

Eddie D. Melton
Mayor



Marco Molina
City Attorney

CITY OF GARY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

Thursday, November 13, 2025 @ 11:00 AM

Conference Room, Hudson & Campbell Sports Center,
455 Massachusetts St., IN 46402

AGENDA

Roll Call

TARYL BONDS - **ABSENT**

FLORZELL HAWKINS – **PRESENT**

REV. CHESTER JONES – **PRESENT**

TOM CERA – **PRESENT**

DAVID FOSSETT – **PRESENT**

MINUTE APPROVAL

Motion to defer the October minutes: Rev. Chester Jones

Second by: Tom Cera

Motion to defer October minutes passed w/ a 4-0 vote

Member	President Bonds	Vice President Hawkins	Secretary Jones	Comm. Cera	Comm. Fossett
Vote	ABSENT	YES	YES	YES	YES

NEW BUSINESS

⊕ BZA 2025-33 – Special Use (Home Daycare)

713 Carolina St.

- **Staff's overview:** The petitioner is requesting a special use variance to operate a home daycare. She has completed public notice. **Staff recommendation is a favorable approval contingent upon the staff conditions.**
- **Petitioner, Loretta & Christopher Hawkins:** She states that the establishing a home daycare will primarily be operated to care for her grandkids.
- **Public Comment:** No comments
- **Questions from the Board:** Commissioner Cera inquired whether a home inspection is required, which it did have and passed prior to meeting. Commissioner Fossett asked the scope of operation, which would primarily

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be for grandkids then expanded to other kids. Commissioner Hawkins asked about the daycare layout which would be operated from the basement, the petitioners live on the first floor, and the second floor is vacant. Commissioner Cera asked whether state licensure was acquired, but the municipal approval is required prior to license obtainment.

Motion to favorable recommend BZA 2025-33: Tom Cera

Second by: David Fossett

Motion of favorable recommendation contingent upon staff conditions passed w/ a vote of 3-1

Member	President Bonds	Vice President Hawkins	Secretary Jones	Comm. Cera	Comm. Fossett
Vote	ABSENT	NO	YES	YES	YES

BZA 2025-34 – Special Use (Wet Processing System)

4900 E 15th Ave.

- **Staff's overview:** The petitioner is requesting a special use variance to operate a wet processing system. She has completed public notice, but is requesting a continuance to improve correction from her home inspection report. **Staff recommendation is a favorable approval contingent upon the staff conditions.**
- **Petitioner, Atty. Scott E. Yahne, Reconstruct Aggregate representative:** The proposed facility will process excavated soil from construction sites, which would otherwise go to landfills. The process involves separating sand for resale, recovering clean fill for reuse, and sorting out vegetation and ferrous materials for recycling. This is done using a water-based wet process that eliminates dust emissions. Water is fully contained, reclaimed, and treated on-site, with rainwater captured to prevent discharge. Trucks will follow a defined safety pattern, be weighed, and have wheels washed before leaving to avoid tracking material onto streets. He continued to elaborate on how the operations fit the seven special use criteria.
- **Public Comment:** Carolyn McCrady, 8241 Locust Ave, raised concerns about the proposed facility's impact on local infrastructure and environment, emphasizing potential damage to roads like 15th Avenue and Clay from increased truck traffic, especially if trucks are diesel-powered. She highlights environmental justice issues for nearby

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neighborhoods such as Aetna, noting that pollution does not respect boundaries and Gary already faces heavy industrial and trucking pollution. Questions remain about truck types, traffic volume, hiring practices, tax incentives, and whether operations will be enclosed to prevent dust during unloading. She stresses the need for transparency on ownership, operational details, and community benefits before approval, while acknowledging the concept's potential value for local redevelopment. Matthew McLaughlin, 3200 Cassopolis St., asked a series of questions as representative

- **Questions from the Board:** Commissioner Jones expressed concerns about how the proposed soil-washing facility might impact water filtration and natural percolation back to Lake Michigan, which supplies local drinking water and sustains native vegetation. He questioned whether reclaimed water and rain runoff could affect the lake's ecosystem and emphasized the need for proper containment, such as cement pads and enclosures, to prevent discharge. The discussion clarified that water would be contained within equipment, with no planned discharge, and that the site will undergo design review and comply with environmental regulations. Additional concerns included evaporation effects, hazardous materials from legacy industrial sites, and ensuring compliance through permits and inspections.

Motion to pass BZA 2025-34: Tom Cera
Second by: David Fossett

Motion of favorable recommendation contingent upon staff conditions passed w/ a vote of 4-0

Member	President Bonds	Vice President Hawkins	Secretary Jones	Comm. Cera	Comm. Fossett
Vote	ABSENT	YES	YES	YES	YES

Director's Comments

BZA 2026 Calendar Dates

Motion to approve: rev. Chester Jones
Second by: Tom Cera

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Motion to approve passed w/ a vote of 4-0

Member	President Bonds	Vice President Hawkins	Secretary Jones	Comm. Cera	Comm. Fossett
Vote	ABSENT	YES	YES	YES	YES

⊕ Zoning Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)

- Corrie Sharp provided a high-level overview of the UDO, a completely new unified development code to replace the current zoning ordinance. The new code combines form-based and traditional zoning standards, introduces consolidated business districts, and adds chapters for landscape, environmental, and wellfield protection standards, as well as regulations for solar and wind farms. It aligns with the city's comprehensive plan by defining mixed-use areas, building design standards, setbacks, and height limits, while also addressing residential updates such as accessory dwelling units and farm animal regulations. The code will merge multiple ordinances into one cohesive document, update the zoning map with an interactive online version, streamline address management, and revise permit applications. Public input will be taken at upcoming plan commission meetings, with adoption expected early next year.

ADJOURNMENT