



LAPORTE COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

Government Complex, 5th Level
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Michael Polan
Building Commissioner

November 18th, 2025

Dear Members:

The regular meeting of the La Porte County Board of Zoning Appeals was held Tuesday, **November 18th, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.** in the Assembly Room of the County Complex.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Melissa Mischke Vern Schafer
 Ernie Schmidt Eric Pointon
 Jeff Baltes

PRESENT: Michael Polan, Recording Secretary; Attorney Doug Biege; Ashley
 Kazmucha, Administrative Coordinator

The Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Melissa Mischke asked for approval of the meeting minutes of October 21st, 2025.

Eric Pointon made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented.

Jeff Baltes seconded.

All Approved. Motion carries 5-0.

Melissa Mischke stated so this evening they're going to start their petitions and she just wants to remind everybody that they do not have what is considered public comment during Board of Zoning Appeals. They have a time for them to remonstrate either for or against a petition and that is their time to speak. Everyone gets (3) three minutes for remonstrance, either good or bad.

Petitions:

1. Petition for Variance of Use for Bats Inc C/O Stephen F Cooper for operation of a small events; wedding venues, dinners. This property is located at 11341 W. Snyder Rd., Westville, IN., New Durham Twp., zoned A. Parcel 46-09-06-200-004.000-027. **TABLED FROM OCTOBER**

Melissa Mischke stated gentlemen, they need to have Petition 1 removed from the table since it was tabled from the October meeting.

Vern Schafer made a motion to remove Petition 1 from the table.

Eric Pointon seconded.

All Approved. Motion carries 5-0.

Attorney Biege stated notice is adequate.

Melissa Mischke stated they tabled them last month so that they could kind of get some things in order and what kind of questions did they still have as a Board.

Eric Pointon stated he read through what was submitted and it looked like what they were looking for so unless they want to speak on it.

Natalie Cooper stated she is one of the owners of 11341 W. Snyder Rd., Westville, IN. She is there with their farm manager Kim DeWees.

Kim DeWees stated her address is 8217 S. 1180 W., Brook, IN.

Natalie Cooper stated first and foremost, she'd like to thank the Board for granting them this continuance for the variance request. She would like to address the specific questions that were raised last month. As suggested, she has listed these items in an addendum to her prior business plan. Should she read it?

Melissa Mischke stated no, she thinks they're fine.

Eric Pointon stated they have it.

Natalie Cooper stated sorry. She thought she would be less nervous this month, but that is not the case.

Remonstrators:

Nick Merkel stated his address is 11602 W. Snyder Rd., Westville, IN which is directly across the street from this place here. He is not going to beat a dead horse. He has the same concerns, the same issues that he had last month. Obviously, it was tabled, so those still stand. He just wants to make sure that that was there. He still has concerns. One, he doesn't know what their business plan is, so what are their hours of operation? He has lots of questions like that. His concern is safety with the traffic there. It is just a terrible road. If they know Snyder Road, it is in the worst possible location that it could be at the top of the hill and a blind curve. At the bottom of the S-curve is his driveway where he has teenage daughters, young children. That's his

concern, so that's why he is here tonight. Like he said, he doesn't want to beat it up. He doesn't have any animosity toward this family. He just has concerns.

Melissa Mischke stated very good.

Nick Merkel stated thank you.

Melissa Mischke stated thank you.

Vern Schafer stated he is pleased that they gave them a detailed report on this and perhaps their neighbor would like to see this addendum also with their hours of operation and things because he is not privy to that information like they are. He doesn't really have any particular comments except for that they are specific on what they want. It says that they are operating from seven to eleven-thirty (7 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.) three hundred and sixty-five (365) days a year so that is pretty wide open, but all events must conclude by eleven p.m. (11 p.m.) and vendors and guests are expected to vacate the premises by eleven-thirty (11:30 p.m.). He's not sure if there are any issues on the highway with the entrance and such that the County would take that into account for the traffic flow.

