City of Columbus – Bartholomew County
Planning Department

123 Washington Street
Columbus, Indiana 47201
Phone: (812) 376-2550
Fax: (812) 376-2643

CITY OF COLUMBUS
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
(July 28, 2026 Meeting)

STAFF REPORT

Docket No. / Project Title: BZA-26-50 (Four Roots Farm)

Staff: Kyra Ardery

Applicant: Shawn Riley

Property Size: 4.53 Acres

Zoning: AP (Agriculture: Preferred)

Location: 303 North 500 West, in Harrison Township

Background Summary:
The applicant has indicated that the proposed conditional use will allow a agritourism activities at the site. Customer experiences will include U-pick flowers, pumpkin patch, farm animals, fresh produce and family events.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:
Denial; criterion #3 has not been met. Any approval shall have the following commitment and conditions:

1) Right-of-way shall be dedicated through an Administrative subdivision along the site's frontage on 500 West, in accordance with the City of Columbus Thoroughfare Plan for a Minor Arterial, Residential, Suburban street.
2) Concerns about sight visibility expressed by County Highway shall be adequately addressed.
3) Concerns about the driveway and parking area expressed by the Fire Inspection shall be adequately addressed.

Zoning District Intent:
The intent of the AP (Agriculture: Preferred) zoning district is as follows: To provide an area suitable for agriculture and agriculture-related uses. This district is further intended to preserve the viability of agricultural operations, and limit non-agricultural development in areas with minimal, incompatible infrastructure.

Current Property Information:	
Land Use:	Single-family residential
Site Features:	Existing dwelling with small sheds, and barns
Flood Hazards:	The site does not contain land in any flood hazard areas.
Street/Road Frontage:	500 West, (Minor Arterial, Residential, Suburban)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	**Land Use:**
North:	AP (Agriculture: Preferred)	Single-family residential
South:	AP (Agriculture: Preferred)	Single-family residential
East:	RS4 (Residential: Single-family 4)	Undeveloped
West:	AP (Agriculture: Preferred)	Single-family residential

Interdepartmental Review:	
City Engineering:	No response.
Fire Inspector:	Generally, no issues with use, however, improvement to driveway entrance, driveway width and overhead clearance beside and over driveway is necessary for entire length of vehicle drives. Driveway width was measured at eleven feet or less. Regarding emergency vehicle access: Suggest width of driveway with Planning Department standards and overhead clearances at 13.5 feet height.
County Highway	The only issue noted by the Highway Department was Sight Visibility. When coming out of the drive, the trees to the north need to be removed to improve Sight Distances.
County Health Dept:	At this time, this department has not received any onsite application. The "play/bathrooms" area on sketch should be applied and consulted with the state due to being commercial use. State rules should be followed for any home-based or homestead food-use.
Code Enforcement:	No response

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 proposes to provide an agri-tourism experience at the subject 4.53 acre site, which is permitted in the AP (Agriculture: Preferred) zoning district with the approval of a Conditional Use.
2. The applicant states they intend to start small but grow into a place where families can experience farm life. The concept plan shows areas for a vegetable garden, U-pick flowers and berries, farm stand ,pumpkin patch, payment area and areas for their existing farm animals (chickens, rabbits, sheep and pigs).
3. The applicant also states in the future they would like to add a greenhouse / glasshouse for growing flowers and be used for seasonal displays, educational experiences, small gathering events and photography sessions.

