MINUTES
CITY OF COLUMBUS BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026, 6:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
123 WASHINGTON STREET
COLUMBUS, INDIANA

Members in Person: Hillary Maple, Charles "Chuck" Doup, Zack Ellison, Michael Kinder, and Grant Hale

Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Melissa Begley, Kyra Behrman, Desiree Aldrich, Janie Meek, and Austin Whitted (Deputy City Attorney)

Mr. Ellison opened the meeting with a brief explanation of the board and its responsibilities. Proof of adequate public notice for all cases on the agenda was confirmed.

Mr. Whitted (Deputy City Attorney) administered an oath to all in attendance who would be speaking.

OLD BUSINESS REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

None

NEW BUSINES REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

BZA-26-11: MAC Properties (Use Variance) – A request by MAC Properties for a use variance to allow the expansion of a contractor's office/workshop in the AP (Agriculture: Preferred) zoning district. The property is located directly south of 2346 North 200 West, in Columbus Township.

Ms. Begley presented for the Planning Department.

Mr. Ellison asked if they would be combining the sites. Ms. Begley stated that they have already submitted a plat to combine the lots but need this variance approval to continue.

Mr. Kinder stated that Mr. Cusack received a conditional use variance approval in 2008 for CCI Roofing and Insulation Systems to operate the business. Ms. Begley stated that the lot at 2346 North 200 West was zoned for business when it was in the county jurisdiction. When it came under the city's jurisdiction, the property was zoned to Agriculture: Preferred (AP), which made the business legal non-conforming. Mr. Kinder asked if the only alternative to the variance request would be rezoning to something that permits a contractor's office/workshop. Ms. Begley stated that rezoning is not an avenue the Planning Department would recommend for this type of request.

Fred Cusack, 8700 West Georgetown Road, represented the applicant. Mr. Cusack stated that the land may not be unique, but the business is. This is an existing family-owned business that has been operating at this location for many years. He added that in today's market, it is very difficult to find a larger property with an existing building that would fit and be affordable. He added that all of the costs associated with moving a business can really take a toll on a small business owner. He stated that he wants to maintain the integrity of this family-owned business and meet the needs of his customers.

Mr. Doup asked Mr. Cusack if he was aware of the staff's recommendations for commitments if the request is approved. Mr. Cusack stated that he was aware of those commitments and did not have a problem with them.

Mr. Ellison asked if the applicant owned the surrounding farmland. Mr. Cusack stated that he did not, but was holding a purchase agreement with Mr. Arnholt, who does own the surrounding farmland, to purchase the requested area for his expansion.

Mr. Ellison opened the meeting to public comment.

No one from the public attending in person requested to speak.

Mr. Ellison closed the meeting to public comment.

Motion: Mr. Doup made a motion to approve the request, including the 3 commitments recommended in the staff report. Mr. Doup stated that he agrees with the staff findings that criteria #1, #2, #4, and #5 have been met. He stated that criterion #3 has been met based on the applicant's testimony that the expansion is necessary for this business. Mr. Hale seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 4 in favor and 1 opposed. Mr. Kinder voted no.

BZA-26-12: Sparks Investments (Conditional Use)– A request by Sparks Investments for conditional use approval to allow a shared housing facility for up to 7 individuals in the RE (Residential: Established) zoning district per Zoning Ordinance Section 3.12(B). The property is located at 2204 California Street, in the City of Columbus.

Ms. Behrman presented for the Planning Department.

Mr. Ellison asked for confirmation of the number of parking spaces available for the site. Ms. Behrman stated that the applicant has proposed 6 parking spaces. 3 onsite spaces and 3 street parking spaces. Ms. Behrman added that the 3 on-street parking spaces are public spaces and not reserved specifically for the residents on 2204 California Street.

Mr. Ellison asked if there was a nearby bus stop. Ms. Behrman stated there was a public bus stop a short distance away from the property, down 22nd Street.

Lisa Pein and Christopher Sparks represented the applicant. Ms. Pein stated that out of the 7 residents, there were only 2 who had a vehicle. She added that 6 spaces are more than they will need for the residents of this property.

Mr. Ellison opened the meeting to public comment.

Jerry Simo, 2201 Chestnut Street, participating in person, stated he was concerned with people trying to park on the north side of the garage off of the alley. He stated that he used a measuring tape, and from the garage to the neighbor's fence was 11 feet wide, and the alley was only 6 feet wide. He stated that because of the turn radius, they would be forced to use his, or the other neighbor's yard, which butts up against the alley, to navigate into that space, which would cause damage to those yards. He wasn't opposed to the request, just to the use of that 1 parking space. He complimented the current residents for cleaning up the yard and decreasing the number of police calls to the property since the first of 2026.

Mr. Whitted administered an oath to Mr. Dell.

