

RECEIVED

Nov 30 2023

ZHB Case # 240001

MOUNT JOY TOWNSHIP

Mount Joy Township

8853 Elizabethtown Rd

Elizabethtown, PA 17022

Phone: (717)367-8917 - Fax: (717)367-9208

Zoning Hearing Board Application

1. Applicant Information

Name: Lauren and Travis Elhajj

Address: 2038 Creek Road City/State/Zip: Manheim, PA 17545

Phone: 717-579-2099 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: Lauren\_elhajj@outlook.com

2. Landowner Information (if different from the Applicant)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Property Information

Property Address: 2038 Creek Road

City/State/Zip: Manheim, PA 17545

Existing Use: farm/homestead Proposed Use: Rural Heritage Meeting Center

Total Property Area (Sq. Ft. or Acres): 7 acres

FOR TOWNSHIP USE ONLY

Date Application Received: November 30, 2023

Date Application to be heard: January 3, 2024

Tax Parcel #: 460-21943-0-0000

Zoning District: Agricultural (A)

Application Denied/Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Request for Special Exception

Section(s) of Zoning Ordinance for which a Special Exception is requested:

N/A

Provide an explanation of your proposal, particularly, why you need a special exception and for what type of use the special exception is being requested for:

This site is suitable for a Special Exception Use because:

How will the request affect adjacent properties? (Dust, noise, fumes, odors, glare, increased traffic, character of the neighborhood etc.):

#### 5. Expansion of Special Exception Uses

Are there any existing nonconformities on the lot, if so list them:

N/A

Existing and proposed square footage of the structure:

Percentage of Expansion:

Existing front, side and rear yard setbacks:

Proposed front, side and rear yard setbacks:

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**6. Request for a Variance**

Section(s) of the Zoning Ordinance for which a Variance is requested:

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Chapter 135 article IV 135-272 Section D

Why do you need a variance and what is your proposed alternative from the requirements of the Township Zoning Ordinance?

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See attached addendum #1

What physical characteristics of the property prevent it from being used for any of the permitted uses in your zoning district? (Topography, size and shape of lot, environmental constraints, etc.):

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See attached addendum #2

Explain how the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance would result in difficulties or undue hardships in the use of your property, buildings and/or structures:

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See attached addendum #3

Explain how the granting of a variance will not be a substantial detriment to the public good or a substantial impairment of the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance:

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See attached addendum #4

## 7. Certification

I/we, the undersigned, do hereby certify that:

1. The information submitted here in is true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge and upon submittal becomes public record.
2. Fees are not refundable, and payment does not guarantee approval of the Zoning Hearing Board Application.
3. All additional required written graphic materials are attached to this application

Lauren Elhajj  
Applicant Signature

11/29/23  
Date Signed

Lauren Elhajj, Travis Elhajj  
Applicant's Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Landowner Sign (if different from Applicant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Landowner's Name (Printed)

## **Addendum for Request for a Variance**

### **Addendum #1**

A variance is needed to be made to allow for our 7 acre farm to become a Rural Heritage Meeting Center, which typically requires 80 acres minimum. It is already a permitted use by right in our zoning district, but we are proposing that we receive a dimensional variance for the lot size. All parts of our farm will remain as is for agricultural use, including the proposed meeting center building.

Our meeting center would be in a post and beam tobacco barn that could host meetings, birthday parties, baby and bridal showers, educational events, homeschool classes, fundraisers and small intimate weddings. We have restored the farmhouse and barns in a sympathetic way to represent our Lancaster County Architectural Heritage. We also restored the pond and rebuilt dry stacked stone walls. The farm yard is original and to scale, we have no large modern barns, pole buildings or unfitting additions. We have maintained our 1867 sandstone farmhouse extremely well and have worked hard on the property, the landscapes and the gardens to make it a beautiful place to gather our friends and family. There are not many farms that haven't been changed or added onto over the years and we are doing our best to preserve the heritage of the original homestead. By providing us with this dimensional lot size variance, you would be allowing us to share this beautiful and classic representation of a Lancaster County historic farm house and barns with the greater Elizabethtown community.

### **Addendum #2**

The size of the lot is the only physical characteristic of the property preventing it from becoming a Heritage Meeting Center.

