

Wabash County Plan Commission

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Wabash County Board of Zoning Appeals – Meeting Minutes

Board Members: Dan Dale, Patty Lengel, Amanda Lyons, Mark Milam, Joe Vogel, Jerry Younce
Staff: Mark Frantz, Board Attorney; Brian Campbell, Plan Director; Jennifer Hicks, BZA Secretary

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

1. Call To Order

Mark Milam, Chairman, called to order the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

Jennifer Hicks, BZA Secretary, called roll:

- ✓ Dan Dale – *Present*
- ✓ Patty Lengel – *Present*
- ✓ Amanda Lyons – *Absent*
- ✓ Mark Milam – *Present*
- ✓ Joe Vogel – *Present*

Jennifer Hicks declared a quorum was present.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 25, 2025

The minutes from the March 25, 2025 meeting were presented. Mr. Joe Vogel made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Dan Dale seconded the motion.

Jennifer Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Dan Dale – *yes*
- ✓ Patty Lengel – *abstain*
- ✓ Mark Milam – *yes*
- ✓ Joe Vogel – *yes*

4. New Business

SE-25-002 - Request to Construct a Pond, Lake, or Earth and Structure with Water Surface Area Greater Than 400 Square Feet

Property Owner, Lagro Township

Address: 2887 East 300 North, Wabash

Mr. Campbell provided a brief description of the request, noting the proposed pond location did not require any variances with setbacks of at least 200 feet from any property line, and that no county-regulated tiles or drains would be affected. Drainage Board approval on February 17, 2025 and a favorable recommendation from the Plan Commission on April 3, 2025.

Mr. Milam inquired about the water source, asking if it would be runoff-filled or if there would be water pumped. The Property Owner responded that there would be more pumping than runoff.

There were no further questions from the Board or the public.

Ms. Lengel made a motion to approve the pond. Mr. Dale seconded the motion.

Jennifer Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Dan Dale – yes
- ✓ Patty Lengel – yes
- ✓ Mark Milam – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

VAR-25-009 – Variance from the development standards to place a deck closer to a primary roadway than permitted by ordinance.

Casey & Jessi Huston, Liberty Township

Address: 2330 E 900 S, LaFontaine

Mr. Campbell stated the request was for a variance to place a deck closer to a primary roadway than permitted. He noted that the deck is located in the square area between the garage and the house, and would not be closer to the road than the existing home.

With no questions raised, Mr. Dale made a motion to approve the variance. Ms. Lengel seconded the motion.

Jennifer Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Dan Dale – yes
- ✓ Patty Lengel – yes
- ✓ Mark Milam – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

VAR-25-010 – Variance from the development standards to place a porch closer to a primary roadway than permitted by ordinance, Chester Township

Andrew & Jennifer Bolinger

Address: 4420 E 800 N, North Manchester

Mr. Campbell presented the request, noting the property was located about a mile and a half south and east of Servia, on 23 acres. He stated the proposed porch would be 43 feet from the center of the primary roadway, less than half of the required 95 feet.

Mr. Milam inquired about semi-truck traffic in and out of the driveway due to it being a working farm. Mr. Bolinger confirmed there was semi-truck traffic. Mr. Milam then asked if there was sufficient room for trucks to turn around without backing onto the roadway, and Mr. Bolinger confirmed that there was.

Mr. Vogel asked to confirm if the new porch would be 8 feet closer to the roadway than the existing house, which Mr. Bolinger affirmed.

Ms. Lengel asked for clarification on the dimensions, and Mr. Campbell showed the proposed porch size and location. Ms. Lengel then asked to confirm there were no visibility issues when pulling in or out of the driveway. Mr. Campbell stated he had attempted pulling in and out several times and did not experience visibility issues, and he did not believe the proposed porch would cause any such issues.

There were no further questions from the Board or the public. Mr. Vogel made a motion to approve the variance, and Ms. Lengel seconded the motion.

Jennifer Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Dan Dale – yes
- ✓ Patty Lengel – yes
- ✓ Mark Milam – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

VAR-25-011 - Variance from the parcel split regulations to allow more than one parcel, less than 20 acres, out of a parent tract within a 5-year period, Chester Township

Runkel Farms

Address: 1817 E 700 N Lot 2, North Manchester

Mr. Campbell presented the request for a variance from the parcel split regulations to allow more than one parcel, less than 20 acres, to be split from a parent tract within a 5-year period. Specifically, the request was to split 1.409 acres from the existing 152.45-acre parcel. He noted the property was in an A1 (Agriculture 1) zoning district, and the factor point system was not required as it would be used for agricultural purposes. The intention was to keep the farm together and restore the farmland around the original homestead from when the farm was purchased.

Mr. Milam asked if the split acreage would be combined with the existing parcel around the home. Mr. Vawter confirmed that it would be combined, which Mr. Campbell stated it would make the resulting parcel compliant with the current zoning ordinance.

Mr. Doug Lehman, attorney for Runkel Farms, identified Runkel Farms as a partnership between Gary and Steve Runkel. Mr. Gary Runkel provided a history of the property, explaining a previous split of 1.851 acres for a cousin's house. The current request was to return land with grain bins to the homestead. Mr. Vawter mentioned future plans for a barn for 4-H animals on that section, not a homesite. Mr. Lehman stated the split wouldn't be injurious to the public.

Mr. Campbell noted the staff recommendation for approval with the condition that the split parcel be combined with the homesite, as it would lack road frontage and not be a compliant stand-alone parcel. Mr. Lehman indicated he had the survey and new legal description for the deed.

There were no questions from the Board or the public. Mr. Vogel made a motion to approve the variance with the recommended requirement to combine the parcels, and Ms. Lengel seconded the motion.

Jennifer Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Dan Dale – yes
- ✓ Patty Lengel – yes
- ✓ Mark Milam – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

5. Other Business

Complaint Update

There are 53 current complaints open, including those rolled over from 2024.
31 open, 15 legal, 7 monitor
54 were rolled over from 2024, 9 of which have been closed so far this year.
12 new complaints have been received in 2025; of those 4 have been closed.
Total of 66 complaints worked in 2025; 13 resolved.

Other

Mr. Campbell presented a request from a property owner in the Town of Lagro. The property owner owns 2 parcels in the town limits. One parcel has a house that is currently undergoing renovations, the other parcel has a garage that remains after a fire destroyed the residential structure. The owner of the property is currently renting an apartment while working on the house. The garage is being used to store materials for working on the home. The property owner would like to purchase a travel trailer to live in on the property with the garage while working on the house. Both properties are connected to town utilities, as would the travel trailer. Mr. Campbell explained there is a clause in the ordinance stating if you are building a new home, a temporary permit to live in a travel trailer is available, but it doesn't state anything about while renovating a home. The property owner would like to save money by living on the property he owns while working on the house rather than continuing to pay rent. Mr. Frantz stated a temporary permit could be issued contingent on the approval of a special exception per the ordinance. Ms. Lengel asked what the timeframe was for the home renovations. Ms. Hicks stated the ordinance states the temporary travel trailer permits are valid for a year with the potential for one additional year extension. Mr. Campbell stated that before any approvals would be given, the property owner would have to obtain the approval of the Town Board. The board agreed to work with the property owner given his good faith efforts so far, but want to set clear expectations and time limits. No motion or vote was needed.

6. Motion for Adjournment

- Mr. Vogel made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Dale seconded the motion.
- The BZA Meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Also Present: Steve Hicks, Ron Huston, Casey Huston, Gary Runkel, Andrew Bolinger, Jennifer Bolinger, Doug Lehman, Nicky Burnsworth, Jill Ringel

(bac)