4. The applicant did not provide information about the days and times of operation. Currently, it is not known whether this will be open daily, only weekends, year round or certain months and the hours that the business will be open.
5. The site will be accessed from 500 West by the existing driveway. The site plan indicates that a separate 'lane' will be added to the existing driveway approximately 40 feet into the property. The new lane will be south of the existing drive, in essence, creating a one-way loop going east to the parking area and one-way going west (existing driveway) to exit the site.
6. The concept plan shows a parking area, but no dimensions were included for the proposed parking area. The applicant states the surface will be grass or gravel and estimates 25-35 cars visiting the site. The Zoning Ordinance requires parking spaces to be 9 feet by 18 feet with an aisle width varying from 14 feet to 24 feet, depending on the layout of the lot and spaces. Using GIS, it appears the parking area is approximately 0.25 acres. Table 7.2 of the Zoning Ordinance requires one parking space per 1,500 sq. ft. of usable floor area for agricultural retail uses. It appears that parking could be accommodated on the site.
7. County Road 500 West is classified by the City's Thoroughfare Plan as a minor arterial road and can handle up to 5,000 vehicles / day on two-lane roads. 500 West, while in the City's Thoroughfare Plan due to the city's two-mile zoning jurisdiction, is not within the corporate limits and is maintained by the county.
8. A recent single-family subdivision has been approved on property that adjoins the subject site (PC-26-5, SUB-26-20). This new subdivision will require road improvements to be made along its frontage on 500 West and at the intersection with SR 46 due to the increase in traffic.
9. The general area is rural in nature with large lot single-family dwellings to the north and west. Adjoining the site to the south are small lot, single-family dwellings. These lots will abut the flower, pumpkin and parking areas. The adjoining lot to the east is part of a recently approved small lot single-family subdivision. Those lots will abut the pumpkin patch and sheep area. The Zoning Ordinance does not require landscape buffers between AP (Agriculture Preferred) districts and RS4 (Residential: Single-family) districts.
10. No information was submitted for signage. Properties with a primary agricultural use are permitted to have a permanent supplemental free-standing sign not more than 10 feet in height, and 32 sq. ft. in area.
11. If this request is approved, their next step would be to submit a Zoning Compliance Certificate application to the Planning Department with a site plan. The application would be reviewed for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance.

Comprehensive Plan Consideration(s):

The Comprehensive Plan designates the future land use of properties in this area as Agriculture.

The Comprehensive Plan includes this property in the Western Hills character area. The following planning principles for that character area apply to this application:

1. Ensure that new development takes place in a manner that preserves natural features such as topography and wooded areas. Clustering should be encouraged.
2. Allow commercial development only where public sewer and water are available.

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

1. **GOAL A-2**: Preserve & enhance the character of the community.
2. **POLICY A-2-11**: Encourage all new development to be in scale (height, area, mass, setback, etc.) with its surroundings with its surroundings, determined on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. *New development should be designed in a manner that is sensitive to the surroundings.*
3. **POLICY A-2-18**: Maintain and enhance neighborhood-scale business areas, with special attention to the unique character of each area. *Neighborhoods can be enhanced by convenient shopping areas, provided that these are of a type, size and design consistent with their surroundings.*
4. **POLICY B-1-9:** Encourage new development to be designed in a manner which preserves natural topography and other natural features, including but not limited to trees, woodlands, wetlands, streams, ponds, drainage ways. *Natural features and topography are a community resource which should not be destroyed due to inflexible subdivision regulation. New development should take place in a manner which preserves these features to the maximum extent possible.*

5. **GOAL J-6:** Continue to provide for economic growth along this previously designated economic growth corridor while protecting floodway areas from development.
6. **GOAL S-L-3:** Improve the safety of traffic flow on streets and in parking areas

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: While the concept plan shows a one-way loop for entering and exiting the site, which accommodates vehicular traffic and reduces vehicle conflicts, both the Fire Inspector and County Highway expressed concerns about sight visibility at the driveway entrance and construction of circulation lanes to accommodate emergency vehicles. In addition, the entrance to the site is located approximately 345 feet north of the intersection of 500 West and SR 46. The recent approval of the Chase Point subdivision requires road improvements to be made along its frontage of 500 West and at the intersection with SR 46 because of the expected increase in traffic. The Planning Department requests right-of-way be dedicated through an administrative subdivision along the frontage of the subject property due to the expected traffic increase. Provided those concerns are addressed, 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: The proposed agri-tourism use is permitted with the approval of a Conditional Use. No new buildings are shown on the concept plan, but the applicant indicated they would like to construct the greenhouse / glasshouse, which is not shown on the concept plan. Provided the greenhouse / glasshouse will not be constructed within any side or rear setbacks, 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: The proposed use is not uncharacteristic for this rural area. However, without additional details about the operation, the daily retail nature of the operation could have an adverse effect on the neighboring properties. This criterion <u>has not</u> 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 small-medium scale businesses to be in scale with their neighborhoods and for neighborhood-scale business areas to pay special attention to the unique character of the area. The Plan also encourages the preservation of natural topography and features. This criterion has been met.

Board of Zoning Appeals Options:

In reviewing a request for <u>*conditional use*</u> 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.

Record No: BZA-26-50

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Application

Status: Active

Submitted On: 6/21/2026

Primary Location

303 N 500W
COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Owner

RILEY SHAWN & KYLIE FERRY BRETT A & KATHERINE E (JTWRS)
N 500 W 303 COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Additional Application Information

What is your Company/Business/Institution Name (if applicable)?

