

MINUTES
WHITLEY COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING
July 22, 2025
7:00 P.M.

Whitley County Government Center
Meeting Room A/B

MEMBERS	PRESENT	ABSENT	STAFF
Kelley Sheiss	X		Nathan Bilger
Danny Wilkinson	X		Brent Bockelman
Doug Wright	X		
Joe Wolf	X		LEGAL COUNSEL
Jack Green	X		Elizabeth Deckard

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

The list of audience members, in-person and electronic, is attached to these minutes. The signed guest list is kept on record.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mr. Wolf called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and read the roll call; the members present and absent are listed above.

CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of the June 24, 2025 meeting were presented for review. Ms. Sheiss moved to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Green. Minutes were approved by a vote of 5-0.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH

Ms. Deckard provided the oath to the audience members wishing to speak.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

25- W-VAR-17, SPRING GREEN

The petitioner, tenant of the subject property, is requesting a development standards variance of the required parking surface on the property located at 1115 S. Williams Drive. The property is located on the east side of Williams Drive, on Lot 1 of Piper Subdivision in Section 18 of Union Township. The property is currently improved with a service business and parking.

Mr. Bilger presented a summary of the staff report for the petition. He explained that a permit has been obtained for a storage building to the east of the main building. Proposed is to have gravel surface surrounding the building, for parking and storage of equipment and vehicles. The

arial views were displayed with the overly of the new construction. The parking areas of the surrounding properties was also displayed and discussed. Review criteria were discussed.

The petitioner for the case was not present at the time. A motion was made by Ms. Sheiss to table the petition until the end of the meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Green. The motion was carried by a vote of 5-0.

25- W-VAR-18, CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

The petitioner, owner of the subject property, is requesting a development standards variance of the required parking surface on the property located at 6231 N. 650 East. The property is located on the southwest corner of 650 East and US 33 in Section 4 of Smith Township. The property is currently improved with a religious institution and accessory parking.

Mr. Bilger presented a summary of the staff report for the petition. He explained that the petitioner planned to install temporary gravel parking. The petitioner also plans to pave the area withing five years. Aerial views were provided with overlays for reference. The drainage and detention of the area were displayed and discussed as well. Review criteria were discussed.

Ben Bailey, 215 E. Berry St. Fort Wayne, addressed the Board as representative of the petitioner. He explained the plans for the parking area. He explained that this request would be temporary, and the plan is to pave the area in the future. Discussion was made regarding the review criteria.

Mr. Wolf discussed drainage in the area. Discussion was made regarding the variance going with the land if the property were to be sold within the five-year timeframe.

Mr. Wolf asked if anyone wished to speak for or against the case.

Gary Byrd, 6620 E. Raspberry Ct, addressed the Board with concerns about the drainage and water problems in the area. He stated that he would appreciate the concerns being addressed.

Ben Bailey, 215 E. Berry St., stated that the Church would be willing to look into the drainage. With no comments, Mr. Wolf Closed the public hearing.

Mr. Green made a motion to approve the petition. Mr. Wright seconded. Petition 25-W-VAR-18 was approved by a vote of 5-0. With he following conditions:

1. The gravel area shall be paved with a compliant hard surface within five (5) years from the date of approval, unless modified by the Board.
2. This variance does not apply to the “future” parking area.
3. If installed, any driveway onto US 33 will need to be paved as well as comply with any requirements of INDOT.

25- W-SE-8, DARIAN & RACHEL ALLEN

The petitioner, owner of the subject property, is requesting special exception approval for a Machine Shop use in conjunction with their residence. The property is located at 431 South State Road 5 in Section 9 of Richland Township. The subject property is currently improved with a house and an outbuilding.

Mr. Bilger presented a summary of the staff report for the petition. He explained that the proposed specific use is to operate a ceramic coating facility in the existing 32’x60’ outbuilding. The operation would coat various automotive, home décor, firearms, and sporting goods parts

with ceramic coating. Additionally, some light machining of parts would be done. Aerial views were provided with overlays were shown for reference. Details of the business were discussed. The petitioner's plan would be to relocate to a different location in the future as growth occurs with the business. Review criteria were discussed.

