



BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS DIVISION I

March 3, 2026

Case Number: 2026-UV1-003
Address: 2407 and 2409 English Avenue (approximate address)
Location: Center Township, Council District #18
Zoning: C-4 / C-7
Petitioner: Joseph Csikos
Request: Variance of Use and Development Standards of the Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance to provide for the operation and expansion of a bar / tavern within an existing building approximately five-feet from a protected district (100-foot separation required), and with 15 parking spaces provided (22 parking spaces minimum required).

Current Land Use: Existing Bar / Tavern and Commercial Building

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of this petition.

Staff Reviewer: Robert Uhlenhake, Senior Planner

PETITION HISTORY

This is the first hearing for this petition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of this petition, subject to the submitted site plan and plan of operation.

PETITION OVERVIEW

VARIANCE OF USE

- ◇ Bars and Taverns are permitted by right in the C-3, C-4, C-5, C-7, MU-2, and MU-3 districts, with a 100-foot separation from any protected district.
- ◇ The purpose of the separation requirement is to provide a buffer between land uses, when one land use is more intense and more impactful. Without the required 100-foot buffer, the impact upon the less intense uses, such as the residential neighborhood uses to the north and south, would be detrimental and injurious to the overall community.
- ◇ This requested variance of use would legally establish a legally non-conforming bar/tavern that was existing prior to the 100-foot separation requirement and provide for the expansion of the existing bar/tavern, into an adjacent storefront within the same building. The expanded bar/tavern would be located within 5 feet of an adjacent protected district.



- ◇ The adjacent protected district to the south would be across an alley from the subject site, which has a 6-foot tall privacy fence with no access to the alley, that helps buffer and regulate any litter, noise, or spill-over of automobile headlights associated with the use. The distance from the building to the closest dwelling would be approximately 25 feet.
- ◇ The proposed use would be located in a community commercial node directly across the alley from a D-5 district, and an abutting protected district to the north across English Avenue.
- ◇ A plan of operation has been submitted that limits the hours of operation from 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM (Monday thru Thursday), 9:00 AM – 12:00 AM (Friday and Saturday), and 12:00 PM – 11:00 PM (Sunday). A site plan has also been submitted that limits the operation to the existing and proposed building. Staff believes having the variance subject to these would limit the scope of operation, and its intensity, providing for the requested use to be an acceptable use at this location despite the non-permitted separation. Therefore, Staff is requesting that approval of this petition shall be subject to the plan of operation and the site plan.
- ◇ In Staff's opinion, the proposed bar/tavern would not be dissimilar from other commercial uses permitted in the surrounding districts.

VARIANCE OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- ◇ The requested variance of development standards would provide for fifteen (15) on-site parking spaces, where a minimum of 22 parking spaces is required.
- ◇ The subject site is within walking distance from surrounding residences, and is also on a well-travelled bus line, that can provide access to the site without the need for a parking space if the need arises or the clients choose to do so.
- ◇ Therefore, given the close proximity of other public on street parking, and similarly developed properties, staff does not believe this reduction in parking would be a significant deviation from the Ordinance or negatively impact the character of development within the surrounding area, and would therefore, be supportable.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Existing Zoning	C-4 / C-7	
Existing Land Use	Bar/Tavern - Vacant building	
Comprehensive Plan	Community Commercial	
Surrounding Context	Zoning	Surrounding Context
	North: C-3 / D-5	Community Commercial / Single-family dwellings
	South: D-5	Single-family dwellings
	East: C-4	Parking lot
	West: C-7	Automotive repair and sales
Thoroughfare Plan		



English Avenue	Primary Arterial	60-foot existing right-of-way and 78-foot proposed right-of-way.
Context Area	Compact area	
Floodway / Floodway Fringe	No	
Overlay	N/A	
Wellfield Protection Area	No	
Site Plan	January 7, 2026	
Elevations	N/A	
Landscape Plan	N/A	
Findings of Fact	January 7, 2026	

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

Comprehensive Plan

- Marion County Land Use Plan Pattern Book (2019)

Pattern Book / Land Use Plan

- The Marion County Land Use Plan Pattern Book (2019) recommends the Community Commercial typology that serve nearby neighborhoods. These uses are usually in freestanding buildings or small, integrated centers. Examples include small-scale shops, personal services, professional and business services, grocery stores, drug stores, restaurants, and public gathering spaces.

Red Line / Blue Line / Purple Line TOD Strategic Plan

- Not Applicable to the Site.

Indy Moves
 (Thoroughfare Plan, Pedestrian Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Greenways Master Plan)

- Not Applicable to the Site.

