



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

Staff: Mark Frantz, Board Attorney; Brian Campbell, Plan Director; Jennifer Hicks, BZA Secretary

Tuesday, August 26, 2025

1. Call To Order

Mr. Milam, Chair, called to order the August Board of Zoning Appeals meeting at 7:00pm.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Hicks, BZA Secretary, called roll:

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

Ms. Hicks declared a quorum was present.

3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes – June 24, 2025

The minutes from the June 24, 2025 meeting were presented. Ms. Lyons made a motion to approved the minutes as written. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

4. Approval of the Meeting Minutes – July 22, 2025

The minutes from the July 22, 2025 meeting were presented. Ms. Lengel made a motion to approved the minutes as written. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

5. New Business

SE-25-007 – Jonathan & Lisa Engle, Noble Township

Request: Special Exception request to build a pond in an A2 zoning district with a variance from the development standards to place a pond closer to a side (south) property line than permitted by ordinance.

Mr. Campbell summarized the request, noting that the petitioners sought approval to reconstruct a pond on their property located at 4568 South Old State Road 15. The pond had existed historically in the same general location, with aerial photographs from the 1970s and 1980s showing its presence. The request included both a Special Exception to allow a pond greater than 400 square feet in surface area in an A2 district, and a Variance to allow placement closer to the southern side property line than the 105-foot minimum setback.

It was explained that the proposed pond location would place the edge approximately 50–60 feet from the south property line, requiring a variance of about 47 feet. The drainage board had given a favorable recommendation on July 21, 2025, and the Plan Commission had recommended approval on August 2, 2025. Staff confirmed that natural drainage flows back onto the petitioner's property and that no adverse impact to neighboring parcels was expected. No comments were received from adjoining property owners.

Board members reviewed maps, aerial images, and photos provided. They discussed drainage flow, elevation changes, and the history of the pond site. The Board noted that the request essentially restored a previously existing pond.

No members of the public came forward in support or opposition.

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

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

VAR-25-024 – Clark Steiner & Matthew Steiner, Pleasant Township

Request: Variance to allow a multi-family residential structure in an RL-1 Lakefront zoning district and variance to place the structure closer to the side property line than permitted

Mr. Campbell introduced the petitioners' request to construct a duplex on their lakefront property in Pleasant Township. The RL-1 Lakefront zoning district permits only single-family dwellings; therefore, the use as a multi-family residence required a variance. A second variance was requested to reduce the side setback requirement, as the proposed structure would be approximately 15–17 feet from the side property line, where 25 feet is required.

The petitioners explained that the intent was to build a duplex to accommodate family members who wished to remain on the family's long-held lakefront property. They noted that they owned several adjoining parcels and had obtained signatures of consent from neighboring property owners, including family members who owned adjoining lots. The petitioners emphasized their desire to preserve lakefront access for both households while keeping the building located away from their business area and recreational amenities on the property.

Board members questioned why the duplex could not be shifted farther from the property line or why separate homes could not be constructed on the multiple parcels owned by the family. The petitioners responded that the chosen location best fit their business and recreational layout, and that all directly affected family members had given written approval.

Discussion included concerns regarding setbacks, potential future ownership changes, and hardship justification. The petitioners reiterated that the property was to remain in the family for future generations, with no plans for outside sale.

No objections were voiced by the audience, and no remonstrators were present.

Mr. Vogel made a motion to approve the variance to place a multi-family residential structure in an RL1-Lakefront zoning district. Mr. Dale seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

Mr. Vogel made a motion to approve the variance to place a residential structure closer to a side property line than permitted by ordinance. Ms. Lengel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

VAR-25-025 – Matthew Steiner, Pleasant Township

Request: Variance requests to allow a screened/enclosed porch closer to the rear and side property lines than permitted, and to reduce the aggregate distance between a residential structure and an accessory structure in an RL-1 Lakefront zoning district.