Natalie Cooper stated yes, sir. As far as safety, which is obviously is everyone's number one (1) concern because that is the responsibility of any business owner or any member of a community whether they own a business or not. They have taken every precaution in order to make Snyder Road probably the safest it has ever been. They are already in the process of working with NIPSCO to install streetlights. They installed a new entrance, which was approved by the Building Commission for a safer entrance and exit. They are also requesting speed bumps, not only for their guests, but just it's kind of a racetrack out there sometimes. She understands her neighbor's concern, and she just wants to say that they are not in the business of making things unsafe. They're trying to improve it. As far as the road safety goes, they will work with the Highway Department and the Building Commission to make sure that they're doing everything that they can for their neighbors.

Vern Schafer stated one (1) suggestion that he would have and they're not supposed to make suggestions, according to Doug, but the point is that if they have an entrance to a business like this there should be good visibility from both sides for people coming in and out so they can see approaching traffic. He hasn't been on this property, so he doesn't know where that is, but he knows that trees and shrubs, everything in the way of that approach should be eliminated so that they can see both ways.

Natalie Cooper stated yes, sir. They recently had all of the pine trees that lead up to the new entrance and exit trimmed. Full disclosure, it was because NIPSCO was doing work there but they had planned to do that anyways, so it kind of just saved them some money.

Eric Pointon made a motion to approve the Petition for Variance of Use for Bats Inc C/O Stephen F Cooper for operation of a small events; wedding venues, dinners. Business Plan attached hereto. This property is located at 11341 W. Snyder Rd., Westville, IN., New Durham Twp., zoned A.

Ernie Schmidt seconded.

Attorney Biege asked if they want the Business Plan attached to the Findings of Fact.

Eric Pointon stated yes.

Approved. Motion carries 4-1.

2. Petition for Variance of Developmental Standards for Bradley and Jamie Dubois for construction of a pole barn with living quarters to reside in while home is being constructed. To keep the pole barn living quarters as a guest house. This property is located at 11324 W. 200 S., Westville, IN., New Durham Twp., zoned A on 41.75 acres. Parcel 46-09-18-200-012.000-027.

Attorney Biege stated notice is adequate.

Brad and Jamie Dubois stated their address is 11324 W. 200 S., Westville, IN.

Melissa Mischke asked them to tell her about their plans to construct a dwelling and then this structure prior to that.

Brad Dubois stated they originally planned to do just a pole barn and then a house after. Now, they are looking to do a pole barn with living quarters, basically a mother-in-law suite attached to it so they can then sell their house that they're in now and then start the building process in the next year or two (2) for the house. Then after we complete the house, that portion will just be a mother-in-law suite for down the road. Eventually they wanted to do a mother-in-law suite anyways. They figured they might as well do it now.

Melissa Mischke asked whose parent is going to live there?

Jamie Dubois stated hers.

Melissa Mischke stated so, they're going to do a nice job?

Brad Dubois stated hopefully. It will either be hers or his. He doesn't know.

No remonstrators present.

Vern Schafer stated he noticed that they want to build this pole barn and then prior to building a home. Usually the home goes first, then the buildings. He understands that. Do they have a timeframe for home construction?

Brad Dubois stated ideally, as soon as possible, but it could either be this next summer or the summer after. Within the next twenty-four (24) months.

Vern Schafer stated he suggests that when they make a motion, or if they do make a motion, that they're going to probably put a timeframe in for start of a construction of a home.

Melissa Mischke stated agreed. Should they approve this petition, she wants them to understand that there is no rental. The apartment structure at whatever point becomes just for them and their family to use.

Jeff Baltes made a motion to approve the Petition for Variance of Developmental Standards for Bradley and Jamie Dubois for construction of a pole barn with living quarters to reside in while home is being constructed. To keep the pole barn living quarters as a guest house. Home construction must start within 24 months. This property is located at 11324 W. 200 S., Westville, IN., New Durham Twp., zoned A on 41.75 acres.

Eric Pointon seconded.

All Approved. Motion carries 5-0.

