

MINUTES

Blue Earth County Board of Adjustment

Regular Meeting

Wednesday July 3, 2019

7:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Lyle Femrite. Board of Adjustment members present were Kurt Anderson, Lyle Femrite, Barry Jacques and Joe Smentek. Staff members Garrett Rohlfiing and George Leary were also present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Kurt Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes for the June 5th, 2019 regular Board of Adjustment meeting. Mr. Smentek seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. NEW BUSINESS

BOA 08-19

Thomas & Christine Rahn - Request for review and approval of a Variance to reduce the required Buildable Area of an existing developed lot from 1 acre to 0.5 acres. The proposed reduction in the Buildable Area will help facilitate a future request to split this property. The property is zoned Agricultural and is located in the Western Half of the Northwest Quarter of Section 10, Rapidan Township.

Ms. Rohlfiing presented the staff report.

The applicant was present. He indicated to the Board that he did not want to extend the proposed property line any further into the farm field than what was necessary.

The Township was represented.

Mr. Smentek asked how many acres would be required to accommodate one acre of buildable area.

Mr. Rahn said it would take approximately two additional acres of farm land to create the extra half acre of buildable area.

The Board moved on to the Findings of Fact Checklist.

FINDINGS OF FACT

SUPPORTING/DENYING A VARIANCE

Name of Applicant: Tom & Christine Rahn

Date: 07/03/2019

Parcel #: R48.13.10.300.006

Variance Application #: BOA 08-19

The criteria for the granting of a variance are set forth in Chapter 24 of the Blue Earth County Ordinance, Section 24-48(j). Variances will only be issued when the Board of Adjustment answers “Yes” to each of the six questions set forth below.

- 1. Is the variance in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the official control? All indicated Yes. The stated purpose of the Agricultural district is to allow extensive areas of the county to be preserved for agricultural related uses. The applicant is trying to maintain as much farmland as possible while

giving up enough farmland to accommodate a new dwelling if something is proposed further down the road. Another stated purpose of the Agricultural district is to prevent scattered development. The piece of property the applicant is proposing to split is currently developed with a house that was built in 1875. If a future owner decides to construct a new home, the 3.9-acre parcel would direct the development in a similar location rather than taking more farmland out of production. Therefore, it appears the request is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the official control.

2. Is the variance consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan (also referred to as the “Blue Earth County Land Use Plan”)? All indicated YES. The Agricultural Goal of the Land Use Plan is to maintain the County’s agricultural areas by limiting new development. As discussed previously, the majority of the existing parcel consists of cropland. The applicant would like to maintain as much cropland as possible with the land split that is being proposed. Therefore, it appears the request is consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Is the property owner proposing to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by an official control? All indicated YES. This property has been used as a residential building site for over 100 years. The narrow triangular shaped parcel has caused the need for the variance. No new development is being proposed at this time. This request will preserve agricultural land and will allow the developed portion to continue without requiring a new well, septic system and other necessary utilities. Therefore, it appears the property owner is proposing to use the property in a reasonable manner that is not permitted by the official control.
4. Is the need for the variance due to circumstances unique to the property and not created by the landowner? All indicated YES. Historical photographs indicate that the triangular shaped piece was created by the railroad. The railroad has since been abandoned, but the triangular shaped area of the parcel remains. There would also be significant loss of agricultural land if developed in a different way. Therefore, it appears the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property, and not created by the landowner.
5. Will the issuance of the variance maintain the essential character of the locality? All indicated YES. The essential character of the locality is both residential and agricultural in nature. The splitting of the existing parcel will not create any physical changes. Therefore, it appears the issuance of the variance will not alter the essential character of the locality.
6. Does the need for the variance involve more than economic considerations? All indicated Yes. The applicant has stated they do not have a need for the second dwelling on the farm. In order to preserve agricultural land, the applicant is proposing to split off 3.9 acres. The proposed parcel appears to have sufficient area to accommodate a replacement home. Therefore, it appears that the practical difficulty in this request includes more than economic considerations alone.

There was no further discussion and no further questions.

Mr. Smentek made a motion to approve the variance and to adopt the findings as proposed by staff. Mr. Jacques seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Smentek made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jacques seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Board of Adjustment Chair Date

Board of Adjustment Secretary Date