

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
MAY 22, 2023**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Zoning Appeals Public Meeting was called to order at 6:01 P.M. by Mr. William Jarvis at the Schererville Town Hall, 10 E. Joliet St.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken with the following members present: Chairman Tom Kouros, Vice-Chairman Michael Davis, Mr. Eric Kundich, and Mr. William Jarvis. Staff present: Town Manager James Gorman, Director of Operations Andrew Hansen, Acting Recording Secretary Megan Schiltz, and Attorney Alfredo Estrada. Absent was Secretary Rick Calinski and Planning & Building Administrator Denise Sulek. In the audience was Councilman Tom Schmitt.

C. Approve Minutes of the Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting of March 27, 2023

Vice Chairman Michael Davis made a motion to approve which was seconded by Mr. Kundich and carried 5-0.

II. PUBLIC ACTION AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. B.Z.A Case #23-5-5 108 E. Joliet St. – Barkley’s Bath House Dog Grooming & Pet Supplies

General Location: 108-112 E. Joliet St. (Lots 11 & 12, Original Town of Schererville, Block 21)

Petitioner(s): Lawrence A. Jagiella, II – Alisha Gonsiorowski

Request: Variance of Use as required by Ordinance No. 1797, Title XVI, Section 6, Paragraph C

Purpose: To allow a dog grooming and pet supply shop to be located within the Joliet Street Overlay Commercial “Core” District

Mr. Kouros asked Attorney Estrada if Proofs of Publication are in order. Attorney Estrada stated they were in order.

Mr. Jagiella along with Ms. Gonsiorowski from 6135 California Ave in Hammond, stated they are looking to open a high quality dog grooming business. Ms. Gonsiorowski continued they would like to get a variance to operate at 108 E Joliet St., hoping to provide superior pet care to Schererville and all surrounding communities. Ms. Gonsiorowski stated both she and Mr. Jagiella have worked at some local pet grooming shops and they believe these shops are looking to go the cheapest route possible and are not looking for better quality. Ms. Gonsiorowski said they are not looking to skip any steps in the groom, and will include what others do not. Ms. Gonsiorowski added the grooms will include conditioning for skin care, tooth brushing to prevent dental disease, and nail trims to help avoid arthritis; also allowing walk-ins for these services.

Mr. Jagiella informed the Board that they plan to have 1-3 clients hourly. Mr. Jagiella stated they have sufficient street parking with 5 spots available in front of the business; continuing that if parking becomes problematic, the landlord has given permission to use the open parking behind the building. Mr. Jagiella added one of the benefits of this location is that it’s right next to the trail and will have plenty of the customers who walk the dogs.

Mr. Jagiella states that regarding the floor plan, they eventually plan to expand. Mr. Jagiella continued there is currently a basement sink where one of the tubs are, and will be needing to add a plumbing fixture. Mr. Jagiella added that currently there are some issues with the water heater that will need to be fixed; continuing the only other work inside will be sound proofing

the wall that is shared with Gaia Salon. Mr. Jagiella stated eventually down the line they will be adding more tubs and electric. Mr. Kouros asked if there a certain certificate is required for grooming. Mr. Jagiella replied that aside from licensing there is no special requirement for grooming; continuing that down the road it is something he would like to push for to hold grooming places more accountable. Mr. Kouros then asked how many dogs they can take in one day. Mr. Jagiella responded that it is pretty much unlimited since they will allow walk-ins for nail trimming and teeth cleaning; he will have 6 appointments a day with Ms. Gonsiorowski having 10 – making it roughly 3 dogs per hour that will be scheduled. Mr. Jagiella went on to say they will begin taking dogs at 7am until 12pm, where they can “rap up shop” at 4pm. Mr. Kouros questioned and Mr. Jagiella answered, they will not be boarding, and all dogs will be gone by 4pm; making the hours of operation 7am – 4pm.

Mr. Kouros opened the matter to the floor. There being no questions or comments, the matter was returned to the Board. Mr. Jarvis asked how they plan on handling dogs that may be aggressive. Ms. Gonsiorowski states this is something that both she and Mr. Jagiella have specialized in over the years; the best thing that you can do is be nice to the dog and handle them with care so they do not stress out. Ms. Gonsiorowski went on to say that she first plans on greeting and petting the dog, and offering treats that the owners bring in for them to enjoy so they can have a bond with her and are less likely to bite. Mr. Jagiella added that both he and Ms. Gonsiorowski have taken courses on how to handle dogs who are extremely nervous or defensive on the grooming side. Mr. Jarvis asked if they plan on doing any veterinary work. Mr. Jagiella responded that they will not, if they notice anything on the skin or anything foreign, they will refuse and advise the owners to see a vet. Mr. Jagiella stated the only thing even close to veterinary work that they will do is expressed glands, but not internally.

