of the foregoing reasons, on this 16th day of June, 2020, the LaGrange County Board of Zoning Appeals finds the Petitioner has met its burden of proof and hereby approves the variance subject to the following conditions: This use only; this owner only; petitioner is allowed no more than seven (7) breeding females at said location.
NEW BUSINESS
VARIANCE

(Public Hearing)

HAGEMAN, MARK & KAY ~ By: Mark Hageman (20-V-26): Johnson Twp., Sect. 23, T36N R10E, zoned L-1. Located 5865 S 455 E, Wolcottville. Application is for a proposed 20’ x 22’ patio, 8’ x 22’ underground storage area that is 5’ above grade and a 3’ tall, 25’ long retaining wall that is within the 45’ lakeside setback.

Robbie Miller introduced the petition and reviewed the site plan.
Mark Hageman, 5865 S 455 E, Wolcottville, was present as the petitioner. Mr. Hageman explained the reason for the variance.

Tyler Young asked if there was anyone in favor of the petition. No others appeared in favor of the petition. Mr. Young asked if anyone would like to remonstrate against the petition. No remonstrators appeared.

The public hearing was subsequently closed.

The board discussed the site plan.

A roll call vote was taken:

Developmental Standard Variance

1. The Approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.
   The proposal is to repair and redevelop the Petitioners’ lakeside landscaping and retaining walls to allow for the construction of underground storage space. The proposal would replace the existing landscaping that is deteriorating and becoming unsafe. The proposal poses no risk to the health or safety of the public.

2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.
   The proposed remodel of the lakeside landscaping and the addition of the storage space will not interfere with neighboring landowners’ use and enjoyment as the proposed construction will be primarily at or below the grade of the existing land. The proposal does not unreasonably encroach on the lakeside of the property, thereby not interfering with neighboring landowners’ lake view. No remonstrators appeared.

3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.
   Strict application would prevent petitioner from replacing and remodeling the lakeside storage structure leaving a dangerous condition on said property. Given the size, layout, and topography of the subject property, it would be difficult and/or impractical to reconstruct the existing landscaping and storage structure without the variance requested.

4. The variance granted is the minimum necessary and does not correct a hardship caused by an owner, previous or present, of the property.
   The proposed structure is minimally intrusive to neighboring properties and does not interfere with the use and enjoyment of the lake. The underground storage facility, as proposed, is reasonably sized considering the size and layout of the lot.

For all of the foregoing reasons, on this 16th day of June, 2020, the LaGrange County Board of Zoning Appeals finds the Petitioner has met is burden of proof and hereby approves the variance as requested
(Public Hearing)


Robbie Miller introduced the petition and reviewed the site plan.

Lynn Jones, 220 N State St., Shipshewana, was present as the petitioner. Mr. Jones explained the reason for the variance.

Tyler Young asked if there was anyone in favor of the petition.

Bob Shananhan, 345 N Morton St., Shipshewana, stated the petitioners went before the Town of Shipshewana on June 11th, 2020, and were given a positive recommendation to approve.

Tyler Young asked if anyone would like to remonstrate against the petition. No remonstrators appeared.

The public hearing was subsequently closed.

The board discussed the site plan.

A roll call vote was taken:

Developmental Standard Variance

1. The Approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.
   The proposal is for the removal of a dilapidated auxiliary structure to make space for the construction of a new 54’ by 24’ auxiliary structure. The variance requested does not interfere with neighboring properties, is located behind Petitioners home well off the roadway, and does not increase traffic or create hazardous situations to the public.

2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.
   The proposed structure is an auxiliary structure to be used for personal storage making the property more aesthetically pleasing to neighboring properties and may enhance neighboring property values. The proposed structure fits within the appropriate setbacks thereby not intruding on adjacent landowners use of their properties. No remonstrators appeared. The Town of Shipshewana is in favor of the proposed variance.

3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.
   Petitioner would be unable to build any reasonably sized auxiliary without the variance requested unless petitioner was to increase the size of the existing home on the subject lot, thereby placing a limitation on the potential use and value of the property.

4. The variance granted is the minimum necessary and does not correct a hardship caused by an owner, previous or present, of the property.
   The proposed construction is minimally intrusive and is placed within the required setbacks and does not infringe on neighboring properties. The existing dilapidated structure on the property is not a hardship created by this owner or any previous owner.

For all of the foregoing reasons, on this 16th day of June, 2020, the LaGrange County Board of Zoning Appeals finds the Petitioner has met is burden of proof and hereby approves the variance as requested.
MILLER, JOSEPH & NICOLE ~ By: Joseph Miller (20-V-28): Lima Twp., Sect. 30, T38N R10E, zoned U-1. Located 311 Third St., Howe. Application is for a proposed auxiliary building to exceed the primary structure by 1140 sq. ft.

Robbie Miller introduced the petition and reviewed the site plan.
Daniel Lovell, 0260 W 400 N, Howe, was present on behalf of the petitioner. Mr. Lowe explained the reason for the variance.

Tyler Young asked if there was anyone in favor of the petition.
Jennifer McBride, 205 Third St., Howe, shared she is a neighbor to Joseph & Nicole Miller. Mrs. McBride stated that Third street is very narrow and often used as a one-way road. Mrs. McBride also stated that the auxiliary building would improve the area greatly.

Tyler Young asked if anyone would like to remonstrate against the petition. No remonstrators appeared.

The public hearing was subsequently closed.

The board discussed the site plan.

A roll call vote was taken:

Developmental Standard Variance

1. The Approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.
   The proposal is for the construction of an auxiliary structure on Petitioner’s property in order to provide personal storage. The variance requested does not interfere with neighboring properties, does not increase traffic or create hazardous situations to the public and meets all of the setback requirements. No risk is posed to the community or public.

2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.
   The proposed structure is a new pole barn/garage making the property more aesthetically pleasing to neighboring properties and may enhance neighboring property values. The existing property has no garage attached or detached, forcing Petitioners to store vehicles and personal property outside in the open. The proposed structure fits within the appropriate setbacks thereby not intruding on adjacent landowners use of their properties. No remonstrators appeared.

3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.
   Petitioner would be unable to build the auxiliary structure as proposed without the variance requested unless Petitioner was to increase the size of the existing home by 1000 sq. ft. The strict application would place a limitation on the usefulness and value of Petitioners property.

4. The variance granted is the minimum necessary and does not correct a hardship caused by an owner, previous or present, of the property.
   The proposed construction is minimally intrusive and is placed within the required setbacks and does not infringe on neighboring properties or the general public.
For all of the foregoing reasons, on this 16th day of June, 2020, the LaGrange County Board of Zoning Appeals finds the Petitioner has met its burden of proof and hereby approves the variance as requested.

(Public Hearing)


Robbie Miller introduced the petition and reviewed the site plan.

James Hockemeyer, 5455 E 610 S., Wolcottville, was present as the petitioner.

Mr. Hockemeyer explained the reason for the variance was due to the fact that the home became his year round home as of June 1st, 2020.

Tyler Young asked if there was anyone in favor of the petition.

Bryan Grubb, 5435 E 610 S, Wolcottville, stated he was in favor of the petition as he felt it would not impede upon surrounding neighbors.

Tyler Young asked if anyone would like to remonstrate against the petition. No remonstrators appeared.

The public hearing was subsequently closed.

The board discussed the site plan.

Robbie Miller informed the board that the property had a previous variance in 2016 for a house addition on the West side 7.5’ from the property line.

Terry Holsinger stated his concern for safety, as the setback is too close to the road.

Lynn Bowen reiterated the same safety concerns and asked how far the building will be from the road’s edge.

James Hockemeyer clarified around 8’.

Tyler Young questioned the purpose of garage orientation being East & West.

James Hockemeyer replied to prevent parking along the road.

A roll call vote was taken:

Developmental Standard Variance

1. The Approval will be injurious to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.

   The proposal is for an addition on Petitioners’ existing home that will allow for the construction of a two-car garage on the road side of the property. The proposed addition will significantly encroach upon the roadway and may hinder and/or obstruct sightlines on the road and may pose an unnecessary risk to the public and general welfare of the community.

2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.

   The proposed new construction will be aesthetically pleasing and may increase the value of adjacent landowners. The proposal does not seek to infringe on neighboring landowners’ properties beyond what currently exists. The proposal will not interfere with neighboring landowners’ use and enjoyment of their properties. No remonstrators appeared.

3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will not result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.
Petitioners would be able to continue to utilize the property for residential use without the proposed garage addition and the variance requested. The strict application will not result in any practical difficulties to this Petitioner in the use of this property.

4. The variance granted is **not** the minimum necessary and **does** correct a hardship caused by an owner, previous or present, of the property. The proposed construction significantly encroaches on the roadway and poses unnecessary risk to vehicles and individuals passing by. The petitioner by requesting to construct the garage addition in the proposed location, within the roadside setback, has created his own hardship.

For all of the foregoing reasons, on this 16th day of June, 2020, the LaGrange County Board of Zoning Appeals finds the Petitioner has not met its burden of proof and hereby denies the variance as requested.