Mr. Campbell presented the request, explaining that the petitioner wished to construct a screened porch addition to an existing lakefront cabin. Because the RL-1 district defines the lake side as the “front” and the roadway as the “rear,” the proposed porch would extend closer to the road than the required 35-foot rear setback, and also closer to the side property line than permitted. Additionally, the proximity of a neighboring shed triggered the ordinance requirement for an aggregate distance of 26 feet between structures, which could not be met with the proposed porch placement.

The petitioner described the existing cabin, the intended porch location, and property ownership of the surrounding parcels. He explained that he also owned an 8-foot strip of land adjacent to the property, originally deeded for lake access, and provided documentation of neighbor approvals. The Board discussed whether combining that strip with the primary parcel would resolve some of the setback concerns. Mr. Steiner stated he had already begun the process and was agreeable to completing the combination.

Questions were raised about the accuracy of GIS parcel lines versus actual property line locations. Mr. Campbell noted that GIS lines appeared offset, but based on documentation from the plats and deeds, the proposed addition would be approximately 8–10 feet from the property line. The Board acknowledged the difficulty of meeting setbacks in the narrow lakefront lots and

discussed the general intent of providing access for emergency vehicles. It was determined that access could still be maintained around the structure if needed.

No audience members objected, and no remonstrators were present.

Ms. Lengel made a motion to approve the variance to reduce the rear setback (roadside). Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

Ms. Lyons made a motion to approve the variance to reduce the side setback, with the condition that the 8-foot strip be combined with the primary parcel. Ms. Lengel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

Mr. Vogel made the motion to approve the variance to reduce the aggregate distance between the residential structure and the neighboring accessory structure. Mr. Dale seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

VAR-25-026 – Roann United Methodist Church, Paw Paw Township

Request: Variance requests to place a property line closer to a side yard than permitted by ordinance, and to create a parcel less than the required 0.20 acres in an R2 zoning district.

Mr. Campbell presented the request from Roann United Methodist Church regarding property located at the southwest corner of Arnold and Adams Streets, 235 East Adams, in Roann. The church wishes to sell its parsonage and garage while retaining the church and fellowship hall. To do so, a new property line would be established between the church and parsonage. Because of the placement of the existing sidewalk and structures, the proposed division would reduce the side yard separation to approximately 9.9 feet, where 13 feet is required. Additionally, the parsonage lot would result in a parcel smaller than the minimum 0.20-acre requirement for the district.

Staff reviewed the survey work and explained that the configuration was intended to keep the sidewalk with the church while allowing the parsonage to be sold as a stand-alone lot. It was

noted that due to the existing placement of the church, garage, and fellowship hall, a variance was unavoidable regardless of where the division line was drawn.

The Board discussed the lot layout, building placement, and ordinance standards. Members agreed that the configuration was practical and allowed the church to retain needed access while providing the parsonage with sufficient space.

No audience members voiced opposition, and no remonstrance was received.

Mr. Vogel made a motion to approve the variance to place a property line closer to a side yard than permitted. Ms. Lyons seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

Mr. Dale made a motion to approve the creation of a parcel less than the required 0.20 acres in an R2 zoning district. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

VAR-25-027 – Paige Nash, Austion & Gayla Young, Liberty Township

Request: Variance of use to allow a nail salon in an A2 zoning district.

Mr. Campbell introduced the request concerning property at 3090 East 1000 South, near the northeast corner of State Road 15 and 1000 South. The site, formerly used for agricultural and salvage-related purposes, contains a smaller front building proposed to be converted into a nail salon. In the A2 zoning district, such a use is not permitted; it is only allowed in a General Business district. Therefore, a variance of use was required.

The petitioner, represented by family, explained that the building would be renovated to serve as a small nail salon operated by the daughter. Hours of operation and customer flow would be limited, and parking would be accommodated on the property without conflict with State Road 15. Utilities and facilities were already in place.

Board members discussed the history of the site, noting past business uses including a fertilizer plant and salvage operation. Members confirmed that the proposed salon was small in scale and would not generate traffic or intensity comparable to prior uses. Staff noted no concerns with parking or access.

No objections were received from adjoining property owners, and no remonstrance was presented at the hearing.