### **Addendum #3**

The hardship is that we bought this farm 6 years ago and it had previously been subdivided so that our historic 1867 farmhouse and two barns sit on just 7 acres of land. There is nothing we can do about the current deeded lot size, I'm sure the original farm was much larger. We will need this dimensional variance in order to use the property as a Rural Heritage Meeting Center which on our land is a permitted use by right in the agricultural district. All of the land and buildings will remain preserved, unchanged and will still be used for agriculture. We use our property as it was intended for 160 years ago, a farm. We raise pigs, goats, and grow and store hay that we harvest for our animals and we also have a small orchard.



#### **Addendum #4**

Granting this variance request will not be a substantial detriment to the public good or impair the intent of the Zoning Ordinance, but will in fact help us keep the original heritage and agricultural beauty of our property alive and inspiring to those in our community. We will be able to continue using it for all the same agricultural uses that we currently do and it is because of the agricultural nature of the property that people want to spend time there. We would also like to note that we will not need extra buildings, parking areas or additions to start hosting meetings. We have planted over 150 trees around the perimeter of our farm since purchasing the property in 2017. These trees provide a screen from the neighbors and the road. Events will mainly be small so the amount of cars will be minimal. There will be no more traffic during a meeting than the daily traffic from Tree Top Golf Course that is on our road and just .5 miles away from our property. The barn is set back from the road and when filled with people it is not loud enough for neighbors to hear.

**\* All requirements for 135-272 can be met except for the lot size (regulation D). We will comply to all the Rural Heritage Meeting Center regulations.**

- A. We have a small herd of pasture raised goats and pigs, hay field and small orchard.
- B. There will only be one meeting center on the lot.
- C. The rural heritage meeting center will be owner operated.
- D. Lot size is regulation that we have requested a variance for.
- E. We have no plans at this time to accommodate overnight guests.
- F. All food for meetings will be prepared offsite and delivered.
- G. Fumes, dust and odors will not be created. Noise will not be an issue. If there is live music we will make sure it ends by 10pm. There will not be loitering or wandering, visitors will remain on the farm. We won't be adding extra lighting to the farm, lighting will remain as it currently is.
- H. We will comply with this regulation.
- I. Our rural heritage meeting center will solely use an existing post and beam tobacco barn constructed prior to 1940. The basement of the barn still will contain animal pens used for our sow and her piglets or does and kids. No additions will be made to the existing building. The existing meeting center is located a minimum of 300 feet from all surrounding dwelling units that are not on the lot. The original appearance of the barn and farmhouse are all unmodified.
- J. We have a well drained and long established hay field to park cars in without causing damage to the field. The existing driveway entrance to our home and farm will be used to access the field parking area so there will not be dust or erosion happening when people pull in. We will comply with all handicap parking requirements and parking space requirements per the number of attendees. We will need relief from J. Section 2 because other than the handicap parking we will be parking guests on the grass.

- K. The traffic is very low on our road. We are located far enough away from the closest intersection that no undue traffic congestion will occur. There is good visibility for all ingress and egress of vehicles (see pictures). We will use our existing driveway going into the parking area and that will prevent dust and erosion from happening when arriving and leaving the parking facilities. We will still be able to continue to harvest hay for our animals from the field.
- L. Our events will typically be under 100 guests and no more than 150, which is much less than the 350 limit.
- M. We will comply with this regulation.
- N. Those that use our rural heritage meeting center will be required to provide portable toilets to meet the sufficient sanitary sewer facility requirement. These portable toilets will be gone within 24 hours of the event and cause no disturbance to any of our agricultural operations.
- O. We will provide potable water to all guests through a contractor that supplies such, ie. Crystal Springs
- P. We will only be using 2.5 acres at the most for our Heritage Meeting Center.





Birthday Party pictures and  
homeschool Field Day





Picture of the parking area the day after having 100 guests over for an end of season party for my sons' mountain bike team. No damage.



