

**MERRILLVILLE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2023  
6:30 PM**

Chairman Ric Holtz led the meeting of Merrillville Board of Zoning Appeals to order at 6:30p.m. O'clock. at the Merrillville Municipal Complex at 7820 Broadway, and then led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:**

Members in attendance were Mr. William Byers, Mr. Pete Guip, Vice Chairman Tim Fortier, and Chairman Ric Holtz. Staff in attendance were Building Director Sheila Shine and Attorney Joseph Svetanoff.

**MINUTES:**

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

NONE

**COMMENTS FROM CHAIRMAN**

Chairman Ric Hotlz stated I will call each case by case number. Please sign in on the sign in sheet located at the podium in the center aisle. The petitioner will have the opportunity to present their case, and if you have someone representing you, they may speak for you. I will ask that you come forward and state your name and address for the public record and you will have the opportunity to present your case. After that we will have a Staff Report pertaining to each case this evening. There will be a question and answer period for the board members. Then we will open the floor to the public for comments, not questions. We ask that if you are desirous to speak for or against any case please sign in at the registry in the center aisle. Public comments will be limited to three minutes. The Board will then render a decision either for or against, ask for a deferral for more information or for another reason which we will state. Or the Board will make no recommendation to the Town Council. At this time please silence any communication devices such as cell phones and pagers. Thank you.

**OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Z28Uv9-1123    LANDMARK SIGN GROUP PETITIONER & DUKE OF OIL, LTD, OWNER**

Located at 2080 West 81<sup>st</sup> Avenue

Request: Variance of Use Approval from Section 21-189(8) in a C-3, Highway Commercial Zoning District on .975 acres

Purpose: To Allow an Electronic Message Center

Mr. Jason Moorehead of Landmark Sign Group represented Duke of Oil and presented the case to the Board. He stated that Duke of Oil would like to change the lighting from florescent to LED and also have an electronic message center sign.

Building Director Sheila Shine read the Staff Report.

Chairman Ric Holtz inquired about the design of the sign and Mr. Jason Moorehead gave the measurements of three feet by eight feet for the LED viewing screen and the sign is double sided. He continued that this sign will be data driven.

There was no public comment.

Vice Chairman Tim Fortier made a motion to approve this petition. Mr. William Byers seconded the motion.

There was a unanimous voice vote of 4 – 0 to approve this petition.

Building Director Sheila Shine informed the petitioner that this will need to be presented before the Town Council.

2. **Z29E12-1123**     **ANTHONY BLISSETT, JR. PETITIONER & LETITIA D. GRIFFIN, OWNER**

Located at 5599 Broadway  
Request:            Variance of Use Approval from Section 21-136 on .358 acres  
                         In a C-2, Community Commercial Zoning District  
Purpose:            To Allow a Tattoo Studio with Retail

Mr. Anthony Blissett presented his case before the Board.

Building Director Sheila Shine read he Staff Report.

Mr. Anthony Blissett stated that he will have an employee for the supply store, and that there will be a storage area for the hazardous materials and that it will meet the expectations of the fire department.

Mr. William Byers inquired about the business name and the clients of the supply store.

Mr. Anthony Blissett stated that the name of the business is seven rounds and supplies will be sold to licensed artist only.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Pete Guip made a motion to approve this petition and the motion was seconded by Mr. William Byers.

There was a unanimous voice vote of 4 – 0 to approve this petition.

3. **Z30E13-1123**     **MICHEL PIRTLE PETITIONER & KISHOR PATEL FOR SHREEJEE CORPORATION OWNER**

Located at 6145 Cleveland Street  
Request:            Special Exception Approval from Section 21-136  
                         On 3.789 Acres in a C-2, Community Commercial Zoning District  
Purpose:            To Allow a Recovery Support Service

The Mr. Michael Pirttle presented his case before the Board.

Building Director Sheila Shine read the Staff Report.

Mr. Pirttle stated that the meals will be prepared before delivering, and then will be heated on site. He stated that it is not a counseling service there on site and that his recovery café is State sponsored. There are other locations is the State of Indiana from this national organization.

The hours of operation are 1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m., Tuesday – Saturday. There will be approximately 18 to 22 people per day attending meetings. There are several volunteers that will be on site.

There was no public comment.

Vice Chairman Tim Fortier made a motion to approve this petition for this petitioner only, for this use only, and for this location only. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pete Guip.

There was a unanimous voice vote of 4 – 0 to approve this petition.

4. **Z31E14-1123**     **BREEJ PATEL PETITIONER & PARTH PATEL OWNER**

Located at 8160 Mississippi Street  
Request:            Variance of Use Approval from Section 21-136 on 1.13 Acres in a C-3,  
                         Commercial Zoning District  
Purpose:            To Allow a DineIn Restaurant

Mr. Breej Patel presented his case before the Board.

Building Director Sheila Shine read the Staff Report.

The petitioner stated that he will run the business himself.

There was no public comment.

Mr. William Byers made a motion to approve this petition for this petitioner only, for this location only, and for this use only. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pete Guip. There was a unanimous voice vote of 4 – 0 to approve this petition.

