STAFF REPORT

MADISON COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
November 24, 2026

Petition Number:	**2026-SU-012**
Location:	**2674 S 475 W, Anderson, IN**
Petitioner:	**Jonathan M. Shirley**
Owner:	**Same as petitioner**
Zoning District:	**Conservation Residential**
Request:	**Special use to allow a baseball training in barn as a Home Occupation II**

Special Uses may be approved by the BZA only upon determination that the petition meets all the legal required criteria:

- The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community.
- The requirements and development standards for the requested special use as prescribed by the Ordinance will be met.
- Granting of the Special Use will not subvert the general purposes served by the Ordinance and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the same district and vicinity.
- The proposed use will be consistent with the character of the zoning district in which it is located and the Madison County Comprehensive Plan.

The Board may examine the following items as they relate to the proposed use:

1. Topography and other natural site features;
2. Zoning of the site and surrounding properties;
3. Driveway locations, street access, and vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
4. Parking amount, location, and design;
5. Landscaping, screening, and buffering;
6. Open space and other site amenities;
7. Noise production and hours of operation;
8. Design, placement, architecture, and building materials of the structure;
9. Placement, design, intensity, height, and shielding of lighting;
10. Traffic generation;
11. General site layout as it relates to its surroundings.

SITE INFORMATION

1. The area is zoned CR. The petitioners own two adjoining parcels totally about 4.5 acres.
2. The parcel is not located within a floodplain.
3. Land use is generally agriculture but the petitioner's property is in a residential enclave.
4. The site fronts on CR S 475 W, a local road in the county thoroughfare plan.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

October 23, 2026

Madison County Board of Zoning Appeals
c/o Madison County Planning Commission
Madison County Government Center
16 East 9th Street
Anderson, IN 46016

RE: Letter of Intent – Request for Special Use / Use Variance for Private Baseball Training Facility
Parcel ID: 48-11-29-300-031.000-031 | **Zoning District:** Rural Residential / Agricultural
Property Address: S 475 W, Madison County, IN | **Total Acreage:** 4.4 Acres

Dear Members of the Board:

I am formally writing to state my intent to apply for a **Special Use Permit (Special Exception) or Use Variance**, whichever formal statutory approval county planning staff determines is correct, to permit the continued operation of a private, elite baseball training facility inside the purpose-built 75' x 70' pole barn located on my property. This 4.4-acre parcel also serves as my family's primary homestead and exclusive residence.

CRITICAL FAMILY HARDSHIP STIPULATION

CRITICAL HARDSHIP NOTICE: The subject property constitutes a completely integrated family homestead. It serves simultaneously as our primary family residence and our absolute sole source of livelihood. As principal directors, we have invested our life savings directly into the specialized indoor infrastructure of this building. A forced cessation of operations would trigger immediate and catastrophic financial hardship for our household, directly threatening our primary housing security and removing the essential revenue required to maintain basic living expenses and property upkeep. Given an unblemished 12-year history of flawless neighborhood integration, this variance is respectfully requested to safeguard our home and family survival.

Chronological History & Proactive Due Diligence

In **Spring 2014**, prior to finalizing the purchase of the land, I proactively met with the Madison County Planning Commission office to transparently present my exact development plans to build a specialized pole barn tailored specifically for private, individual baseball instruction. Planning Commission representative **Tim Westerfield** was already deeply familiar with the elite standards of my program, having personally visited and vetted my previous facility operating in Pendleton, Indiana.

Based on that established, unblemished operational history and the large 4.4-acre capacity of the new lot, we received express verbal clearance from the commission representative to proceed. Relying entirely on this authoritative local government guidance, we officially purchased the land in **May 2014** and initiated construction immediately. The facility officially opened its doors in **November 2014** and has operated continuously under the same highly structured protocol for 12 years. While I recognize that verbal guidance does not replace a formal written instrument, I am proactively bringing this forward today to ensure the use is properly documented,

legitimized, and clear on the county's registry.

