

Town of St Joe, and ETJ Area Zoning Board Meeting Minutes

Date: June 4, 2026

Meeting Called to Order: 5:30 PM

Committee Membership / ETJ Appointment (Ongoing Business)

Angela reported on the status of appointing a Democrat or Independent member to fill an open committee seat. Of four applicants originally forwarded to the County Commissioners and Clerk-Treasurer, two were disqualified for residing across the road from the town's ETJ boundary, leaving two eligible candidates (including Mike and Jerry) who were both registered Republicans and therefore could not both be seated.

Angela had followed up with the Clerk-Treasurer of DeKalb County that afternoon requesting a decision, noting the item had been pending for some time. A board member expressed frustration that the matter had stalled and that it was the Clerk-Treasurer's responsibility to keep the item on the county meeting agenda until resolved. There was discussion about communication gaps between the board, the Clerk-Treasurer, and County Commissioner Jim Miller, who had previously indicated the appointment would be addressed at an upcoming county meeting.

No motion was made; Angela will continue to follow up and request the item be placed on the next county meeting agenda.

Permit Applications

Arlen (Arlen) Smucker – Log Cabin Addition

The board reviewed an application from Arlen Smucker for a log cabin structure (approximately 30' x 30') to be attached to the existing home on County Road 64. The board confirmed the property's location (north side of CR 64) placed it within the board's jurisdiction, verified via the Beacon/Snyder mapping tool, and confirmed setbacks (approximately 100 feet from the rear property line) were compliant. The board discussed and confirmed the process for building inspections: the county building inspector performs electrical and structural inspections, with final inspection paperwork returned to the board for the file.

Angela Snyder moved to approve the permit for Arlen Smucker's log cabin addition. Maddison Vanhorn seconded. Motion carried unanimously (all in favor).

Bob Byrd – Recreational/Event Building (Tabled)

An application was reviewed on behalf of an applicant (plans presented by Bob Byrd) for a large recreational building including a basketball court, kitchen, and two garage bays, with a request for a separate address for the building. The board raised questions about whether the use would be residential or commercial, which would affect the permit type and applicable tax classification. The applicant had indicated he intended to attend the meeting to answer questions directly.

No motion was made; the item was tabled pending the applicant's appearance later in the meeting (see below) and further clarification.

Adam Graver – Livestock Rain Shelter

The board reviewed a permit request for a three-sided rain/run-in shelter for livestock (an addition near an existing calf barn and horse barn) on County Road 56, north side. The board confirmed the property fell within its jurisdiction and noted no concerns with the setbacks. The applicant briefly appeared by phone to confirm the request was not associated with any business use and did not require a separate address.

Mary Simcox moved to approve Adam Graver's request for a rain/run-in shelter. Misty Spicer seconded. Motion carried unanimously (all in favor).

Deborah (Debbie) Becker – Combining Two Lots

The board reviewed a request to combine two adjoining lots (105 4th Street) into a single parcel. The board confirmed this was consistent with prior board direction that such requests fall under its review. No objections were raised.

Randy Drake moved to accept Debbie Becker's request to combine the two lots into one lot. Misty Spicer seconded. Motion carried unanimously (all in favor).

Kevin Bontrager (Man Cave / Athletic Building and Storage, with Separate Address)

Kevin appeared before the board to address the earlier-tabled application (see Bob Byrd item above) for a large accessory building to be used for basketball/athletic activity, RV and camper storage, and family/community gatherings (including a weekly family pickleball night). Kevin confirmed under recorded testimony that the facility would not be rented out, operated as a business, or used commercially, and that the request for a separate address was solely to help guests locate the correct building — not for a business purpose. The board also discussed that establishing a separate address would require coordination with the county for mail and fire department (E911) purposes.

Mary Simcox moved to approve the permit for the man cave/athletic building and storage structure, including the associated separate address, for Kevin Bontrager. Randy Drake seconded. Motion carried unanimously (all in favor).

Pending / Unresolved Matters

Lot-Splitting Inquiry (Lynn Reinhardt property)

A caller (regarding a property associated with Lynn Reinhardt) inquired about the possibility of re-splitting previously subdivided parcels for resale. Board members discussed their understanding that Indiana/DeKalb County rules limit the number of times an original parcel may be subdivided (recalled as up to three times) and that there may be a minimum acreage requirement, though exact figures were not confirmed. The board agreed to reach out to Charity or Bob at the Planning and Building Department for clarification before proceeding, and noted no permit application had yet been submitted for this request.

No motion was made; item is on hold pending follow-up with the county Planning and Building Department and submission of a formal permit application.

Property Advertised/Sold as Two Lots (State Road 1 area)

The board discussed a property recently sold at auction that had been advertised and sold as two lots despite county records showing it as a single parcel. The board noted the buyer(s) would need to apply to the county to formally divide the parcel if that was their intent, and confirmed no one had yet approached the board regarding this property. No action was taken.

Gun/Conservation Club Classification (State Road 1 and C60)

A board member raised a question about the zoning classification of a clubhouse/shooting range facility, referencing that a similar nearby conservation club is classified as "other exempt" (property owned by an organization granted an exception). The board agreed to review the applicable classification further, noting a not-for-profit club may be classified differently than a commercial use. No motion was made.

Public Comment – ETJ / Zoning Jurisdiction Overview

Resident Brenda Griffin attended to ask questions about the town's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and how zoning and permitting requirements apply to properties within it, particularly in light of community concerns about large-scale development and burning restrictions. Board members explained that the ETJ was originally established in a 2011 comprehensive plan, but that the county had not consistently recognized or enforced it until more recently, which is why the town's zoning board is now "catching up" on enforcement. It was clarified that:

- Being within the ETJ does not place a property inside town limits or subject it to town ordinances generally — it applies specifically to zoning and permitting.
- Property owners within the ETJ must still obtain final inspections through the county, consistent with other applicants.
- The process is not related to annexation.
- Residents may submit permits locally rather than through DeKalb County directly, which board members characterized as a convenience for property owners in the ETJ.

No motion was made; this was an informational discussion.

Administrative Items

The board briefly reviewed prior working-session meeting minutes (described as short, reflecting a working session).

Maddison Vanhorn moved to approve the minutes as presented. Randy Drake seconded. Motion carried unanimously (all in favor).

Adjournment

Misty Spicer motioned to adjourn the meeting. Maddison Vanhorn seconded. Motion carried unanimously (all in favor).

Meeting adjourned at 6:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Misty Spicer

Misty Spicer, Member

Randy Drake, Member

Mary Simcox

Mary Simcox, Member

Angela Snyder

Angela Snyder Member

Mike Bradley

Mike Bradley, Member

Kloudi Minnick, Member

Maddison Vanhorn, Member