Mr. Jarvis asked about having permission for parking in the back. Mr. Jagiella stated that yes the property owner Jeff Oesterle. Mr. Jarvis asked if he had documentation. Mr. Jagiella replied that no, however he does have a contract giving him power of attorney to speak on his behalf. Mr. Jarvis said that he will be needing something written stating he can use the parking so that it does not become an issue once they get in there.

Mr. Davis questioned the opening of a grooming academy that is listed on the business plan, and how that addition will effect parking along with the regular business. Mr. Jagiella responded that he plans to structure it off of the academy he attended with small classes. Mr. Jagiella went on to say currently his floor plan shows 2 small grooming tables; continuing that he has another floor plan written up, which is his eventual dream plan, with 6 tables. Mr. Jagiella says ideally he will have 3 people grooming at all times, leaving 3 spots open for students. Mr. Jagiella continued that along with books published by the American Kennel Club, he hopes to personally create a workbook for the students. Mr. Davis asked if the business grows as he hopes, would the present parking be able to handle clients, students, and employees. Mr. Jagiella stated he does not feel it would be an issue, and they will let people know to use the back parking as much as possible.

Mr. Jarvis asked if they will be grooming any other animals such as cats. Mr. Jagiella said that aside from nail trims on cats, guinea pigs, rabbits, etc., they will only bathe and groom dogs. Mr. Kouros asked if a client drops off a dog at 7am, would they be able to then pick-up at 4pm after work. Mr. Jagiella responded that is something they would not advise, and will push for them to pick-up earlier so the dog does not become stressed. Mr. Kouros asked if someone comes in at 7am, waits for the dog to be done, would they be out by 8am. Ms. Gonsiorowski answered they will give a window of time, depending on the kind of dog, size, and coat type; and will let them know 20 min prior to them being done. Mr. Jagiella continued that they will have 3 dogs come in, on the hour, with a 15 min grace period before needing to reschedule. Mr. Jagiella continued with there being a lot of local places to visit, they do not want anyone waiting for their dog. Mr. Davis asked Mr. Gorman if he feels like parking or traffic would be an issue in the downtown area if the business grows. Mr. Gorman responded he personally does not feel as though it would, due to the fact no one would be waiting. Mr. Gorman added that if they do have classes, there is both street and public parking down the road at the Police Station as well as the Town Hall.

Mr. Jarvis made a motion for a favorable recommendation to the Town Council of B.Z.A. CASE #23-5-5 with proof of shared parking area in the rear of the building obtained from the property owner, no veterinary service provided on-site, and no selling of dogs or any other animals from this location. This was seconded by Mr. Kundich and carried 4-0.

III. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Findings of Fact:

1. B.Z.A Case #23-3-3 1297 Wildflower Way – Aleksandra Trifunovic
Petitioner(s): Aleksandra Trifunovic
Developmental Variance as required by Ordinance No. 1797, Title XVII, Section 13, Paragraph A – to amend the Developmental Variance approved on May 23, 2022 to allow a 6' high fence to extend 12' off the building line on a corner lot – requesting to add an additional 13'. If approved the fence will be 5' from the edge of sidewalk on a corner lot
APPROVED W/CONDITIONS (3-1) 3/27/23
Mr. Jarvis made a motion to approve which was seconded by Mr. Kundich and carried 4-0.

2. B.Z.A. Case #23-3-4 1516 U.S. 41 – (Proposed: D-Bat Training Facility)
F/K/A: Ashley Furniture
Petitioner(s): S.E. Hamilton Enterprises, LLC – Sean Hamilton
Variance of use as required by Ordinance No. 1797, Title XVI, Section 5, Paragraph C – To allow a baseball and softball training facility within the U.S. 41 Commercial Corridor Overlay District
FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION TO TOWN COUNCIL W/CONDINDITIONS
(4-0) 3/27/23
Mr. Davis made a motion to approve which was seconded by Mr. Kundich and carried 4-0

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:



Rick Calinski, Secretary