



**BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
(December 15, 2025 Meeting)**

STAFF REPORT

Docket No. / Project Title: BCU-2025-006 (Chris & Jessica Stevens)
Staff: Melissa Begley

Applicant: Chris & Jessica Stevens
Property Size: 47 Acres
Zoning: AG (Agriculture: General)
Location: 3335 South Whitehorse Road, in Harrison Township

Background Summary:

The applicant has indicated that the proposed conditional use will allow a shared housing facility (a short term rental) for up to 10 individuals.

Key Issue Summary:

The following key issue(s) should be resolved through the consideration of this application: None

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:

Approval, all criteria have been met. Approval shall include a condition that the address numbers be posted visibly at the driveway entrance.

Zoning District Intent:

The intent of the AG (Agriculture: General) zoning district is as follows: to provide areas for a mixture of agricultural and residential land uses. This mixture is intended to support the long-term viability of agricultural operations, while also allowing increased nonagricultural development in areas adjacent to developed infrastructure. This district should be used to provide unique, rural housing options and the future ability to extend urban infrastructure.

Current Property Information:	
Land Use:	Single-family residential
Site Features:	A single family dwelling, 2 accessory structures, a pond and woods
Flood Hazards:	No flood hazards exist on the property
Street/Road Frontage:	Whitehorse Road (Collector)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	Land Use:
North:	AG (Agriculture: General)	Large lot single-family residential
South:	AG (Agriculture: General)	Large lot single-family residential
East:	AG (Agriculture: General)	Large lot single-family residential
West:	AG (Agriculture: General)	Large lot single-family residential

Interdepartmental Review:	
County Engineer:	No concerns.
Code Enforcement:	No concerns.
County Fire:	No concerns.

Planning Consideration(s):

The following general site considerations, planning concepts, and other facts should be considered in the review of this application:

1. The applicant is proposing a conditional use to allow a short term rental home under the Zoning Ordinance definition for a shared housing facility within the AG (Agriculture: General) zoning district. Shared housing facilities are only permitted within this zoning district by conditional use.
2. Shared housing facilities are defined as a dwelling unit occupied as a single housekeeping unit, and therefore using common facilities for cooking, sanitation, and gathering by more than 5 adults, any one of which is not related to the others by blood or marriage. The definition of a shared housing facility also includes a boarding house, rooming house, co-housing facility, housing co-operative, and other similar facilities; however, the application and any approval is limited to the short-term rental and does not include these other uses.
3. The applicant has indicated that the home, on a 47 acre lot, will have a maximum capacity of 10 persons. A total of 10 parking spaces are provided on site.
4. Whitehorse Road is a winding collector road and is approximately 20 feet in width. There are approximately a dozen residential driveways that are accessed from Whitehorse Road between the subject property and 170 South to the north.
5. When using a mapping application on a mobile device, the subject property was identified and the given directions were correct to arrive at the site.
6. The area is made up of a mix of large wooded single family residential properties. The nearest house to the short term rental house is 366 feet to the northeast, but is visually separated by existing vegetation and slight topography changes. The property directly to the south is also owned by the applicant and there is an associated request to allow a shared housing facility for that property also.
7. The applicant has indicated that there would be restrictions regarding usage, including no parties, ATVs will be permitted for trail riding, no fireworks or discharge of firearms. The applicant has also noted quiet hours will be from 10pm to 8am.

Comprehensive Plan Consideration(s):

The Future Land Use Map indicates the future use of this property as general rural district.

The following Comprehensive Plan goal(s) and/or policy(ies) apply to this application:

1. **Goal 3:** Maintain rural neighborhoods, establish appropriate new neighborhoods, and revitalize existing rural towns and villages
2. **Goal 4:** Create stable residential neighborhoods that are safe, healthy, socially satisfying and retain their economic value.
3. **Goal 6:** Ensure wise and efficient use of limited and non-renewable resources including but not limited to capital and land.
4. **Policy 13-A:** Encourage proper maintenance of buildings and grounds, to promote economic stability, health, and safety.

