

**Porter County Board of Zoning Appeals
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 16, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Porter County Board of Zoning Appeals was held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, in the Porter County Administrative Center, 155 Indiana Avenue, Suite 205, Valparaiso, Indiana. Debbie Cook presided.

Members present were: Luther Williams, Jim Clarida, Brian Damitz, and President Debbie Cook. Also present were Kristy Marasco, Monica Gee, Attorney Scott McClure, Helene Pierce, citizens, and representatives of the press.

MINUTES:

Jim Clarida made a motion to approve the May 19, 2021 minutes as submitted. Luther Williams seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried 4-0.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

UV-21-0033 – Samantha & Collin Reed, 122 West 200 South, Valparaiso, IN in Porter Township in the A1, General Agriculture District. The petitioner is seeking a Use Variance to allow weddings or special event venues out of an existing accessory structure. Samantha and Collin Reed presented. They have an existing rustic accessory structure that they would like to put to good use in while preserving their agricultural area. Echo Ridge Wedding and Special Event Venue will allow them to do this.

Public Hearing: Debbie Cook asked if any of the public would like to speak in favor of or in opposition of this petition. Debbie Cook also asked that the public address their questions to the BZA while at the same time the petitioner will take notes and respond at one time.

The following were in opposition to or had questions for the petition/petitioner:

Mr. Justin Marshall, 128 West 200 South, Valparaiso

Mr. Brian Erikson, 132 West 200 South, Valparaiso

Ms. Shannon Smith-Angelitis, 236 South 100 West, Valparaiso

Mr. Eric Kretzke, 133 West 200 South, Valparaiso

Those that spoke cited items such as, traffic, increase in crime, lack of parking, hours of operation, hunting around the area may interfere with their events, noise both from the venue and from the neighbors that may affect their events, septic capacities, and the overall quality of life for the neighbors will be negatively impacted.

Samantha & Collin Reed's rebuttal:

- They plan to have security at their events and maintain a safe environment.
- They will not encroach on anyone's property.
- They understand the neighborhood and will not ask anyone to prohibit or hinder their activity.
- They do not know yet how many cars will be traveling to and from events, but they know that it will average to half the number of guests. Example 50 guests will be approximately 25 vehicles.
- 100 West will be the primary route.
- The County will direct us on how much parking we are required to have.
- We plan to have the porta-let trailer at first with plans, if everything goes well, to invest into the property and will have restrooms and an enhanced entranceway.
- We are not changing the property zoning. We are only asking to be able to allow this type of venue in the AG zone.

The public hearing was closed, and questions/comments were heard from the Members.

Q: The venue is an existing structure?

A: Yes.

Q: Has it been remodeled already?

A: The exterior has been, and we will start on the inside very soon. We will seek proper building permits but have only put on new siding so far.

Q: Will you be offering a bar service with alcohol?

A: Possibly. We are exploring options and viability.

Q: How do you get back to the accessory structure currently?

A: There is a dirt path.

Q: Is there water available?

A: Yes.

Q: Have you considered septic, security, fire alarms and prevention, etc.?

A: We have not achieved everything yet.

Attorney Scott McClure advised there are a lot of codes and requirements that need to be addressed before this Board makes a decision. The petitioner may need to go before the Development Review Board (DRC) to get a better feel for what is needed and required by the County for this type of venue.

Motion: Brian Damitz made a motion to continue UV-21-0033 to allow the petitioner time to go before the Site Review Board for review and to allow the petitioner to research more information needed to be successful in their petition. Jim Clarida seconded the motion. A ballot vote was taken and unanimously carried 4-0.

STAFF ITEMS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the June 16, 2021 Board of Zoning Appeals meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Debbie Kerr-Cook, President

Attest: Kristy Marasco