Darian Allen, 431 South State Road 5, addressed the Board and explained his proposal. He stated the reasons for the Special Exception request for the property. He stated that he worked by appointment only due to the type of custom work the business does.

Discussion was made regarding any timeframe set for the expiration of the Special Exception.

Mr. Wolf asked if anyone wished to speak for or against the case. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and asked for further discussion.

Mr. Sheiss moved to approve the petition with conditions. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Green. Petition 25-W-SE-8 was approved by a vote of 5-0, with the following conditions:

1. The Special Exception is granted for the applicant and is non-transferable without Board approval.
2. The Special Exception is granted as presented.
3. There will be no more than two non-resident employees.
4. Operations will be within a completely enclosed building. No materials or products will be stored outside.
5. Any outdoor lighting be oriented and shielded to prevent light spillage and/or glare onto surrounding properties.
6. Any signage will conform to the requirements of the code.
7. Provide the BZA with an update for review in five years.

25- W-SE-9, JOSIAH AND JESSICA SMITH

The petitioner, purchaser of the subject property, is requesting special exception approval for a secondary dwelling unit on the property located at the north end of Butterstone Trail in Chapine Reserve in Union Township, immediately north of the Lake Trail Estates subdivision on east Old Trail Road. The property is currently unimproved but was previously the site of a gravel pit.

Mr. Bilger presented a summary of the staff report for the petition. He explained that the petitioner is proposing to construct a pole barn with living quarters that will be used as their residence during the construction of a primary dwelling. After completion of the primary residence, the living quarters in the pole barn would be retained for use by relatives as a guest house. He explained that property is comprised of two existing parcels, each of which is interpreted to be a building site. So, two dwellings could be constructed here without need for special exception review. However, since the exact location of each structure is not yet determined, and they will be contingent on the suitability of soil conditions for building and septic system, the petitioner is requesting this review prior to purchasing the property in case the two residences wind up on the same parcel. No matter what the building sites would be, though, the proposed usage would remain the same. The flood plain and flood way on the property were discussed. A chart was displayed comparing the proposed and the code requirements. Aerial views were displayed with overlays. Review criteria were discussed.

Josiah Smith, 5497 E. 750 South , addressed the Board and explained the purpose of his request. He stated that he would likely be living in the pole building with living quarters for four to five years while the primary home is planned and built. Once the primary home is finished, the pole building will be used as a guest house and storage.

Mr. Wolf asked if anyone wished to speak for or against the case. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and asked for further discussion.

Mr. Wright made a motion to approve the petition with conditions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. Petition 25-W-SE-9 was approved by a vote of 5-0 with the following conditions:

1. The Special Exception is granted as presented.
2. Compliance with recommendations of the Health Department.
3. In addition to the requirements in the Zoning Code definition of “Secondary Dwelling Unit”, the dwelling shall not be used as an income-producing rental unit.

Mr. Wright made a motion to continue 25-W-VAR-17 to the August 26th meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. Motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Having no other business, Mr. Wolf adjourned the meeting at 8:20 P.M.

GUEST LIST

1. Scott Lougheed914 Lanyard Ct, Cicero
2. Gary Byrd.....6620 Raspberry Ct
3. Devon Kirk.....11815 Weigela Ct, Ft. Wayne
4. Nancee Lougheed.....11815 Weigela Ct. Ft. Wayne
5. Josiah Smith.....14306 Smugglers Notch, Ft. Wayne
6. Darian Allen.....431 S. State Road 5
7. Jason Teders.....6371 E. Cobblestone Cv.
8. Donald Lewis332 Butterstone Trail
9. Ben Bailey.....215 E. Berry Street, Ft. Wayne
10. David Moses6232 N. 750 East
11. Ed McCutcheon6927 Mandarin Run, Ft. Wayne
12. Kimberly Slucher.....181 N. Lexington

GUEST LIST – ELECTRONIC

None

