

# WOODFORD COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Woodford County Board Room  
1837 S. Main St. Eureka, IL  
6:00 P. M. Tuesday, June 28, 2022

- Call to Order:

Ms. Krug called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

- Roll Call: Terry Pille, Karen Krug, John Obery and Marty Clinch were present.

Ms. Krug declared a quorum present.

Others present: Erik Gibson and Lisa Jording

Motion to nominate Karen Krug as acting chairman made by Pille, seconded by Clinch. *Motion Carried.*

- Approval of minutes.

Motion to approve minutes as amended made by Pille, seconded by Clinch. *Motion Carried.*

- Swearing in/ Affirmation – Completed for each petition.

- Presentation of Petitions

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**#2022-13-S Panola Township**, filed May 18, 2022, by Truth Academy for a Special Use to operate a Private Christian High School located in the (AG) Agriculture District, on 2.32 acres, Lot B NW ¼ SW ¼ Section 20, T27N-R2E of the 3<sup>rd</sup> P.M. Woodford County, Illinois, and more commonly described 706 50<sup>th</sup> St Panola, Illinois.

Mr. Jimmy Huber was affirmed.

Mr. Huber explained that he is the President of the Board for Truth Academy.

Mr. Huber discussed that they feel there is a need for alternative high schools in the community to give alternatives to public school and to support home schooling parents and provide a co-op experience to help parents get the kind of education they want for their kids. This school would provide an option for those parents. He noted they would have no activities that would be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare. The school hours will be Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Every effort will be made to avoid injury to the use and enjoyment of the surrounding area. These hours should not impede normal operations of the town. The school will add opportunities for family in the district including home school kids. It is not intended for this to impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of the surrounding property. With roads to the south and west and fields to the North and East, school activities will have no impact on surrounding properties. The building has been on site for over 20 years with no impact. The well has been tested and been proven adequate to meet the needs of the use of this facility. The street adjoining the property leads to Route 251 so access to a major highway is available and the property is on high ground, the drainage is all natural. The Health Department report has been provided.

The current driveway into the property is more than adequate to facilitate the expected use of this property. No roadside parking is needed. It is the intention of this facility to remain consistent with the Woodford County Comprehensive Long-Range Plan.

Along with the Special Use permit Truth Academy is requesting permission for a school sign on the south side of the property and a sign on the building. These would meet all code requirements.

The Health Department has been contacted, the current well and septic systems are adequate for the current use. Truth Academy is a private Christian High School teaching grades 9-12. The school will be overseen by a Board of Directors. In the first-year class sizes are expected to be small, they will be taught by certified teachers and growing as enrollment increases.

Ms. Krug asked how many students were expected. Mr. Huber stated they are capping the first year at 20 students, he noted they currently have 2 enrolled. The plan is to have 4 teachers and 2 staff with parents and board members assisting as volunteers.

Mr. Obery asked about the long-term capacity. Mr. Huber noted that the facility is a shed-house, they will do some remodeling. The plan to use the finished portion for classrooms and the garage portion for shop classes and similar

things. They expect to have enough room for several years to come. They noted they will have a vetting process to ensure the students and families fit with the goals of the school. They want to provide a safe environment and adult role models. The state of Illinois has a low bar for graduation, they hope to provide better electives that benefits their future goals and plans. Most interest is from the local area currently.

Mr. Pille asked about off-street parking. Mr. Huber noted they have a triple wide drive; he estimates they can accommodate 12-14 vehicles.

Mr. Pille asked about accepting handicap students. Mr. Huber noted the building is all one level, so it is handicap accessible. He noted they would be willing to accommodate special needs students but at this time they are not ready to support those students, any requests they would work with parents.

Ms. Krug asked about students driving to the school. Mr. Huber noted that students would be allowed to drive at this time most of the students are younger and would be dropped off by parents.

Mr. Clinch asked if they intended to expand parking. Mr. Huber noted that they would look at parking expansion if needed with growth. He noted that they have the acreage to expanding in the event of growth. Mr. Clinch asked if it would be a trade and tech school. Mr. Huber noted it is an option, but no one has asked for that yet. He noted this is going to help the home school population provide a high school experience for the older kids. Mr. Clinch asked about the ability to support growth at this location. Mr. Huber noted that they would address growth as it comes. The goal is to be a benefit to the community. If they need a Variance or Special Use in the future, they will do that.

Mr. Pille asked how they get the kids certified as a graduate. Mr. Huber noted the teachers are certified. They are not applying for the school to be state certified at all, they will remain independent and private. They have consulted an attorney to ensure they meet the State graduation requirements. They will have a high school diploma from Truth Academy. Ms. Krug asked if she spoke with the township or road commissioner about the traffic and if they have any concerns. He noted they have not but would be happy to if needed. Ms. Jording noted that the Township Supervisor and the Road Commissioner were notified.

Mr. Pille asked about after school activities. Mr. Huber explained that they will not have sports teams but would allow students to come to the site and study, there would always be an adult there and only students would be allowed. Mr. Pille asked about the septic, it was discussed that the system was determined to be adequate.

**The testimony portion of the hearing was closed.**

#### **Findings by the Zoning Board of Appeals for Petition 2022-13-S-S:**

- A. Will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare;** Building is in a good location for expansion, there should be no issues with roads or access.
- B. Will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purpose already permitted. The applicant need not demonstrate complete compatibility, but the applicant shall demonstrate reasonable efforts to minimize incompatibility;** There are no close neighbors, it is bordered by crop ground on three sides. There will not be a large student population which could disturb the neighbors.
- C. Will not be injurious to the district in which it shall be located;** The focus will be on the students and curriculum, there will not be evening events traditionally seen with a public high school. No disruption to the surrounding community is expected.
- D. Will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the districts;** It is near a community but not in the community. It is mostly a rural setting.
- E. That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or other necessary facilities have been or are being provided;** Access roads and drainage are in order, there is sufficient room for future growth. It was recommended that the petitioner look into a circle drive and a storm shelter for safety.
- F. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public roads;** Petitioner was willing to expand parking as needed with increases in attendance. It was recommended that the students and staff exit the facility to State Route 251.

**G. Is consistent with the Woodford County Comprehensive Land Use Plan.** This will turn this facility into a productive site and will be complementary to the county.

Motion to approve petition 2022-13-S made by Obrey, seconded by Clinch.

Roll call vote: Terry Pille – *Yes*. Karen Krug – *Yes*, John Obery – *Yes*, Marty Clinch - *Yes*. *Motion Carried*.

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- Other Business to Come Before the Board:
  - Update on previous months petition/s: All petitions were approved
  - Update on next month petition/s: Ms. Jording noted there is 1 Variance.
- Public Input – None
- Executive Session – None
- Adjournment

Mr. Pille made the motion to adjourn at 6:38, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Clinch. *Motion Carried*.

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Lisa Jording, Secretary

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Karen Krug, Acting Chairman

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Date