Ms. Lengel made a motion to approve the variance of use. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

VAR-25-028 – Thomas Christman & Paula Burcroff, Lagro Township

Request: Variance to place a shed closer to a primary roadway than permitted by ordinance.

Mr. Campbell presented the request involving property at 2071 East Old 24. The petitioners had installed a small shed adjacent to their home. Upon review during reassessment, it was determined that the shed was located within the required 95-foot setback from the centerline of Old 24, which is classified as a primary roadway. The shed sits approximately 75–80 feet from the centerline, requiring a variance to remain in place.

The petitioners explained that the shed is modest in size, approximately 10x12 feet, and was located near the home in the most level and practical spot available. They stated that it provides necessary storage and could not be relocated further south due to terrain limitations.

Board members noted that the shed is small in scale and largely screened from view. Discussion confirmed that the structure did not create visibility concerns for traffic.

No audience members spoke in opposition, and no written objections were received.

Mr. Vogel made a motion to approve the variance to allow the shed to remain closer to a primary roadway. Ms. Lengel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

Due to the petitioner having multiple variance requests on the docket, the Board adjusted the order of the agenda to hear the petitioner's second request at this time.

VAR-25-032 – Thomas Christman, Lagro Township

Request: Variance to allow a second parcel split of less than 20 acres within a five-year period.

Mr. Campbell presented the request involving property along Old 24 in Lagro Township. The petitioner sought to create a split for the purpose of conveying a house lot to a family member. Under county ordinance, only one split of less than 20 acres is permitted within a five-year period; a prior split had already been made, requiring this variance.

The petitioner explained that the split would allow his grandson to reside in the existing home while the family retained use of the surrounding farm ground. He stated that the split involved

only the house and immediate yard, and that the farm buildings and remainder of the acreage would remain with the parent parcel.

Board members asked about access and use of the driveway. The petitioner confirmed that he would continue using the shared drive and that an easement would be established to guarantee long-term access if the property were ever sold.

No audience members objected, and no comments were received from adjoining property owners.

Mr. Dale made a motion to approve the second parcel split within five years. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

VAR-25-029 – Kelsie Silvers, Noble Township

Request: Variance requests to place a garage closer to the front and side property lines than permitted in an R3 zoning district.

Mr. Campbell presented the request regarding property located at 366 East 500 South, on the north side of the road in a residential area west of 50 East near Whites. The petitioner proposed constructing a new garage beside the existing driveway to provide additional covered parking. Due to the small lot size of approximately 0.75 acres and the placement of existing septic and well areas, the garage could not meet both the front and side yard setbacks.

The proposed location would place the garage approximately 10–12 feet from the side property line and closer to the roadway than the required front setback. Staff noted that the petitioner had explored purchasing additional land from Whites Residential to increase the buffer, but the request was declined. No objections were received from adjoining property owners, and no calls were received in opposition.

The petitioner submitted a site plan showing the proposed garage placement and explained that several trees would be removed to accommodate the structure. The design would preserve the existing driveway and avoid encroachment on septic or well areas.

Board members discussed the practicality of the placement and recognized the difficulty of meeting setbacks on substandard-sized residential lots. A representative from Whites Residential, the adjoining property owner, was present and stated have no objection to the variance.

Ms. Lyons made a motion to approve the variance to place a garage closer to the front property line than permitted. Mr. Dale seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

Mr. Vogel made a motion to approve the variance to place a garage closer to the side property line than permitted. Ms. Lengel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

VAR-25-030 – Lavonne Sparling, Lagro Township

Request: Variance requests to place a shed closer to the side property line than permitted in an R3 zoning district, and to reduce the aggregate distance between accessory structures.

Mr. Campbell presented the request concerning property located at 1000 Main Street, at the northwest corner of Main and Harrison in Lagro. The petitioner had installed a shed on the lot, positioned near an existing garage on a neighboring property. The placement brought the shed closer than the required 13-foot side yard setback and also failed to meet the 26-foot aggregate distance required between accessory structures on adjoining parcels.

The petitioner explained that the shed was placed in the most practical location on the lot, considering space constraints and access. The Board noted that the garage on the neighboring property was already located close to the shared line, making it impossible to achieve the required aggregate distance regardless of placement.