**5. Z23Uv10-1123    ANTHONY WILLIAMS PETITIONER & OWNER**

Located at 601 West 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 6200 Harrison Street  
Request:            Variance of Use Approval from Section 12-136 on 5.908  
                         Acres in a C-2, Community Commercial Zoning District  
Purpose:            To Allow a Storage Facility

Mr. Isaah Williams presented the case before the Board on behalf of his father Anthony Williams.

Building Director Sheila Shine read the Staff Report.

Chairman Ric Holtz inquired that since the petitioner is proposing to have 10 buildings, how many total units is the petitioner proposing to do.

Mr. Issah Williams stated that he is proposing to have 200 to 300 storage units.

Mr. Anthony Williams stated that the proposed project will have asphalt paved roads and there will be 3 or 4 employees and it will have key pad entry, and the project will be well lighted. He continued that he is intending to have approximately 230 units on each of the three acres. He stated the project will be done in phases and he is proposing to start on the Harrison Street project first. He explained that some clients will sign up online, or at a kiosk.

Building Director Sheila Shine explained that the petitioner will have to go before the Board for a Variance of Development Standards petition.

Mr. Anthony Williams stated that the proposed buildings will be constructed of metal and brick and he is proposing to have chain link fencing on the property, and that there will be ample parking.

Mrs. Lisa Avelis of 803 West 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue inquired about the layout of the proposed project.

Mr. Anthony Williams explained that he is proposing to invest \$1,500,00.00 into the project. He stated that he is intending to improve the neighborhood.

Councilman Richard Hardaway spoke in favor of this project.

There was no other public comment.

Chairman Ric Holtz inquired if the project could be done on just one lot.

Mr. Anthony Williams stated that he has invested on various properties in Town and just wants to make improvements to the area.

Vice Chairman Tim Fortier made a motion to approve this petition for this petitioner only, for this use only, and for this location only. The motion was seconded by Mr. William Byers.

There was a unanimous voice vote of 4 – 0 to approve this petition.

6. **Z23Uv11-1123** **HI-TECH SELF-STORAGE LLC a/ka/ HI-TEC STORAGE LLC**  
**PETITIONER & OWNER**

Located 240 West 79<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Request: Variance of Use Approval from Section 21-136 on 2.55 Acres in a C-2 Community Commercial Zoning District

Purpose: To Allow an Existing Self-Storage Facility for Future Owners

Attorney Mark Anderson of 9211 Broadway represented the petitioner and presented the case before the Board. He explained that the petitioner is proposing to sell this facility and to extend this use only and petitioner only to the future owner which would possibly be Global Storage.

Attorney Joseph Svetanoff inquired if the property has conformed to the Town with all current Merrillville ordinances.

Attorney Mark Anderson stated that the client is working out any issues.

Building Director Sheila Shine read the Staff Report.

Attorney Joseph Svetanoff stated that he has never heard of an unlimited use for a retailer.

Attorney Mark Anderson stated that his petitioner will request the existing owner operate at the site, but if Global Self Storage could have the right to have the self-storage business at the location of the existing Hi-Tech Storage site, if the business is sold to Global Self Storage. He stated that the Global Self-Storage would like to keep the property the same, but if any changes are made, then Global Self-Storage will come back to the Town.

Building Director Sheila Shine stated that the protocol is that the future owner would need to ask for a Use Variance.

Vice Chairman Tim Fortier explained that when Hi-Tech Storage came before the Board the Board gave conditions for this petitioner only, for this use only, and for this location only, therefore, if the existing owner wants to sell the property, the new owner will need to come before the Board.

Building Director Sheila Shine explained that the petitioner is requesting storage for the future owner.

Councilman Shawn Pettit stated that it is important that this condition not be removed so that the Town will know about the businesses coming into Merrillville. He continued that when Hi Tech Storage came before the Town during the pandemic, it was approved for Hi-Tech Storage to have outdoor storage pods on the site, but the owner of Hi-Tech did not pull any building permits for that project which would've been \$19,000.00.

Attorney Joseph Svetanoff stated that there could be a condition within the contract to have all governmental approvals need to be completed before the actual closing date.

Councilman Shawn Pettit explained that the petitioner will need to figure out the land transaction. He encouraged that the different Town committees and boards get together to discuss the future Merrillville Momentum focusing on the abundance of the storage facilities.

Attorney Mark Anderson requested that if Global Storage purchase the Hi-Tech Storage property, if they would be granted for this petitioner only, for this use only, and at this location only.

There was no public comment.

Vice Chairman Tim Fortier made a motion to approve the transfer of use approval to Global Storage.

Attorney Joseph Svetanoff added that if the transfer occurs, for that petitioner, at this location, for that use only, and existing use if it doesn't close, will go back to the current owner of the property which is Hi-Tech.

Mr. Pete Guip seconded the motion.

There was a unanimous voice vote of 4 – 0 to approve this petition.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board members wished Sheila Shine a Happy Birthday.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chairman Tim Fortier made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. William Byers.

There was a unanimous voice vote of 4 – 0 to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00p.m. O'clock.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marie Wilson,  
Recording Secretary