(Public Hearing)

**BONTRAGER, ERVIN & JOANNE ~ By: Hand to the Plow Surveying, LLC (20-V-30):** Clay Twp., Sect. 26, T37N R09E, zoned A-1. Located 1915 W 100 S, LaGrange. Application is for a 50' Westside setback for a proposed 25,800 sq. ft. AFO poultry barn.

Robbie Miller introduced the petition and reviewed the site plan.

Scott Ziegler, Hand to the Plow Surveying, LLC, was present on behalf of the petitioner. Mr. Ziegler explained the reason for the petition was due to DNR flood plain data enacted the previous year.

Tyler Young asked if there was anyone in favor of the petition. No others appeared in favor of the petition. Mr. Young asked if anyone would like to remonstrate against the petition. No remonstrators appeared.

The public hearing was subsequently closed.

The board discussed the site plan at length.

Lynn Bowen questioned if the area can be delineated or not.

Robbie Miller confirmed yes, and that the petitioner had already began the process with DNR.

A roll call vote was taken:

**Developmental Standard Variance**

1. The Approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.

The proposal is to construct a new 25,800 sq. ft. AFO poultry barn on Petitioner’s property that encroaches on the required side yard setbacks. The structure as proposed is located well off of the road and away from neighboring landowners, and does not pose any risk to the public.

2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.

The structure as proposed would not interfere or intrude on neighboring landowners’ properties as there are no property owners or residential structures near the side yard in question. The A-1 zone is the best possible location for an AFO barn such as the one proposed by Petitioner. No remonstrators appeared.

3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance **will not** result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.
Strict application would not prevent petitioner from constructing the AFO poultry barn on his property as he possesses sufficient space to construct the proposed AFO barn within all required setbacks. Petitioner has selected the proposed location out of convenience rather than necessity.

4. The variance granted is not the minimum necessary and does correct a hardship caused by an owner, previous or present, of the property. The proposed location of the AFO poultry barn seeks to reduce the required side yard setback by 50% when more than sufficient land is available to locate the barn within all required setbacks. Petitioner by his own admission stated he chose this location out of practicality and needing less fill dirt than other locations. Petitioner has created his own hardship by proposing the subject location.

For all of the foregoing reasons, on this 16th day of June, 2020, the LaGrange County Board of Zoning Appeals finds the Petitioner has not met its burden of proof and hereby denies the variance as requested.

LAND USE VARIANCE

(Public Hearing)


Robbie Miller introduced the petition and reviewed the site plan.
Gary Andrews, 1330 E 700 S, Wolcottville, was present on behalf of the petitioner. Mr. Andrews explained the reason for the variance.

Tyler Young asked if there was anyone in favor of the petition.
Daniel Orlando, 6210 S 085 W, Wolcottville, appeared in support of the petition by providing examples of other non-contiguous properties in the nearby area.

Tyler Young asked if anyone would like to remonstrate against the petition.
Tim Byler, 0855 E 680 W, Wolcottville, stated his concerns that a non-contiguous owner may not provide proper care of the property. Mr. Byler also stated to the board that he had an accepted back up offer to purchase lots 10, 11, & 12, if the variance was not granted to Gary Andrews.

Ronald Stahley, 0845 E 680 S, Wolcottville, expressed his concern of a non-contiguous land owner and how they would use the property.

Robbie Miller read aloud a petition containing 6 signatures of those opposed to the petition.

The public hearing was subsequently closed.

The board discussed the site plan at length.
Lynn Bowen asked Tim Byler his plans for the property.
Tim Byler stated his intent was to build a garage across the road from his home on Lot 14.

Tyler Young questioned when the area had been platted.
Robbie Miller explained to the board it was July 1st, 2018, and those were platted as accessory lots.

Tyler Young made a motion for the petition to be taken under advisement and postponed until the July BZA meeting, Nick Wilson seconded the motion.
A voice vote was taken, motion carried.

The petition was postponed until the July 21, 2020 BZA meeting.

Robbie Miller introduced the petition and reviewed the site plan. Lyle Beechy, 7705 W 100 N, Shipshewana, was present on behalf of the petitioner, and explained the reason for the variance. Tyler Young asked if there was anyone in favor of the petition. Bob Shanahan, 345 N Morton St., Shipshewana, stated to the board the Town of Shipshewana had given a positive recommendation with the stipulation no more than 3 horses. Tyler Young asked if anyone would like to remonstrate against the petition. No remonstrators appeared.

The public hearing was subsequently closed.

The board discussed the site plan.

Terry Holsinger expressed concern with it being in a residential area.

Tyler Young questioned if the horses should graze upon the lot.