Strict Privacy Mandate & Zero Public Footprint

Unlike standard commercial recreational spaces or batting cages that generate noise and community friction, this facility enforces a strict privacy mandate specifically designed to eliminate public nuisance variables:

- **No Public Presence:** The facility operates entirely offline. It features no corporate signage, no website, no public booking engines, and zero social media footprint. It does not accept walk-ins or public rentals.
- **Elite Industry Longevity:** As the owner and head instructor, I have actively worked continuously within professional baseball since 1999. This 27-year tenure translates into a highly disciplined, strictly controlled environment far removed from commercial amusement parks.
- **Restricted Demographic:** Training is strictly limited to an elite, invitation-only roster of competitive athletes ranging in age from 10 to 22, practicing under direct veteran supervision.
- **Prestigious Regional Draw:** The facility draws elite players from throughout the state into Madison County for quiet athletic training, generating positive prestige without localized vehicular traffic congestion.

Proactive Property Cleanup & Structural Enhancements

To ensure the property matches or exceeds all current Madison County community standards, we are undertaking an extensive site enhancement campaign. The vacant historical farmhouse on the eastern side of the property is slated for complete demolition by **[Insert Target Date / Pending Permit]**. Additionally, an old red barn on the property line is being fully dismantled. These actions will remove aging structures, enhance line-of-sight safety, and clean up the visual borders of the property, as documented in the attached visual photo exhibits.

Why the Request Meets Statutory Approval Standards

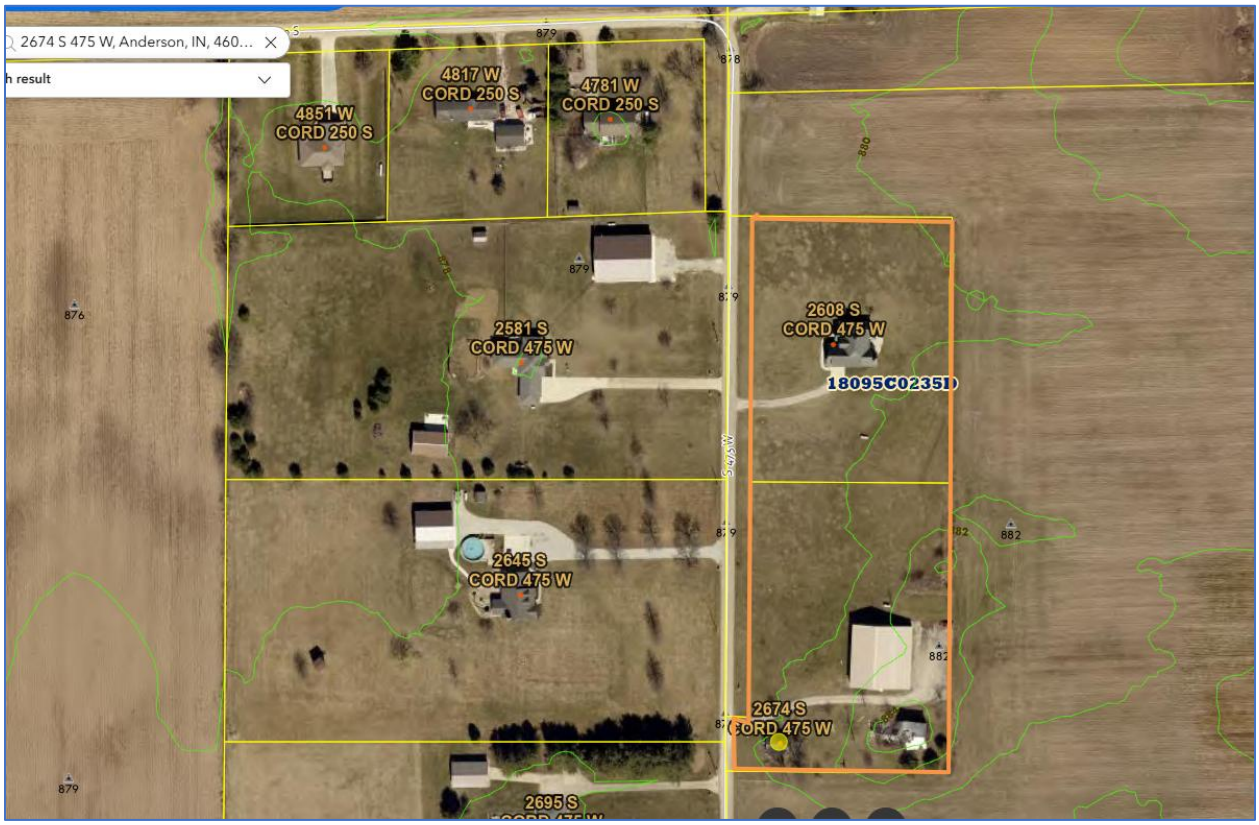
1. **Public Health, Safety, and Welfare:** In 12 complete years of continuous operation (November 2014 – Present), the facility has compiled a flawless record with zero code enforcement actions, zero traffic accidents, and zero public complaints. All training activity occurs strictly indoors within a fully insulated structure.

2. **Adjacent Property Protection:** The use is low-volume, pre-scheduled, and heavily seasonal. Our operational calendar deliberately scales back operations during warmer months when neighboring landowners are most active outdoors.

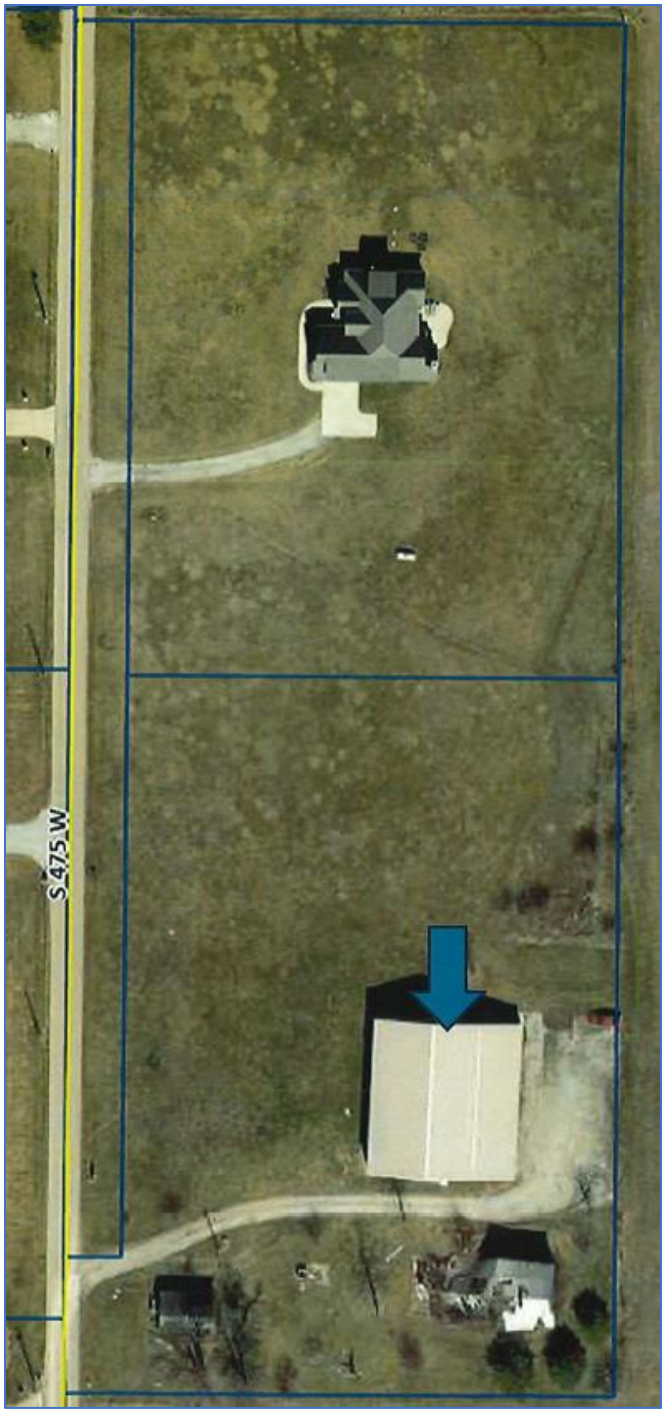
3. **Peculiar Conditions & Hardship:** The 4.4-acre site was selected and the barn specifically engineered and built for this layout, featuring extensive deep setbacks (170' front setback from S 475 W) and natural perimeter buffering. The facility cannot be reasonably converted to another use without catastrophic financial loss, which directly compromises our family's primary housing security.