Homeschool Learning Day Event (top right)  
Celebration of Life Reception (Bottom Left)  
Our Business Group (bottom right)







**Bridal Shower (top left)**



**Lawn Concert Fundraiser for Elizabethtown Mountain Bike Team (top right)**

**Family Gathering (bottom left)**

**Business Group Catered Dinner (bottom right)**











looking to the right out of  
driveway



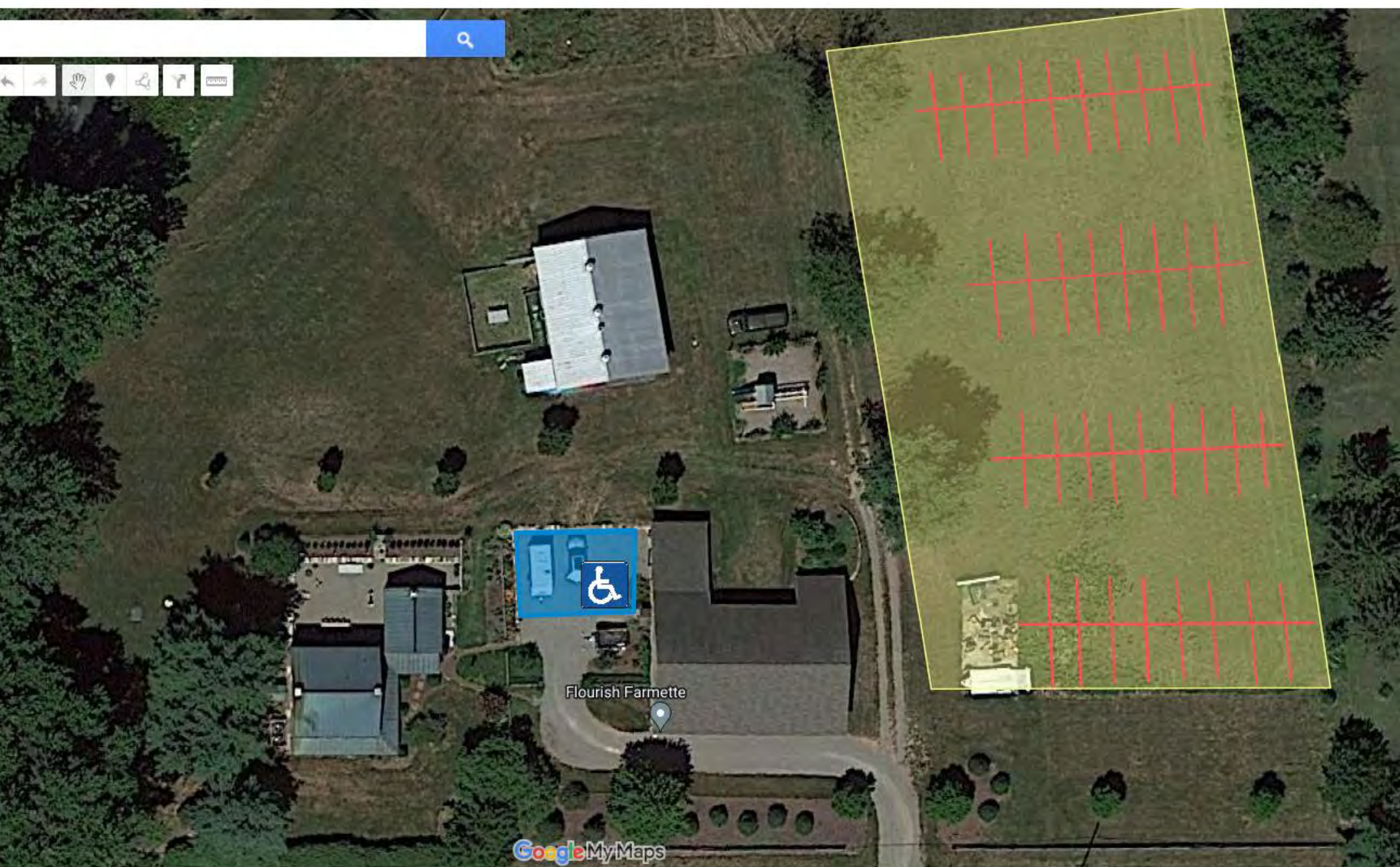
looking to the left out of  
driveway towards Camp  
road intersection