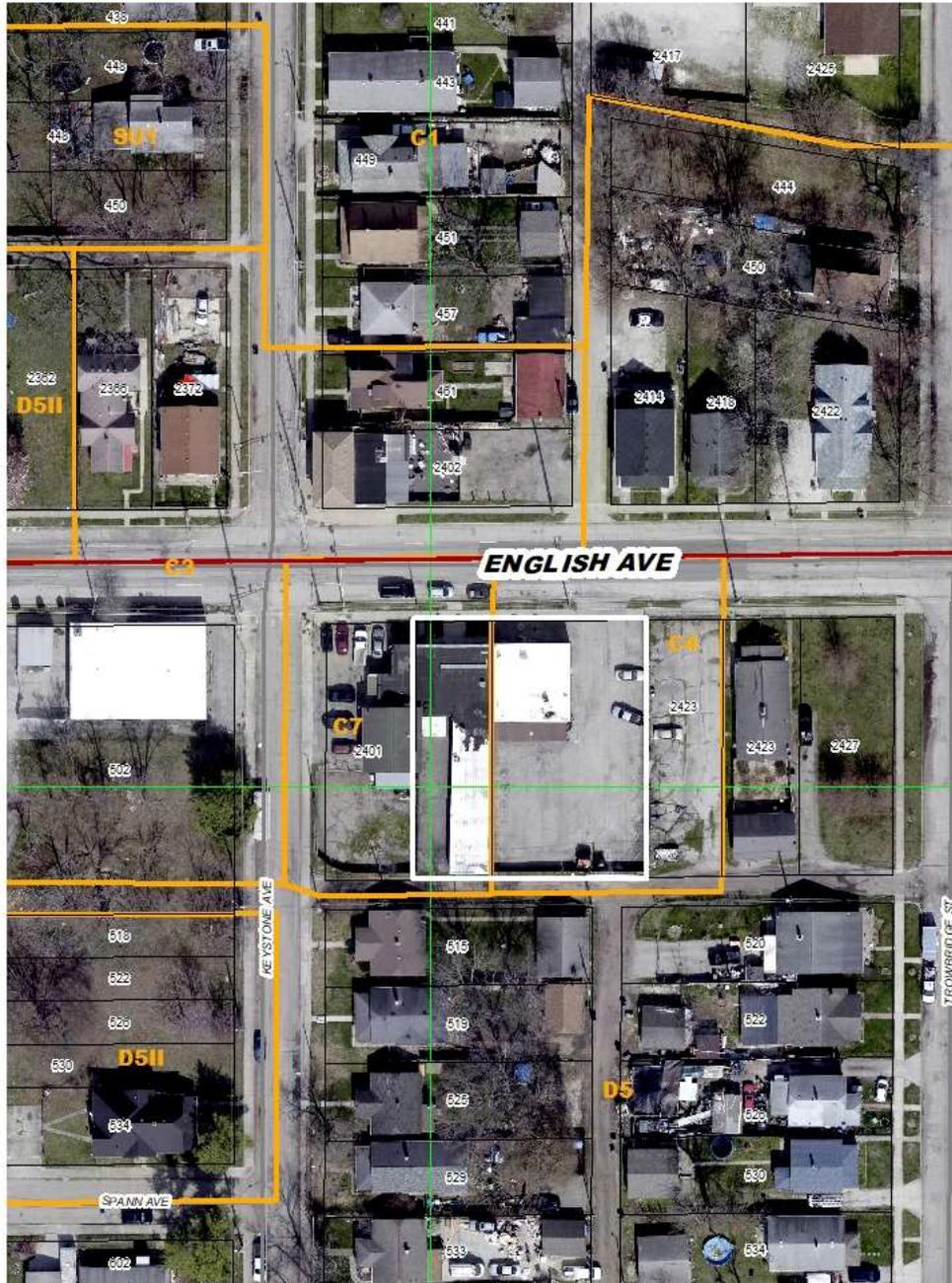
ZONING HISTORY

95-Z-157; 2409 and 2411 English Avenue (includes subject site), requested the rezoning of 0.6 acre, being in the C-7 District, to the C-4 classification to conform existing commercial uses, **approved.**

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EXHIBITS

Location Map



Site Plan (File-dated January 7, 0226)





Plan of Operation (File-dated January 7, 2026)

RIFF RAFF'S OF INDY

VARIANCE OF USE (BAR / TAVERN WITHIN 100' OF PROTECTED DISTRICT)

VARIANCE OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (MINIMUM OFF-STREET PARKING)

Riff Raff's Bar and Grill operates as a neighborhood gathering place serving drinks and a full food menu at 2409 English Avenue. The bar and grill is open daily from 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM (Monday thru Thursday), 9:00 AM – 12:00 AM (Friday and Saturday), and 12:00 PM – 11:00 PM (Sunday).