Are you the owner of the property?*

Yes

Application Information

Application Type*

Conditional Use

You may enter multiple requests for the same application type. If you are also requesting a different application type, you will need to submit a separate application.

Pre-Application Meeting

Have you had a pre-application meeting with the Planning Department?*

Yes

What staff member did you meet with?*

Kyra Behrman

When did you meet?*

06/11/2026

Conditional Use Request

I am requesting a Conditional Use per Zoning Ordinance Section (insert the ordinance section number below):*

3.5 (B)

Please Describe the Proposed Use:*

The proposed use is an agritourism farm that offers seasonal farm activities and opportunities for visitors to learn about agriculture. Activities may include viewing farm animals, a pumpkin patch, U-pick flowers, a farm stand, and other farm-related experiences. The goal is to provide a safe, family-friendly environment while supporting and promoting local agriculture.

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?*

Approval of the conditional use will not be harmful to the public health, safety, or general welfare of the community. The proposed use is a low impact agricultural activity that is intended to be safe and family friendly. The public right-of-way will be kept clear at all times, and gravel driveways and parking areas will be provided to allow safe access to the property. The entrance will be clearly visible and easily identified by first responders in the event of an emergency. Appropriate signage will be used where needed, and the property will be maintained in a safe condition. Insurance will be obtained, and the use is not expected to create significant traffic, noise, or other public safety concerns.

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?*

The proposed use will meet the development standards established by the Zoning Ordinance. All activities, parking, and improvements will be located on the property. Gravel driveways and parking areas will be provided where needed, and appropriate signage will be installed to direct visitors safely. The use will comply with applicable setback, parking, access, and safety requirements. No variances are being requested at this time.

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: 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?*

Granting the conditional use will not be harmful to neighboring properties or their ability to use and enjoy their property. The proposed use is consistent with the rural and agricultural character of the area and will be operated in a respectful manner. The operation will be family owned and family operated rather than employee driven, helping to maintain a small scale atmosphere. Activities will be seasonal in nature and will not occur year round. Operations will generally take place during daylight hours, primarily on weekends and limited weekday hours during seasonal activities. Parking will be located on site, and visitors will be directed by appropriate signage to minimize impacts on neighboring properties. The property will be maintained and improved, and there is no reason to believe the proposed use will negatively impact neighboring property values. The proposed use is expected to be compatible with surrounding agricultural and rural properties.

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?*

The proposed use is consistent with the character of the zoning district and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The property will continue to be used as a farm, and the proposed activities support agriculture and the preservation of farmland. The use does not change the agricultural nature of the property and is consistent with the Future Land Use Map for the area.

The proposed use supports the goals of maintaining the rural character of the community, preserving productive farmland, and encouraging small business opportunities. The operation will be family owned and operated, seasonal in nature, and conducted primarily during daylight hours. The use is intended to complement existing agricultural uses, provide opportunities for the public to experience local agriculture, and contribute positively to the local economy while preserving the character of the surrounding area.

The City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan can be found at: https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/.

The Bartholomew County Comprehensive Plan can be found at: https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/comprehensive-county-plans/.

Applicant Signature

The undersigned acknowledges that the information included in and with this application is completely true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief. * Denotes a required field

Signature*

Shawn Allen Riley
Jun 11, 2026

Welcome to Four Roots Farm 🌳

Four Roots Farm was born from a dream of creating a place where family, hard work, and simple joys come together.

What started as a few animals and big dreams is slowly growing into something special, a place where memories are made, traditions are started, and families can experience a little piece of farm life.

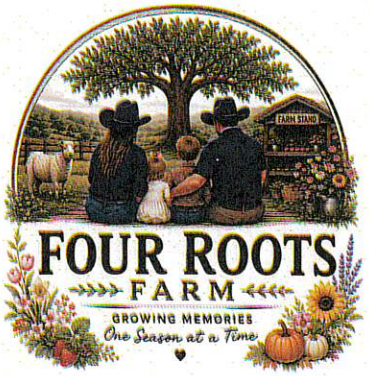
Over the coming years, our hope is to grow Four Roots Farm into a destination for:

🐑 Farm animals
🎃 Pumpkin patch adventures
🌻 U-pick flowers
🫐 Berries and fresh produce
🥚 Farm fresh goods
❤️ Family events and experiences

The “Four Roots” represent the four roots of our family - Shawn, Kylie, Luke, and Ali, and the values we hope to grow deep into this land and into the lives of those who visit.

