

ROLL CALL

Tyson Brooks
Bill Dowty
Tracy Gentis
Jeff Kyle
Tim Rohr

Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr., Secretary

The Board of Zoning Appeals meeting on March 17, 2026, was called to order by Tyson Brooks at 7:05 p.m. All members were present for roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Jeff Kyle moved to approve the minutes from the March 17, 2026, meeting, and Bill Dowty seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 5-0.

OLD ITEMS:

There were no old items to discuss.

NEW ITEM:

B 26-04-05 LANCASTER TWP. SW/4 22-27N-12E Damon & Britney Ho Plaza LLC requests a special exception to allow an 8' x 40' shipping container for storage. The property is located at 2205 N SR 1, Bluffton, IN 46714. The property is zoned B-3.

Tammy Heyerly represented the petition as the owners were unable to attend the meeting. She explained the need for the shipping container. Michael Lautzenheiser mentioned that the City of Bluffton's Fire Department signed off on the container, stating that it would not be in a usable fire lane. He mentioned the suggested screening around the container. Tyson Brooks reviewed the items needed for a motion for approval. First, the shipping container would need to be painted and free of defects. Second, the shipping container would need to be enclosed by a fence taller than the container so that it would not be visible from the road. Lastly, access to the shipping container would need to be from the rear or east side of the property. The floor was opened for public comment, and there was none. Mr. Brooks mentioned a correction needed on the coversheet of the petition. Jeff Kyle asked what would be stored in the container and voiced his concern regarding the continued use of shipping containers in the city. He said that Bluffton is known as the Parlor City and does not want it to be known as Container City. He asked who would actively monitor the proposed structure. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the office would actively monitor the structure.

Conditions: 1. The shipping container would need to be painted and free of defects.

2. The shipping container would need to be enclosed by a privacy fence taller than the container so that it would not be visible from the road.

3. Access to the shipping container would need to be from the rear or east side of the property.

Motion to Approve with Conditions: Tim Rohr

Second: Jeff Kyle

Vote: 5-0

B 26-04-06 HARRISON TWP. SW/4 17-26N-13E Daniel & Sarah Jones request a variance to increase the size allowance for an accessory structure from 1500 sq ft to 2352 sq ft. The property is located at 2701 SE Wabash Street (Vera Cruz), Bluffton, IN 46714. The property is zoned R-1.

Daniel Jones discussed the project and his progress on building the pole barn. He said the variance is to add the lean-tos to the building, which would now exceed 1,500 sq ft. There was a discussion about the active permit and the property's layout. Michael Lautzenheiser said that the Plat Committee approved the addition of ground to their property, making the property even larger. Tyson Brooks reviewed similar approvals with larger properties. Setbacks were discussed, as well as the home's history. The floor was opened for public comment. Harry Baumgartner, Jr., spoke in favor of the proposed variance. The public comment portion was closed.

Motion to Approve: Tim Rohr

Second: Jeff Kyle

Vote: 5-0

B 26-04-07 LANCASTER TWP. NW/4 27-27N-12E Edward M & Cheryl Jean Mason request a variance to reduce the side yard setback from 5ft to 2 ft for a shed. The property is located at 125 Hickory Knoll Drive, Bluffton, IN 46714. The property is zoned R-1.

Edward Mason explained the variance request to the board. There was a discussion of property lines and the property's layout. Mr. Mason talked about all the prep work that was done for this project. Tyson Brooks opened the floor for public comment, and there was none.

Motion to Approve: Bill Dowty

Second: Tracy Gentis

Vote: 5-0

B 26-04-08 JEFFERSON TWP. NE/4 33-28N-12E Luke & Lydia McConnell request a variance to reduce the rear and side yard setbacks from 20' to 5' for a barn. The property is located at 6664 N SR 1, Ossian, IN 46777. The property is zoned A-1.

Luke McConnell discussed the variance request with the board. He explained that they were replacing the existing barn with a new and larger one. There was a discussion at the upcoming Plat Committee meeting about petitioning to add additional ground to the property. The site layout was discussed, including how it will fit within the rural community. Tyson Brooks opened the floor for public comment, and there was none.

Motion to Approve: Tim Rohr

Second: Bill Dowty

Vote: 5-0

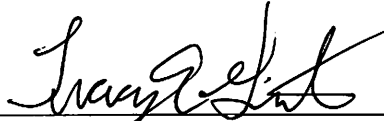
OTHER BUSINESS / DIRECTOR COMMENTS / ADVISORY:

Michael Lautzenheiser reviews the recap of the bills that passed at the state level and went into detail on certain ones that will affect the Area Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals.

The May 26, 2026, Board of Zoning Appeals meeting was mentioned as a possible variance petition might be submitted by the end of the week. An email will be sent by the week's end confirming if there will be a meeting or not.

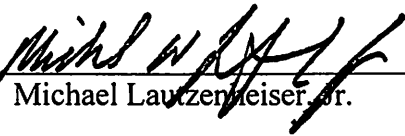
ADJOURN:

Tim Rohr moved to adjourn the meeting. Tracy Gentis seconded the motion, which passed 5-0. The April 28, 2026, meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



Tyson Brooks, President
Tracy Gentis VP

ATTEST:



Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr.