

**ROME CITY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**October 23, 2025**

The Rome City Board of Zoning Appeals held their regular meeting on Thursday, October 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Rome City Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chair Kelly Morris.

Members Present:

Barb Tatman

Kelly Morris

Leigh A. Pranger-Secretary

Gerrit Geurs

Members Absent:

Christine Coe

Tom Clifton

Rollcall determined a quorum was present.

Member Geurs made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented. Second by Member Tatman. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried. The minutes were posted on the bulletin board for everyone to read.

Interested Parties in attendance: Town Attorney Dustin Glick, Bruce and Kathy Rietdorf, Pat Filler, Geoff & Susan Newman, Steve Smith, Josh Lash, Vernon Yoder, Orla Bontrager, John Moorman, Dale DeGroff, Steve Reinbrecht, Roger Smith, Todd Stayer, Tonya and Larry Black, Alex Dollar, Attorney Rob Kruger-representing Swaney.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Variance #2025-27**

Dale and Robin DeGroff, 340 Bernice Avenue, Rome City, IN 46784 are requesting a variance from the Rome City Unified Development Code, Article 5.07 AS-05 Lake Residential Accessory Structures not permitted in the lake yard. To allow the installation of solar panels. Solar panels to be laid flat to the roof pitch and primarily black.

Chair Morris called for Mr. DeGroff to present his petition to the board. Mr. Degroff informed the board he would like to install solar panels on the lakeside roof of his home. He then presented the board with pictures of the proposed solar panels on the roof of his home, an information sheet on the type of solar panels and a picture of another home on the lake with solar panels. Mr. Moorman-representing Advance Solar informed the board they would like to install solar panels on the roof of his home facing the lake. Chair Morris asked if the roof was facing south. Mr. Moorman replied yes, the southern facing roof is the best location for the solar panels to get full sunlight. He noted if they put the panels on the back roof it would not receive adequate sunlight to power the house. Chair Morris asked the color of Mr. DeGroff's roof and the proposed color of the solar panels? Mr. Moorman stated the roof is Dark Brown and the solar panel will be black frame with black panels. Member Tatman asked if the panels will be flat to the roof? Mr. Moorman stated yes, they will lay flat. Member Tatman asked about reflection

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of the sunlight, since the house is located across from Sylvan Manor and the Public Access Site. Mr. Moorman stated the black on black will reduce reflection and the panels are on top of the roof angled up. Mr. Moorman informed the board they have received permission from NIPSCO to install the solar into the power grid. Secretary Pranger asked the location of the batteries and the inverter transfer switch? Mr. Moorman stated the batteries and inverter switch will be located inside the basement of the house. Pranger asked about the location of the power disconnect switch. Mr. Moorman stated the switch is located outside on the northeast side of the house. Member Geurs asked why the panels must be located on the lakeside? Mr. Moorman stated the south roof is the best location to receive sunlight for the most hours in the day, second best locations are the east and west sides of the house, and the lowest production side is the north side of the house. Mr. Moorman stated NIPSCO will buy back any unused power at 3.8 cents. Pranger asked if they were aware that SEA1 removed the tax credits from the property taxes for solar and geothermal. Mr. Moorman stated yes, he is aware of the new law. There being no further questions from the board, Chair Morris called for interested parties on Variance #2025-27. Secretary Pranger informed the board she notified the adjoining owners and had no returns. Mr. Larry Black, 330 Bernice Avenue, Rome City adjoining owner to the west, stated he is worried about the batteries and a potential fire hazard due to the houses being so closely built. Mrs. Stephanie Shrock, 350 Bernice Avenue, Rome City, adjoining owner to the east, stated she came to confirm this will be a professional installation. She inquired about the green dot on the packet picture. Mr. DeGroff stated that it is a tree. Mrs. Shrock asked about the type of inverter and how much noise it will emit. Mr. Moorman stated the inverter will be located inside the basement of the home and will not emit noise to the outside. Pranger informed Mr. DeGroff to let the Fire Department know you have solar power. Mrs. Schrick then asked for a glare study to be performed to see how much glare will be affecting the neighbors and the public boat launch. Mr. DeGroff stated his windows will create more glare than the roof solar panels. He noted there will be no noise emitted to the outside and the solar panels will increase safety to the neighbors. Mrs. Schrock asked what type of batteries will be installed? Mr. Moorman stated they will be 51.2V Lifepro 4-Lithium batteries. There being no further questions Chair Morris called for a motion on Variance #2025-27. Member Geurs made a motion to approve variance #2025-27 per the findings of fact. Second by Member Tatman. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried. Variance #2025-27 Approved

Variance #2025-28

Debra J. Herber Revocable Trust, 1144 Highland Pointe Dr., Saint Louis, MO 63131, is requesting variances for the back lot for 1580 North Shore Drive, Rome City, IN 46784. The variances from the Rome City Unified Development Code, Article 2.10, Single Family Residential District Development Standards Maximum Lot Coverage of 35% up to 41% and side yard setback requirement of 10' down to 4' on the east side of the lot. Also, a variance from Article 5.06 AS-04 SR Accessory Structure Standards C. Quantity and Size, 2. Maximum Size of 1200 sq. ft. up to 2080 sq. ft. To allow the construction of a 26'x 80' storage building. Chair Morris called for Mr. Herber to present his petition to the board. Mr. Orla Bontrager-Contractor for Mr. Herber will be presenting to the board. Mr. Bontrager presented the board with a plot plan and drawings of the proposed building. Mr. Bontrager stated the owner originally wanted a 38'x80' building. Mr. Bontrager told him they have to meet setbacks, so the size was reduced to

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26'x80' requesting a side yard setback. Mr. Bontrager stated Mr. Herber has two children and they have their own lake toys that need to be stored. He noted the current building of 24'x32' is full of lake toys. He added the owner has been storing the boats outside because they do not fit inside the building due to the length of the trailers and the height of the pontoon trailer. The current building is too small for the family's storage needs. Member Tatman asked about the size of the building overhangs? Mr. Bontrager stated they will be 16 inches. Secretary Pranger asked if Mr. Bontrager received the office emails regarding the lot being located within the floodplain. Mr. Bontrager stated he did not receive the emails. Pranger stated there are additional regulations that need to be followed to build in a flood plain and she will resend the information to him. Chair Morris called for interested parties on Variance #2025-28. Secretary Pranger stated she notified the adjoining owners and no one returned the form. Mr. Alex Dollar, adjoining owner to the west, at 1565 North Shore Dr., Rome City informed the board his lot retains water all year round and is concerned about the amount of water that will be shed onto his property. He also asked if the building must be that big it will dwarf his home. Mr. Bontrager stated the current building doesn't have tall enough sidewalls for a pontoon trailer to be stored inside the current building. Member Tatman raised concern about the four-foot setback and the additional 1 ½ foot overhang on the east side as a building that size will encroach on the neighboring property. Mr. Bontrager stated Mr. Killen adjoining neighbor on the east side is in favor of the project. Member Morris stated a building of this size will require a water retention plan to ensure water does not encroach onto the neighboring properties. Chair Morris also building should be centered on the lot to eliminate causing more hardship to one adjoining owner over the other. Member Tatman stated the building is too big and should be reduced in size. After some discussion, Mr. Bontrager asked for the Variance to be tabled so he can look into the flood plain and water retention issues. Member Geurs made a motion to table Variance #2025-28. Second by Member Tatman. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried. Variance tabled to November 20, 2025, meeting.

Variance #2025-31

Steve and Cara Reinbrecht, 12312 Cobblefield Court, Fishers, IN 46037, are requesting a variance for 1170 and 1174 Pleasant Point, Rome City, IN 46784. A variance from the Rome City Unified Development Code, Article 5.60, RV-04 Lake Residential Vehicle Storage Standards, subsection 3. Restricting overnight usage for more than two weeks in one calendar year. To allow for unlimited recreational vehicle overnight stays in the year 2026.

Chair Morris called for Mr. Reinbrecht to present his petition to the board. Mr. Reinbrecht informed the board they purchased the property in July of 2024 and cleared the first lot and installed the driveway in the spring of 2025. They were informed by NIPSCO there is a gas easement through the property, and the easement must be added to the plat. He stated he has been working with a surveyor and NIPSCO to identify the easement and have it included on the plat. It has been a slow process. They decided in order to be able to use the lake they purchased an RV to come up on the weekend and holidays. If all goes as planned and they do not have any further delays, they plan to build a house in 2026. Secretary Pranger asked where the gas easement runs on the property. Mr. Reinbrecht stated it runs along the lake unless the surveyor finds something different. There being no further questions Chair Morris called for interested parties on Variance #2025-31. Secretary Pranger informed the board all adjoining owners were

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notified and eight out of the ten returned. Three of those notified had concerns. Mr. Juergen Hinz-did not want to see it become an RV park and would like clarity on a building timeframe: Mr. Reinbrecht stated our RV is the only RV allowed and they intend to build in 2026. Tiffany Parker -Director of Gene Startton-Porter-concerns about the dog and how it is being restrained, how often is the port-a-john cleaned, water tank and disposal of gray water, are the owners the only ones using the RV or are the renting it out, fire control measures: Mr. Reinbrecht the dog has a Halo GPS collar, the port-a-john is cleaned once a week, we shower at friends home and use the water to wash dishes and hands, we do no rent out the property and only our family uses the RV, we have fire extinguishers in case of a fire. Vickie Fiandt-happy to see a family enjoying the lake and the additional boat traffic in the bay helps to keep the water from going stagnant. Member Geurs stated for clarification, the RV is not being rented and no other RV's will be allowed to set up, and this is a temporary solution until a house can be built. Mr. Reinbrecht stated no rental of RV or other RVs on property and the holdup is getting power to the property once the gas easement is solved, they can begin to build. Member Morris stated the building should begin in 2026. Geoff Newman, 1090 West Pleasant Point, lives across the channel, he stated concern for sewage going into the lake, noise issues since they do not have a home and are constantly outside also stated concern, they do not know the lake rules and speed into the channel. Mr. Reinbrecht stated they have port-a-john which is cleaned weekly for a restroom so there is no sewage issue. Mr. Job Ward, 179 Sylvan Avenue, stated Mr. Reinbrecht and his family are great people and he is the one who told them about the property being for sale. They are neighbors in Fishers, Indiana and they have no problems with them. There being no further comments or question Chair Morris called for a motion on Variance #2025-31. Member Geurs made a motion to approve Variance #2025-31 for the temporary RV placement until December 31, 2026. Second by Member Tatman. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried.

**OLD BUSINESS-Tabled from January meeting-update from Attorney Glick**

**Variance #2025-02**

Bret and Jodie Swaney, 6714 Laysan Teal Cove, Fort Wayne, IN 46845, owners of 1498 North Shore Drive, Rome City, IN 46784 are requesting variances from the Rome City Unified Development Code, Lake Residential District, Article 5.66 SB-02 Setback Exceptions Standards A. Exceptions 6. Chimneys. This will allow the chimney two feet into the side yard setback on the east side of the house.

Attorney Glick informed the board Swaney's Attorney requested the appeal of the Zoning Administrator's interpretation be tabled. The parties are in negotiations. Member Tatman made a motion to approve the table request. Second by Member Clifton. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried.

Attorney Glick informed the board that he and Pranger met with Swaney's attorney and Neederman's Attorney to discuss a settlement. The proposal is for Mr. Swaney to remove the garage bathroom and all evidence of the upstairs plumbing; the air conditioning units be moved to the west side of the house and fines will be paid to the Town of Rome City and Mr. Nedderman, and no future variances can be requested on the east side of the house property. Member Geurs made a motion to approve the settlement. Second by Member Tatman. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried.

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**ON HOLD Tabled-Appeal #2025-12-waiting on court date**

Appeal by Larry Weisenberger, 1115 Pleasant Point, Rome City from Zoning Administrator's decision to enforce the Fence standards, 5.23 FW-04 Residential Fence Standards B. Location 2. Side Yard or rear yard in the Rome City Unified Development Ordinance.

**MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

Review of paperwork on possible fence variance. Pranger presented the board with a picture of chain link fence covered in black vinyl. The board stated they like the looks of the vinyl costed fence.

Next Meeting: November 20, 2025

There being no further business, Member Tatman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 p.m. Second by Member Geurs. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried.



Kelly Morris, Chair BZA

Attest:



Leigh A. Pranger, Secretary

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