🌿 Four Roots Farm
Growing Memories, One Season at a Time

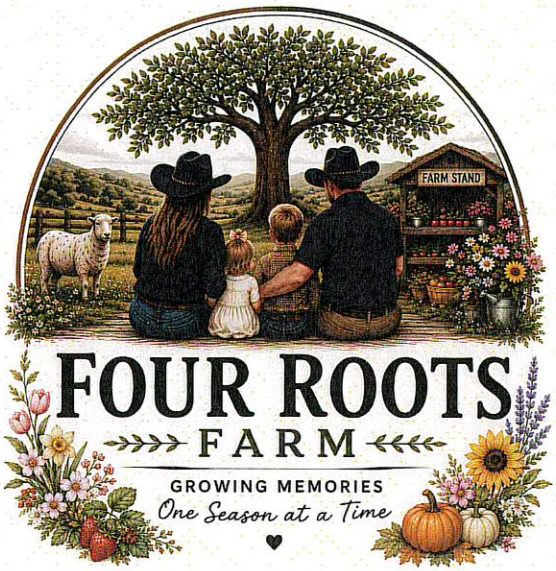
Farm Vision Sheet



- Farm name: Four Roots Farm
- Family-owned farm
- Growing pumpkins, flowers, corn, vegetables, blueberries, apples, and more
- Raising sheep, chickens, and pigs
- A place families get to feed and pet farm animals
- Future farm stand - selling pumpkins, flowers, corn, vegetables, blueberries, apples, eggs, cookies, and more
- U-pick pumpkins / U-pick flowers / U-pick apples / U-pick blueberries
- Educational farm experiences for families
- Seasonal events (pumpkin season, flower season, etc.)

In the coming years, we hope to add a greenhouse that will support flower production while also providing a beautiful space for visitors to enjoy the farm. The greenhouse would serve as a location for photography sessions, seasonal displays, and educational experiences, further enhancing the agritourism opportunities offered at the farm while maintaining its agricultural character.

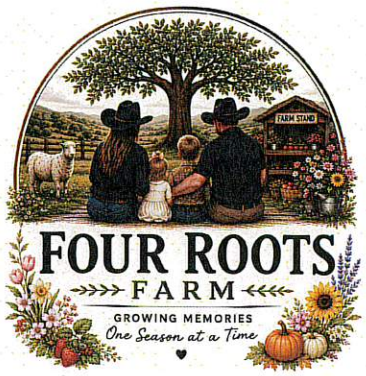
Our Goal



Our goal is to build a small family farm that grows over time. We want to offer pumpkins, flowers, produce, and farm experiences for local families while being good neighbors and following all county requirements.

We are committed to operating Four Roots Farm in a safe, responsible, and family-friendly manner. The safety of our visitors, animals, and neighbors will always be a top priority. We intend to maintain appropriate insurance coverage, follow all applicable local and state regulations, provide safe parking and traffic flow, and utilize clear signage throughout the property to communicate important safety information, direct visitor traffic, identify restricted areas, and help ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all guests. As we grow, we will continue to work closely with local agencies and officials to ensure Four Roots Farm remains a safe and valuable asset to the community.

Parking Plan



Estimated number of cars: 25-35 (not including overflow parking)

- We will have parking in the lot / (grass or gravel) with a few pull off spots randomly
- Driveway will be able to fit two cards at the beginning and they go to a one lane to the lot and one lane to the exit. It will be marked
- Emergency vehicles will enter the same way or traffic will be stopped to clear a way
- Traffic should be be stopped on the road
- If we need more parking we would use grass field for “flowers” that will not be all pumpkins in the fall

Map Colors / Rough Area Sizes

* We are not competing with the big farms, we are just a small family farm. *

Black: Border of property

White: Drive way / Parking Lot / House

Orange: Pumpkins / Flowers / Apple Trees / Blue Berries (Depending on Season)

Yellow: Sheep

Red: Chickens and Rabbits

Dark Blue: Pigs (Berkshire)

Green: Garden (Corn, Potatoes, Tomatoes, ect)

Light Blue: Check out, Bathrooms, Hand washing

Silver Circle (Front Entrance) - Farm Stand

Garden (Green) - .31 Acres

Sheep (Yellow) - .51 Acers

Pumpkins / Flowers (Orange) - 1.13 Acers

Parking Lot (White) - .25 Acers * Not including drive and pull off areas

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N 500 W
Flowers (Spring) overflow Parking
Garden
303 House
Porty Bathrooms
Parking Lot
Pumpkins
Sheep
Pigs
R