No objections were received from adjoining property owners. The neighbors located on either side of the property in question were in attendance and expressed support for the variance, indicating no concerns with the shed's placement.

Ms. Lengel made a motion to approve the sheds placement closer to the side property line. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

Ms. Lyons made a motion to approve the variance to reduce the aggregate distance between accessory structures. Ms. Lengel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

VAR-25-031 – Bruce Pollard, Noble Township

Request: Variance to place an accessory structure (carport) closer to a primary roadway than permitted by ordinance.

Mr. Campbell presented the request concerning a vacant property along County Road 250 South (Dora Road) that the petitioner uses as a weekend retreat. The property contains a small shed and deck, with a recently placed metal carport intended to shelter a boat and equipment. Because County Road 250 South is classified as a primary roadway, a 95-foot setback is required. The carport sits approximately 65 feet from the road centerline, requiring a variance.

The petitioner explained that the carport was located in a natural, tucked-back area of the lot, screened from the road by trees and terrain. He noted that the location was chosen to minimize visibility and to provide convenient access from the existing drive. The Board confirmed through site photos and staff's observations that the carport could not be seen from the roadway without entering the property.

Board members discussed sight lines, access, and terrain. It was noted that similar variances had been approved for neighboring parcels due to the topography and established development patterns. The Board also emphasized the importance of maintaining an easement for access and confirmed that emergency vehicle passage would not be obstructed.

No comments or objections were received from neighboring property owners or the public.

Ms. Lengel made a motion to approve the carport to be closer to a primary roadway. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

VAR-25-033 – James Francis, Paw Paw Township

Request: Variance to place a pool closer to the side property line than permitted in an R2 zoning district.

Mr. Campbell presented the request concerning property located at 225 S West Street in Roann. The petitioner had installed a 15-foot round above-ground pool with a surrounding deck. Due to the lot's size and the presence of mature trees, the pool and deck were situated approximately eight feet from the side property line, where 13 feet is required.

The petitioner explained that the pool's placement was constrained by tree roots and yard layout. He confirmed that the pool walls were 52 inches in height, meeting the state requirement for a barrier, and that the deck would be gated and latched for safety. Mr. Francis noted that fencing requirements were met through the pool design and deck access per his insurance company.

Board members asked about neighbor concerns. The petitioner stated that he had spoken with adjoining neighbors, who had no objections, and that one neighbor's garage slightly encroached into his property. Staff noted that a neighboring structure was close, but aggregate distance requirements were not triggered in this case.

No remonstrance was received, and no audience members spoke in opposition.

Mr. Dale made a motion to approve the variance request to place a pool closer to a side property line than permitted. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The Motion carried.

6. Staff Reports

Complaints Update

Mr. Campbell provided an update on zoning complaints for 2025. A total of 91 complaints had been worked during the year, including 59 carried over from 2024 and 32 new cases. Of these, 35 complaints remained active, 12 were in legal proceedings, and 2 were being addressed under unsafe premise orders. Sixteen properties were being monitored but not formally classified as active complaints.

Mr. Campbell reported that 18 complaints from 2024 had been closed, along with 8 of the 2025 complaints. Many of the cases presented during the evening's docket originated from reassessment notices and were resolved through variances approved by the Board. Mr. Campbell emphasized that public education continues to be an important component of enforcement, given the county's lack of a dedicated building department.

Board members expressed appreciation for the progress and noted that continued ordinance revisions may help reduce the need for variances in common residential situations, such as small-lot setbacks.

7. Other Business

No additional business was brought before the Board.

Mr. Vogel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Lengel seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Others Present: Colleen Hollenback, Ann Meyer, Steve Hicks, Paula Burcroff, Tom Christman, Jon Engle, Lavonne Sparling, Barb Dook, Tim Moroney, Susie Veverka, Bonnie Meredith, Bruce Pollard, Kelsie Silvers, Matthew Steiner, Clark Steiner, Austin Young, Katie Pratt, Jamie Francis, Conner Nash via zoom.

(bac)