Provisional Findings of Fact/Decision Criteria

Section 12.4(D) of the Zoning Ordinance permits the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow conditional uses that meet the criteria listed below. The Board may impose reasonable conditions as part of an approval.

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

Provisional Findings: Neither the County Highway Department, Code Enforcement Department, nor County Fire Inspector indicated any concerns regarding traffic, nor building issues. *This criterion has been met.*

2. **The development of the property will be consistent with the intent of the development standards established by the Zoning Ordinance for similar uses.**

Provisional Findings: All development standards common to single-family homes are met and the applicant has demonstrated the availability of adequate parking on-site for the proposed occupancy of the short-term rental. *This criterion has been met.*

3. **Granting the conditional use will not be contrary to the general purposes served by the Zoning Ordinance, and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the same zoning district and vicinity.**

Provisional Findings: For the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance, the short term rental is only distinguished from the adjacent homes by its proposed increased occupancy. The applicants have demonstrated that adequate parking to accommodate the proposed maximum occupancy can be provided. The nearest residence is visually separated by existing vegetation and topography. If prominent address numbers are placed at the driveway entrance to the property to ensure renters can locate the property, *this criterion has been met.*

4. **The proposed use will be consistent with the character of the zoning district in which it is located and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.**

Provisional Findings: The Comprehensive Plan encourages maintaining rural neighborhoods. The property will retain its appearance and general function as a single-family home. Given the large lot sizes and mature woods in the area, the increased number of vehicles and occupancy at this property should not alter the residential character of the area. *This criterion has been met.*

Board of Zoning Appeals Options:

In reviewing a request for conditional use the Board may (1) approve the petition as proposed, (2) approve the petition with conditions, (3) continue the petition to a future meeting of the Board, or (4) deny the petition (with or without prejudice). Failure to achieve a quorum or lack of a positive vote on a motion results in an automatic continuance to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Property / Location Information:

Property Address (if an address has been assigned): 3335 S. White horse Nashville
(number) (street) (city)

or Parcel Number(s): _____

or General Location: _____
(a street corner, subdivision lot number(s), etc.)

Conditional Use Criteria:

The Columbus & Bartholomew County Zoning Ordinance establishes specific criteria that each must be met in order for a conditional use to be approved. Describe how the conditional use requested meets each of the following criteria.

1. **The approval of the conditional use will not be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.** For example: What harm could come from approving the conditional use? Would it create any public safety issues? Why or why not?

This home is in a rural area with little traffic. Offset from the road with no visible neighbors. Plenty of space for parking on-site for up to 10+ vehicles.

2. **The development of the property will be consistent with the intent of the development standards established by the Zoning Ordinance for similar uses.** For example: Will the conditional use be able to meet minimum building setbacks, parking standards, and other requirements? If not, are variances being sought to address those items?

We plan to ~~rent~~ have the homes managed by Hills o' Brown which has extensive knowledge + experience w/ short term rentals.

3. **Granting the conditional use will not be contrary to the general purposes served by the Zoning Ordinance, and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the same zoning district and vicinity.** For example: The property is zoned _____. Are there risks that the conditional use will cause harm to the neighbors' ability to use and enjoy their property? Is there reason to believe that the conditional use will cause harm to neighboring property values?

The 47 acre property will keep guests from encroaching on or even near other properties. Noise restrictions will be enforced as per local law. Hunting will not be permitted for these rentals.

4. **The conditional use will be consistent with the character of the zoning district in which it is located and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.** Will the conditional use change the character of the area? Will it involve a building, operation, or features that are significantly different than what is common to the zoning district? If the property is located in the jurisdiction of the City of Columbus visit <https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/>. If the property is in the jurisdiction of Bartholomew County visit <https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/comprehensive-county-plans/>. Include statements or concepts that support the request.

The short term rentals will allow us to maintain the land and protect it from future development. This property will give access for guests to get back to nature in this beautiful wooded setting.