

Burns Harbor Board of Zoning Appeals

Minutes of Tuesday, February 24, 2026

The Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Burns Harbor, Porter County, Indiana, met in its regular session on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at the Burns Harbor Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by the Board of Zoning Appeals President, Bernie Poparad, at 6:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited.

Roll Call:

Bob Crecelius	Absent
Travis Dunlap	Absent
Jim Meeks	Present
Timothy Minier	Present
Bernie Poparad	Present

Additional Officials Present

Attorney Clay Patton, Building Commissioner Joe Lawson, and Secretary Jill Sherrill.

Also Present

Mark Dutler, Senior General Manager, and Raeann Trakas, Senior Community Relations Representative at Cleveland Cliffs.

Minutes

Minier made a motion to approve the minutes of January 27, 2026. Meeks seconded the motion. Meeks-Aye, Minier-Aye, Dunlap-Absent, Crecelius-Absent, Poparad-Aye. Motion passed.

Communication, Bills, Expenditures

Nothing to report.

Report of Officers, Committee, Staff

Nothing to report.

Preliminary Hearing

Cleveland Cliffs- Developmental Standards Variance

Dutler stated my name is Mark Dutler, and I am the Senior General Manager for Cleveland Cliffs Burns Harbor. We are seeking a variance for more than one storage container on our property here at Burns Harbor. There are currently about 240 storage containers on our property, and that number ebbs and flows. That number is split between contractors and those that we run ourselves. Meeks asked if contractors rent the containers. Dutler stated they do not rent from us; they bring in their own containers. Meeks asked how many Cleveland Cliffs has on its property. Dutler stated we have 144 containers, and contractors have 95 containers. The number goes up and down based on projects going on. Poparad asked if there were any maintenance procedures for the containers. Dutler stated that we track where they are at; there are no maintenance procedures for them. It has not been a safety issue. We have never had an issue concerning a container. We have infrastructure programs that are geared towards the equipment, not necessarily geared towards the boxes. Minier asked as the containers age, do you cycle them out? Dutler stated that they do get cycled out, and we keep parts and tools in them. Minier asked if Cleveland Cliffs had any agreements with the contractors when they bring in the containers. Dutler stated that they must get authority from me to bring anything in. They are inspected on the

way out just to ensure that they haven't stolen anything. From a safety perspective, though, that has never been on our radar. Meeks stated that this board has made a concerted effort to make sure we treat everyone fairly and equally throughout the Town of Burns Harbor on all the zoning ordinances. Why do you feel like you do not need to pay for your storage containers like everyone else? Dutler stated that I believe we are paying for these. We said we would pay for these. We are only seeking the variance to have more than one. Meeks asked whether there is a number you want? Dutler stated that we thought 200 would be the number we'd be at, but we are above that right now. We will be below that in six months, potentially. Poparad asked whether Cleveland Cliffs pays the fees on the contractor containers? We requested that they come in and pay for their fees, but that was turned down by Building Commissioner Lawson. So, at this point, we are paying for their fees. Building Commissioner Lawson stated that it was discussed on the phone. If they are a business in the Town of Burns Harbor, which they are, and someone else brings something onto their property, I would assume or believe that it would be their responsibility to manage that. Whether that is a cost they must charge their contractors or however they choose to mitigate or deal with it, that would be their decision. Trakas stated that we did ask if they could come into the Town of Burns Harbor and pay and bring us the receipt, but we were told that we couldn't do that. Meeks stated that we do not want to be involved in a third party. I don't understand why you can't take care of that out there by yourself. Dutler stated that we said that we would. Minier made a motion to move to a Public Hearing on March 24, 2026. Meeks seconded the motion. Minier- Aye, Meeks- Aye, Dunlap- Absent, Crecelius- Absent, Poparad- Aye. **Motion passed.**

Poparad stated to get with Secretary Sherrill and make sure all the paperwork is right. Make sure you send out all your green cards and everything else.

Good of the Order and Other Business

Poparad asked Building Commissioner Lawson what was happening with the property at 298 Meadowbrook. Building Commissioner Lawson stated that I finally was able to speak with the property owner, and he wants to work with the Town of Burns Harbor. He doesn't want any problems or any more fines, and he will move the equipment. He moved the backhoe, the bulldozer, and the giant rack of tubing. So, he is working on it. He is seeking an excavation permit, so they are going to discuss that at the next Plan Commission meeting. Poparad asked, "What about the house on Salt Creek?" Building Commissioner Lawson stated I received clarification today from the Clerk-Treasurer about what the process would be to move certain funds into the unsafe building fund as we complete the procedure to make that ordinance official. So, we do have a fund for it; we just need to transfer the money into it to allow for demolition. I got current bids for that, and I have given those to the Town Council a few different times.

Announcements

Nothing to report.

Adjourn

Minier made a motion to adjourn at 6:13 p.m. Meeks seconded the motion. Meeks-Aye, Minier-Aye, Dunlap-Absent, Crecelius-Absent, Poparad-Aye. **Motion passed.**

Approved March 24, 2026

Bernie Poparad, President