3. Petition for Variance of Developmental Standards for Gary S Meloun & Brianna Renay Shaw JTWROS & Christopher McGrew to split a parcel in two. Parent parcel will retain 287' of frontage and 4.63 acres; New parcel will have 60' of frontage and 6.94 acres and for construction of a home on the new parcel. The property is located at 0119 N. 600 E., Mill Creek, IN., Wills Twp., zoned A on 11.57 acres. Parcel 46-08-31-300-019.000-068.

Attorney Biege stated notice is adequate.

Gary Meloun stated his address is 119 N. 600 E., Mill Creek, IN.

Christopher McGrew stated his address is 1007 Pennsylvania Ave., LaPorte, IN.

Melissa Mischke stated okay. So, they want to split one (1) giant parcel into two (2).

Gary Melous stated yes.

Melissa Mischke stated obviously they are related.

Gary Meloun stated this is his grandson.

Melissa Mischke stated very nice. Is there anyway they could get a little extra frontage on that sixty feet (60')?

Gary Meloun stated yes.

Melissa Mischke stated that makes her very unhappy when she sees that little tiny entrance.

Gary Meloun stated it's about three hundred and forty feet (340'). They can make it whatever. They were going to use the same driveway, but couldn't. That's why. They're backwards though.

Christopher McGrew stated pretty much what they were wanting to do is they wanted to split the property in half so they got like a rough drawing. He was wondering when they did have the surveyors come in and do a survey of the property if they would be able to change the numbers and get it more accurate of what they wanted.

Melissa Mischke stated so, they're still going to have a strip of land that is inherently part of that parcel, correct?

Gary Meloun stated yes. He'll have the four and a half to five (4½ - 5) acres in back.

Melissa Mischke stated she feels like they might have jumped the gun on this a little bit.

Attorney Biege stated yes, he is thinking they want to table until the surveyor has his work done because he might be able to set it up to where they don't need a variance at all.

Gary Meloun stated Hendricks told them to do it this way first because they we're jumping the gun by doing the survey first.

Ashley Kazmucha stated she was told, that the frontage is only sixty feet (60') because the house's septic is in the front to the north and they cannot move the property line over that. It has to stay on his property.

Gary Meloun stated that is why the driveway is at the edge of the property.

Ashley Kazmucha stated yes.

Gary Meloun stated because of the signs too, they were told they can't use the same driveway so they were just going to put him on the end of their property and he will still be away from all of his septic lines. His driveway might be seventy-five to one hundred feet (75' - 100') wide.

Jeff Baltes asked if they know how far the septic is from that line?

Attorney Biege stated they could sit around here guessing and waste everybody's time, but he thinks they should table it and have them get with the surveyor and come back with a drawing.

Melissa Mischke asked what they think.

Vern Schafer stated he thinks what they should is try to maximize the amount of frontage they have, that they can allow, but they can't go over that septic field. So, they're going to have to find out exactly where that is and then get an exact measurement there and then come back to them. They can table it until next month and come back to them next month and they'll discuss that.

Christopher McGrew stated okay.

Melissa Mischke stated if it's longer than next month, just give the Building Department a call and they will put them on for the first available meeting when they have everything ready.

Gary Meloun stated all right.

Eric Pointon made a motion to table until next month the Petition for Variance of Developmental Standards for Gary S Meloun & Brianna Renay Shaw JTWROS & Christopher McGrew to split a parcel in two. Parent parcel will retain 287' of frontage and 4.63 acres; New parcel will have 60' of frontage and 6.94 acres and for construction of a home on the new parcel. The property is located at 0119 N. 600 E., Mill Creek, IN., Wills Twp., zoned A on 11.57 acres.

Jeff Baltes seconded.

All Approved. Motion carries 5-0.

Melissa Mischke stated to tell Tony if he has an issue to give her a call.

4. Petition for Variance of Developmental Standards for Greg Karwick (owner) & William Paxton (buyer) to split a property in two. Parent parcel will retain all frontage on 400 W and approximately 2.2 acres. New Parcel will have 25' of frontage on 450 W and approximately 2.8 acres and for construction on the new parcel. This property is located at 6456 N. 400 W., LaPorte, IN., Springfield Twp., zoned R1B on 5.0 acres. Parcel 46-02-32-426-003.000-062

Attorney Biege stated notice is adequate.

