

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS.
COUNTY OF MENARD)

The Menard County Zoning Board of Appeals met on September 29, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. at the Menard County Courthouse in Petersburg, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order and roll call was taken by Chairperson Tom Eldridge. ZBA members Steve Ozella, Dan Robertson, and Karen Stott were present.

Additionally, District 3 Menard County Commissioner Troy Cummings, District 5 Menard County Commissioner, Ed Whitcomb, Menard County Zoning Officer Jayme Ray, Menard County Coordinator Dara Worthington, and Menard County State’s Attorney Gabe Grosboll were present.

Minutes from the August 25, 2022, meeting were presented. Zoning Board of Appeals members Steve Ozella moved to approve the minutes. ZBA member Dan Robertson seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING: (CASE NUMBER 22-4SUP)

APPLICATION FROM SCOTT VARGAS, d/b/a KEN’S AUTO BODY SHOP, ACTING ON HIS OWN BEHALF OR WITH LEGAL REPRESENTATION, SEEKING THE ALLOWANCE OF AN AUTO BODY SHOP IN THE (RR) RURAL RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT.

The public meeting was opened for comments and consideration for Case Number 22- SUP at 7:12 p.m.

Scott Vargas was sworn in for testimony by Chairperson Eldridge.

Scott Vargas, representing himself, gave an overview of his Special Use Permit application. Mr. Vargas has owned Ken’s Auto Body Shop for three years and worked for the previous owner, Ken Britton, for four and one-half years before purchasing the business. Fifteen vehicles are currently on the property. Thirteen vehicles are in working order. Two inoperable vehicles present are personal project he’s working on. The car lot is fenced in with trees surrounding it. Mr. Vargas only works on passenger vehicles and does not plan to bring in semis or heavy-duty equipment. Mr. Vargas as full support from his neighbors.

Upon further discussion, the Zoning Board of Appeals moved to recommend the approval to the Board of Commissioners with one stipulation:

- No junk parts, vehicles

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING: (CASE NUMBER 22-5SUP)

APPLICATION FROM JOE SMITHERS, d/b/a JOSIE’S FARM ACTING ON HIS OWN BEHALF OR WITH LEGAL REPRESENTATION, SEEKING THE ALLOWANCE OF A SPECIAL EVENT VENUE AND PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO IN THE (RR) RURAL RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT.

Joe Smithers was sworn in for testimony by Chairperson Eldridge.

Joe Smithers, representing himself, gave an overview of his Special Use Permit application. Mr. Smithers, his wife, and mother-in-law own Josie's Farm, which sits on 60 acres. Mr. Smithers explained that he and his wife also live on the grounds and do not want noise disturbances in the nighttime hours. For noise control, the East facing barn doors are the only doors allowed opened during an event. Also, during events, the last call is at 10:00 p.m. Sierra Smithers, his wife, owns a professional photography business that will use the barn for her business along with the grounds for her photo shoots.

Upon further discussion, it was decided by unanimous vote to recommend both the Special Event Venue and Photo Studio Special Use Permits to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING: (CASE NUMBER 22-4TA)

APPLICATION FROM JOHN LYONS, d/b/a INDIAN CREEK FARMSTEAD LLC, ACTING ON HIS OWN BEHALF OR WITH LEGAL REPRESENTATION, REQUESTING A TEXT AMENDMENT TO ALLOW THE ADDITION OF SPECIAL EVENT VENUES TO BE ALLOWED IN THE (AG) AGRICULTURAL ZONING DISTRICT.

John Lyons was sworn in for testimony by Chairperson Eldridge.

John Lyons represented himself and provided an overview of his text amendment application. John Lyons and wife, Judy, own Indian Creek Farmstead LLC. Mr. and Mrs. Lyons currently use the venues to host weddings, wedding receptions, celebrations of life, proms, reunions, and graduations. Egg hunts, fields trips and fundraisers can also be accommodated. A wide range of music, from acoustic to live bands can be played in various places, both indoor and outdoor, on the property. On average, Indian Creek Farmstead hosts 14-16 weddings per year with most of the weddings taking place April through June and September thru October. Indian Creek provides adequate refuse storage and parking for guests. Handicapped accessible bathrooms are always open.

Judy Lyons was sworn in for testimony by Chairperson Eldridge.

Judy Lyons stated that she and/or John are at every event and that if they find something to be inappropriate, they will ask the guest to leave.

In discussion, Tom Elridge stated this decision affects the county, not just Indian Creek Farmstead.

Upon further discussion, the Zoning Board of Appeals recommended approval of the Special Event Venue Text Amendment with language:

- To allow venues to host reunions, proms, graduations and other similar events, weddings and wedding receptions, fundraisers, celebrations of life, and similar gatherings.

UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENTS/REQUESTS

There were no public comments/requests.

ZONING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Zoning Officer reported that her last day of employment as Zoning Officer will be October 14, 2022.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no comments from the individual Zoning Board of Appeals members.

ADJOURNMENT

As no other business was brought before the Zoning Board of Appeals, Steven Ozella moved to close the public meeting. Karen Stott seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.