Tom Dell, 1063 Hummingbird Lane, participating in person, stated he was concerned about people parking in the alley and blocking access for other residents in the area. He noted that some residents only have access to their garages through the alley. He was concerned with the safety of the residents in the area in case of an emergency if the alley were blocked. He was also concerned with the safety of the residents in the shared housing facility, especially those who would be living in the basement area. He also wanted to know who gives approval for gravel to be added along the street. He doesn't oppose the request as long as everyone's safety is secured.

Mr. Ellison closed the meeting to public comment.

Ms. Pein stated that, in regard to safety, they have added signs inside to illuminate the exits, more fire extinguishers, egress windows to the home, and are putting stickers on the windows of every room to indicate someone could be inside. She added that there are also cameras in the common areas to monitor those activities for any issues. She stated that she has 24/7 live access to those cameras.

Mr. Ellison asked who manages the property. Ms. Pein stated that there is an on-site manager for this location.

Mr. Ellison recommended that Mr. Simo put some type of barrier along the alley to prevent people from pulling into his yard. Mr. Simo stated that there is a city sewer line that runs along that side of the alley, so he would not be able to put anything in the ground.

Ms. Behrman stated that the City Engineer's office would make the decision about being able to add gravel near the street.

Ms. Maple asked if the current gravel area next to 22nd Street is open to public parking now, but the applicant is requesting it be exclusively for the residents of 2204 California Street. Ms. Begley stated that the gravel is technically not allowed, and there should be grass where the gravel is located along 22nd Street.

Mr. Whitted stated that in the staff report, it states that if approval is given, it should be stipulated that appropriate approval from the City Engineer's office should be obtained for any of the graveled areas along 22nd street.

Motion: Ms. Maple made a motion to approve the request, agreeing with the staff's findings that all criteria have been met, adding the commitment to obtain approval from the City Engineer's office for any gravel added by the applicant, for the parking areas along 22nd Street. Mr. Hale seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

BZA-26-13: DOC Chumley's (Development Standards Variance) – A request by Eric Neal for development standards variances from 1) Zoning Ordinance Section 7.2(Part 1)(B)(Table 7.6) to allow parking spaces to be 8 feet in width, 1 foot less than the required 9 feet, and 2) Zoning Ordinance Section 7.2(Part 4)(B)(1) to allow parking spaces to be located 24 feet from the centerline of Goeller Boulevard, 31 feet less than the required 55 feet. The property is located at 8030 West Goeller Road, in Harrison Township.

Ms. Aldrich presented for the Planning Department.

Mr. Kinder asked that, seeing in the staff findings that criterion #3 has not been met, does that mean that there is ample parking on the site for the use. Ms. Aldrich stated that they have plenty of green space to the east of the current parking area to expand parking if needed, while remaining within the Ordinance requirements.

Mr. Kinder asked if the setback was on all sides of the property. Ms. Aldrich stated that it is 55 feet from each of the bordering roads. Ms. Begley stated that the 55-foot setbacks from the road are the planned right-of-way and the front setback requirements. The setbacks along the side property lines are 10 feet.

Mr. Ellison asked if there were any setback variances approved of the site's previous use approvals. Ms. Begley stated there are no previous variance approvals on record for this site. She believes that the site's previous uses were noted as legal non-conforming from the 2008 Zoning Ordinance changes. She added that because the applicant is requesting to expand the site, it must now come into compliance or obtain the variance approvals. Mr. Ellison asked if that included the parking area, which is not paved. Ms. Begley stated that it does.

Mike Kirsch, Alan Schwenk (In person), and Eric Neal (via Webex) represented the applicant. Mr. Whitted administered an oath to Mr. Neal. Mr. Neal presented some slides indicating that when he is open, the business is such that the current parking spaces are not adequate. People are parking on the grass, on Goeller Road, and on 525 West, and at the Contractor's Office on the other side of Goeller Road. He said that he is unable to install parking on his adjoining lot because of the waterline and septic drain that runs between them.
Mr. Kirsch stated that he and Mr. Neal have had discussions where, when possible, they will make 8.5-foot-wide parking spaces. Mr. Neal stated that was correct. Mr. Kirsch added that he has seen firsthand how more parking spaces are needed for this site.

Mr. Ellison asked the applicant how he plans to control parking along Goeller Boulevard. Mr. Neal stated that he had put a flower bed there in the hope of discouraging parking on the street. In his opinion, he thinks that adding more parking spaces to the site is the best way to help with that.

Mr. Kinder asked if the lot to the east still had a legally accessible drive. Mr. Neal stated that it does. He is keeping it for use with his future ancillary building. Mr. Kinder asked if Mr. Neal could add overflow parking on that lot and use the existing entrance so no one would have to drive over the water/septic drain line. Mr. Neal stated that it could be a possibility, but customers may have to occasionally walk across mud to get into the building if they park there. Mr. Neal stated that he was concerned about the effects on the underground utilities.

Ms. Begley asked how many seats were in his establishment. Mr. Neal stated he had 44 seats. Ms. Begley asked if 4 more parking spaces would be sufficient. Mr. Neal stated that it would help. He added that he does have more than 44 people there from time to time, so it may not help then.

Mr. Kinder asked whether the shipping containers would be allowed to have multiple uses on that one lot. Ms. Begley stated that the CC – Commercial: Community zoning district does allow multiple uses in one building. There could also be a requirement for sidewalks to go back and forth between the 2 buildings. Mr. Kinder asked what the parking standards were for the CC zoning district. Ms. Aldrich stated that the requirements are one parking space for every 4 seats. Ms. Begley asked how many outdoor seats there were. Mr. Neal stated that there were 2 10-foot, 2 6-foot, and 1 4-foot picnic tables. He was not sure of the official seat count, but however many you could fit at those 5 tables. Mr. Ellison stated that there would be approximately 15 more seats with those 5 tables. Mr. Neal stated that he is having a parking issue without anyone using the outdoor seating.

Mr. Kinder asked how it works when they have enough parking spaces for the amount of seating they indicated but are having issues with all of those 11 spaces being used, and people are still having to park on the grass and on the street. Ms. Begley stated that as long as he meets the minimum parking requirements in the zoning ordinance, he is allowed to open for business. If there are parking issues beyond the requirements, then it is on the property owner to figure out how to solve them.
Mr. Kinder asked how many spaces were on the site now without the additional 4 he is requesting. Mr. Neal stated that he had 17 spaces using the 9-foot width.

Mr. Ellison opened the meeting to public comment.

Tom Dell, 1063 Hummingbird Lane, participating in person, stated that he supports approval of Mr. Neal's requests.

Mr. Ellison closed the meeting to public comment.

Ms. Maple asked if the finger system of the septic tank ran north or south of the tank. Mr. Neal stated that the existing septic system on the east property only has one line that runs down into the drain on the road. He added that it is the line that runs between the 2 lots.

Mr. Kinder stated that in his opinion, the site has ample parking for the allotted seating, but the request to increase the parking is for financial gain to have additional customer traffic, which does not meet the criteria #3 requirements.

Motion: Mr. Kinder made a motion to deny the request to allow parking spaces to be located 24 feet from the centerline of Goeller Boulevard. Mr. Kinder stated that he agrees with all of the staff's findings and that criterion #3 has not been met. Ms. Maple seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 3 in favor and 2 opposed. Mr. Ellison and Mr. Doup voted no.

Motion: Mr. Kinder made a motion to deny the request to allow parking spaces to be 8 feet in width. Mr. Kinder stated that he agrees with all of the staff's findings and that criterion #3 has not been met. Mr. Hale seconded the motion. The motion failed with a voice vote of 2 in favor and 3 opposed. Mr. Ellison, Mr. Doup, and Ms. Maple voted no.

Motion: Mr. Doup made a motion to approve the request to allow parking spaces to be 8 feet in width. Mr. Doup agreed with the staff's findings that criteria #1 and #2 have been met. He also states that criterion #3 has been met based on the applicant's testimony that, because of the site's square footage and the building's proximity to the road, a 9-foot width does propose a practical difficulty. Ms. Maple seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 3 in favor and 2 opposed. Mr. Kinder and Mr. Hale voted no.

FINDINGS OF FACT

BZA-25-4: Brandon Neilsen

Motion: Mr. Kinder made a motion to approve the findings. Ms. Maple seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 0 in favor and 0 opposed.

BZA-25-10 & BZA-26-2: Rollins Property Development

Motion: Mr. Doup made a motion to approve the findings. Mr. Kinder seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 0 in favor and 0 opposed.

BZA-25-13: Burt's Pest Control

Motion: Mr. Doup made a motion to approve the findings. Mr. Kinder seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 0 in favor and 0 opposed.

BZA-25-14: Mona Jalal

Motion: Mr. Kinder made a motion to approve the findings. Mr. Doup seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 0 in favor and 0 opposed.

BZA-26-7: Carl Miller

Motion: Mr. Kinder made a motion to approve the findings. Ms. Maple seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 0 in favor and 0 opposed.

BZA-26-9: Hot Diggity Dog

Motion: Ms. Maple made a motion to approve the findings. Mr. Kinder seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the February 24, 2026 meeting.

Motion: Mr. Hale made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Kinder seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

DISCUSSION

None

HEARING OFFICER REPORT

BZA-26-14: Kiersten Voils (Conditional Use) – A request by Kiersten & William Voils for conditional use approval to allow an accessory dwelling unit in the AP (Agriculture: Preferred) zoning district per Zoning Ordinance Section 6.1(D)(Table 6.1). The property is located at 765 South 650 East, in Clay Township.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:58 p.m.

Motion: Mr. Hale made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Maple seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

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Zack Ellison, Chairperson

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Charles Doup, Secretary