William Paxton stated his address is 5201 Locke Ave., Fort Worth, TX.

Greg Karwick stated his address is 6456 N. 400 W., Michigan City, IN.

Melissa Mischke stated she is going to need a second. Have they had a survey done?

William Paxton stated no, ma'am.

Vern Schafer stated so Greg, he owns the property.

Greg Karwick stated yes. He has had it for twenty (20) years.

Vern Schafer stated his questions is, it appears to him that the map shows that 450 West dead-ends right on the back of the property. Is that how this works?

Greg Karwick stated it doesn't go to 450, it only goes to Sherwood.

William Paxton stated there is a cul de sac on Sherwood.

Sherwood Drive is not the road. It is actually Ray Bush Drive, which all addresses along that stretch use 450 W as it is an off shoot of 450 W before it dead ends.

Vern Schafer stated so it is Sherwood. Yes, that's right. Ray Bush Drive is what they call it.

William Paxton stated he doesn't know why there are two (2) different names. Ray Bush and Sherwood probably couldn't decide what to call it, but it dead ends right as his property.

Greg Karwich stated yes. There is a dead-end curb.

Vern Schafer asked if that would be the new entrance to that property then?

Greg Kawrich stated yes, that would be it.

William Paxton stated that is the idea, yes.

Vern Schafer stated he doesn't know. What do they do about that? This doesn't have a lot of frontage on it, but the road runs right into it. That's kind of strange.

Eric Pointon stated there will be an entrance on each side for each parcel then?

William Paxton stated correct. It will be two (2) completely autonomous properties.

Vern Schafer stated so despite the fact that they don't have two hundred feet (200') of frontage or whatever.

Melissa Mischke stated on either one (1) of them.

Vern Schafer stated it is on the back side and they would just drive right in. It's an extension of the road.

Michael Polan stated yes. He was there. There is nothing there except woods and it is a cul de sac, so there is plenty of room to have a driveway.

Vern Schafer stated the property does come right up to that cul de sac, correct?

Michael Polan stated yes. Yes, it does.

Vern Schafer stated so that would be an entrance.

Melissa Mischke asked if addressing would be a problem for them.

Michael Polan stated no.

Vern Schafer stated if sounds kind of doable.

Eric Pointon stated he thinks so.

Melissa Mischke stated she doesn't care for a lack of road frontage, but at least they are not going with a sixty-foot (60') strip.

No remonstrators present.

Vern Schafer stated as he looks at the Beacon map, the property is probably right centered with that street that runs into it. Is that correct?

William Paxton stated that is correct.

Vern Schafer stated so he just has to slide off to one (1) side and he has a drive way.

William Paxton stated yes, sir. That is correct.

Melissa Mischke stated she thinks technically the driveway permit is going to come from County Highway or the Building Department so they can address those issues with them at the time.

Ernie Schmidt made a motion to approve the Petition for Variance of Developmental Standards for Greg Karwick (owner) & William Paxton (buyer) to split a property in two. Parent parcel will retain all frontage on 400 W and approximately 2.2 acres. New Parcel will have 25' of frontage on 450 W and approximately 2.8 acres and for construction on the new parcel. This property is located at 6456 N. 400 W., LaPorte, IN., Springfield Twp., zoned R1B on 5.0 acres.

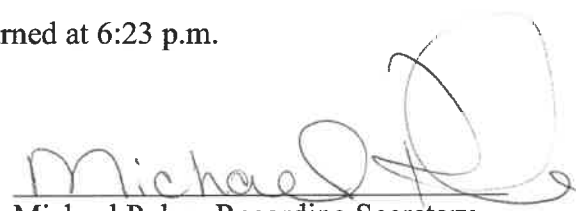
Eric Pointon seconded.

All Approved. Motion carries 5-0.

Melissa Mischke asked if there is any further business before the Board.

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.


Melissa Mullins Mischke, President


Michael Polan, Recording Secretary