Respectfully submitted,

Property Owner & Principal Director


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Petitioner Site Plan

ZONING REQUIREMENTS

CR - Conservation Residential District

3.5 "CR" District Intent, Permitted Uses, and Special Uses

District Intent

The "CR" District is intended to provide for the development of clusters of medium sized homes on large lots in otherwise agricultural areas. The intent of the district is to allow for the construction of rural residences and small recreational farms while maintain the viability of the surrounding large-scale farming operations and preserving land for agriculture, open space, and future, higher density development.

Madison County's Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals should strive to establish this district as a transitional area between higher density residential and commercial development and agricultural districts.

Permitted Uses

Agricultural Uses
- grazing and pasture land
- livestock
- agricultural crop production
- retail sales (of crops produced on-site)
- agriculture crop processing (of materials produced on-site)
- agriculture crop storage (of materials produced on-site)
- agricultural products (seeds, fertilizer, etc.) sales, distribution, and storage
- farm implements storage (operable implements used in the farming operation - not for sale)

Residential Uses
- dwelling, single-family
- manufactured home (type I)
- manufactured home (type II)
- residential facility for developmentally disabled/mentally ill
- child day-care home
- home occupation (type I)

Institutional/Public Uses
- nature preserve
- public school (P-12)
- church or other place of worship
- passive recreation trail

Communication/Utilities
- utility substation
- public wellfield/pumphouse
- water tower

Special Uses

Agricultural Uses
- animal boarding
- livestock auction/sale facility
- commercial greenhouse
- farmer's market (for products grown off-site)
- farm implement sales and service
- seasonal farm worker housing

Residential Uses
- dwelling, single-family
- assisted living/retirement facility
- home occupation (type II)
- bed and breakfast facility
- boarding house

Institutional/Public Uses
- park and recreation uses
- police, fire, or rescue station
- government office/facility

Communication/Utilities
- sewage treatment plant
- wireless telecommunications facility/ tower

Business Uses
- kennel
- recreation uses (large scale)
- expansion of existing, legal, nonconforming uses

Industrial Uses
- mineral extraction and processing in urban areas and floodplains as shown on the flood insurance rate maps
- expansion of existing, legal, nonconforming uses

STAFF FINDINGS

Generally, the baseball training generally lasts from October/November through March with about 30 clients/cars per day with the hours 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. The facility operates from Monday through Thursday and on weekends they operate limited hours. As noted, the petitioner had a verbal agreement with this office dating to 2014. Without any documentation, there is no foundational backing for this use in the event issues arise. There appear to be no other issues as the training occurs inside the barn.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the special use to operate a baseball training facility as a Home Occupation II.

FINDINGS of FACT for SPECIAL USE

1. ***Would the approval be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community?*** No. The operation is such that there should be no negative impact on the general welfare of the community.

2. ***Will the requirements and development standards set forth in the district for such exception be met?*** Yes. as presented, they will meet with the standards.

3. ***Will the proposed use subvert and permanently injure other property or uses in the same district and vicinity?*** No. As presented, no injury will occur to surrounding properties in the same district and vicinity. The operation operates inside and has been operating for 12 years without issue.

4. ***Will the proposed use be consistent with the character of the zoning district and the Comprehensive (Comp) Plan?*** Yes. As presented, the conditions and the nature of the proposed project are consistent with the zoning code and comprehensive plan.

Site Photos



View from site looking north



View from site looking east



View from site looking south



View from site looking west