Bob Shanahan asked the board if the variance were to not be granted, what would be allowed for the use of the lot. Robbie Miller stated the lot would be used as originally intended, as a storm water retention area for the subdivision.

A roll call vote was taken:

Land Use Variance

1. The approval *will* be injurious to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.

   *The proposal is to graze and maintain horses on a residentially zoned platted lot located in a planned unit development adjacent to Petitioner’s property. The subject lot also contains the retention pond for the residential subdivision which raises questions regarding the runoff into said waterway and drainage system and effects on the residential subdivision.*

2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance *will* be affected in a substantially adverse manner.

   *That maintaining horses is not the best use of the S-1 platted lot within the residential Planned Unit Development and poses the risk of reducing neighboring property values. Maintaining horses and agricultural uses of S-1 property may also hinder residential development in the surrounding area and have an impact on the community as a whole. No remonstrators appeared.*

3. The need for the variance does arise from some condition peculiar to the property involved

   *The location of the subject property as it currently sits within an S-1 residential zone would prevent petitioner from grazing and maintaining horses on the subject property located adjacent to his existing A-1 property.*

4. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance *will not* constitute an unnecessary hardship if applied to the property for which the variance is sought.

   *Petitioner, by selecting the subject location in an S-1 zone, to graze and maintain horses has created his own hardship, that could have been prevented by selecting a more suitable location located in an A-1 zone or located within his existing A-1 property. The S-1 zoning district is not conducive to maintaining horses or other large animals, said usage is designated for A-1 zoning districts.*
5. The approval does interfere substantially with the Comprehensive Plan. The use requested by Petitioner is not common in the S-1 zone, as the S-1 zone is designated for primary residential development. The comprehensive plan clearly provides for the designation of agricultural uses, such as maintaining large animals and livestock, in A-1 zones and not in S-1 zones.

For all of the foregoing reasons, on this 16th day of June, 2020, the LaGrange County Board of Zoning Appeals finds the Petitioner has not met its burden of proof and hereby denies the variance as requested.

(Public Hearing)


Robbie Miller introduced the petition and reviewed the site plan.

Rob Yoder, 7740 W SR 120, Shipshewana, was present on behalf of the petitioner, and explained the reason for the variance.

Tyler Young asked if there was anyone in favor of the petition. No others appeared in favor of the petition. Mr. Young asked if anyone would like to remonstrate against the petition. No remonstrators appeared.

The public hearing was subsequently closed.

The board discussed the site plan at length.

A roll call vote was taken:

Land Use Variance

1. The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.

   The proposal is to construct and operate a manufacturing and retail business for the production and sale of dog related products in an A-1 zone. The proposal provides for adequate driveway and turnaround for deliveries and for patrons to enter and exit the property without affecting traffic flow on the county road. The proposal poses no risk to the community as the petitioner has operated the same business directly across the street for several years without issue.

2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.

   The Petitioner has operated the business directly across the street out of his home property for several years without issue. The proposed variance will allow for the construction of a brand-new facility that meets all required setbacks, thereby not intruding on any neighboring landowners. The manufacturing at this site is minimal and does not pose the risk of sound nuisance upon neighboring landowners. No remonstrators appeared.

3. The need for the variance arises from some condition peculiar to the property involved

   The unique characteristics and the geographical location of the property as it currently sits in an A-1 zone would prevent the petitioner from operating manufacturing and retail sales of the proposed dog products.
4. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will constitute an unnecessary hardship if applied to the property for which the variance is sought. 

Petitioner would be prohibited from operating his manufacturing and retail business at the subject location without the requested variance requiring petitioner to find another suitable location away from his home in an industrial zone.

5. The approval does not interfere substantially with the Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan encourages rural businesses and the proposed plan is not dissimilar from those in existence in the surrounding area. The comprehensive plan also encourages a diverse economy and promotes growth in the county economy with the small business owners.

For all of the foregoing reasons, on this 16th day of June, 2020, the LaGrange County Board of Zoning Appeals finds the Petitioner has met its burden of proof and hereby approves the variance as requested.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: Lynn Bowen made a motion to adjourn, Nick Wilson seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

LAGRANGE COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

BY: _____________________________________________

Tyler Young, President

BY: _____________________________________________

Terry Holsinger, Vice President

BY: _____________________________________________

Jim Bugg, Member

BY: _____________________________________________

Lynn Bowen, Member

BY: _____________________________________________

Nick Wilson, Member

BY: _____________________________________________

Rich Sherman, Alternate Member

BY: _____________________________________________

Freeman Miller, Alternate Member
LAGRANGE COUNTY, INDIANA
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