Driveway View from the road



handicap parking lot in blue,  
general parking in yellow





# MOUNT JOY TOWNSHIP

• Lancaster County, Pennsylvania •

8853 Elizabethtown Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022

717.367.8917 • 717.367.9208 fax

www.mtjoytp.org

December 8, 2023

Certified Mail # 9407 1118 9876 5496 0334 38

Lauren & Travis Elhaji  
2038 Creek Road  
Manheim, PA 17545

Re: Proposed Rural Heritage Meeting Center  
Property Located at 2038 Creek Road, Manheim, PA 17545  
Tax Parcel Account #460-21943-0-0000  
Case #240001

Dear Mr. & Ms. Elhaji:

I have reviewed the above-referenced zoning hearing application submitted to Mount Joy Township on November 30, 2023. The hearing for the application is scheduled for **6:30 P.M. on Wednesday, January 3, 2024** at the Mount Joy Township Municipal Building located at 8853 Elizabethtown Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022. I offer the following comments on the application:

- I have printed out an aerial image for reference by the Zoning Hearing Board. You provided various photographs of the property that are being provided to the Zoning Hearing Board as well.
- The subject property is approximately 7 acres and was reduced from being a 12-acre tract via a subdivision recorded at Book J-230, page 073 on April 18, 2007. It is located in the A – Agricultural District and contains a house, historic barn and other customary accessory structures.
- The application proposes to establish a rural heritage meeting center, which is a permitted use in the Agricultural District subject to the standards set forth in Section 135-272. Compliance with multiple criteria contained in Section 135-272 is evidenced in the application's supplemental narrative, however, variances are being requested for three of those criteria.
- I understand that the subject barn contains a restroom with connection to an existing on-lot sewage disposal system. My suggestion is to provide information about the suitability of both the restroom and the disposal system at the hearing.
- The applicant is seeking and has requested approval of the proposed project via Chapter 135 of the Code of Ordinances of the Township of Mount Joy, i.e. the Mount Joy Township Zoning Ordinance of 2012. The following variances have been requested pursuant to Chapter 135, as noted below:
  - (1) Chapter 135, Article XXII, §135-272.D to establish a rural heritage meeting center on a property containing less than 80 acres
  - (2) Chapter 135, Article XXII, §135-272.I(4) to establish a rural heritage meeting center within 300' of existing residences
  - (3) Chapter 135, Article XXII, §135-272.J(2) to allow parking on a vegetated surface

General criteria for variances are found in §135-383.C of the Zoning Ordinance. I have enclosed a copy of §135-383 for your use in preparing for the scheduled hearing. You may wish to have an attorney present at the hearing to present your case to the Mount Joy Township Zoning Hearing Board. Additionally, you should be prepared to testify specifically to the general criteria for variances as set forth in §135-383.C.



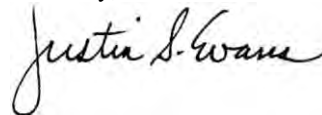
In the event the Mount Joy Township Zoning Hearing Board would approve the application, the Township recommends the following conditions be applied to any approvals:

1. Applicant shall comply with all other provisions contained in Chapter 135 of the Code of Ordinances of the Township of Mount Joy for which relief has not been requested or granted.
2. Applicant shall confirm the suitability of the on-lot sewage disposal system for use by the rural heritage meeting center.
3. Applicant shall gain approval under the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code for use of the barn as a place of assembly.
4. Applicant shall obtain a Use & Occupancy Certificate under the Mount Joy Township Zoning Ordinance for the proposed use.
5. Applicant and any representatives of the Applicant shall comply with and adhere to the testimony and any evidence presented to the Mount Joy Township Zoning Hearing Board at the hearing held on January 3, 2024 and any continued hearings, if applicable, except to the extent modified by the conditions imposed by the Mount Joy Township Zoning Hearing Board herein.

The Township reserves its right to revise, amend and/or extend the aforementioned list of recommended conditions of approval based upon the testimony presented at the hearing. Please note that these conditions are a recommendation from the Township. If the Mount Joy Township Zoning Hearing Board approves the application, they may change or add conditions if they determine such actions are appropriate based on the testimony and evidence presented and submitted at the hearing.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Justin S. Evans, AICP  
Zoning Officer  
Mount Joy Township

Copy: Lauren & Travis Elhajj – First Class Mail  
MJT Zoning Hearing Board  
File

Enclosures