The venue has become popular within the community over the years, earning a 4.4 rating on Yelp. The existing facility operates a +/- 1,300 square foot bar and grill with available outdoor seating via a covered patio in the rear of the building. Associated paved parking is provided on site. The existing bar, located at 2049 English Ave, is zoned C4, while the area of proposed expansion at 2407 English Ave is zoned C7.

As the facility has enjoyed success in the neighborhood, ownership has acquired interest in the adjoining commercial structures. Riff Raff's is proposing to expand its existing operations into the structure located at 2407 English Avenue. This portion of the structure has, most recently, operated as an accounting office; however, this space has operated as a neighborhood tavern and restaurant in the past. The expansion would offer an additional +/- 2,000 square feet of operational space including additional restrooms and entertainment options. With the expansion, the owners are proposing to improve the adjacent parking area with code compliant striping and ADA parking providing 14 parking spaces with 1 ADA compliant, van accessible, space.

As a neighborhood bar and grill, the buildings are near residential zoning districts which necessitates the variance of use permitting a bar / tavern within 100 feet of a protected district. The relationship to residential areas is important to the identity of the neighborhood bar, providing a "third place" for gathering and entertainment in the community. The location within the neighborhood, at the edge of a larger commercial node, does not afford an abundance of off-street parking. As the facility is within a walkable area, with access to public transportation, and is located within the compact context area, the provision of excess parking would not fit the character and identity of the area.

The proposed operation would mirror the hours and operations of the existing Riff Raff's providing refreshments, food, and entertainment to the neighborhood.



Findings of Fact

**METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HEARING EXAMINER
METROPOLITAN BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS, Division [redacted]
OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA**

PETITION FOR VARIANCE OF USE

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. THE GRANT WILL NOT BE INJURIOUS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, MORALS, AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY BECAUSE

The use of a bar / tavern with food sales is currently taking place immediately adjacent to the site and has operated as a bar / tavern for many years. The proposed use would be located in a portion of an existing commercial structure with adjoining on street and off street parking. The area of proposed expansion has been in operation as a bar / tavern until approximately 2014 with a bar / tavern operating in the adjacent space continually. The re-establishment of a bar / tavern in the space would not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community.

2. THE USE AND VALUE OF THE AREA ADJACENT TO THE PROPERTY INCLUDED IN THE VARIANCE WILL NOT BE AFFECTED IN A SUBSTANTIALLY ADVERSE MANNER BECAUSE

The proposed use is consistent with the surrounding businesses as well as the character and intent of the underlying zoning districts. The owner has shown to be a community asset and has demonstrated compliance with Indiana's alcoholic beverage laws. The plan of operations in place reflects respect for the community. The existing establishment has integrated well into the fabric of the community and has caused no negative impacts on the area.

3. THE NEED FOR THE VARIANCE ARISES FROM SOME CONDITION PECULIAR TO THE PROPERTY INVOLVED BECAUSE

The property is situated in an established neighborhood and sits at the edge of a commercial node. The existing bar / tavern serves as a neighborhood gathering place. The positioning of the use within the neighborhood is essential to its function as a neighborhood "third place".

4. THE STRICT APPLICATION OF THE TERMS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE CONSTITUTES AN UNUSUAL AND UNNECESSARY HARDSHIP IF APPLIED TO THE PROPERTY FOR WHICH THE VARIANCE IS SOUGHT BECAUSE

The area of the expansion is zoned C7 and is intended to occupy a vacant portion of the existing commercial structure, while the existing bar is zoned C4. Strict application of the terms of the Zoning Ordinance would serve to maintain a vacant space in the neighborhood node as well as prohibit walkable neighborhood bars.

5. THE GRANT DOES NOT INTERFERE SUBSTANTIALLY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BECAUSE

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the area for community, regional, or heavy commercial use. The use of the space as a bar / tavern complies with the land use recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan while integrating into the neighborhood. The proposed use also establishes an appropriate community use at the edge of a larger commercial node.



Petition Number _____

**METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HEARING EXAMINER
METROPOLITAN BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS, Division _____
OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA**

PETITION FOR VARIANCE OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The grant will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community because:

The proposal is located in a historic, walkable neighborhood with access to public transportation. The location is not dependent on vehicular access for patrons and supports the creation of a third place, serving as a neighborhood gathering place. IndyGo also provides a stop approximately 4 blocks east, at a 10 minute walk. The establishment of excess surface parking in the neighborhood would be detrimental to the overall health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

2. The use or value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner because:

The expansion of the bar / tavern into adjacent, vacant, space will not visually alter the structure or existing lot. Ownership is proposing to improve the existing surface parking located adjacent to the current space. The expansion also provides new investment into the neighborhood that is exhibiting a number of abandoned and vacant properties turning this vacant space into a productive asset to the community. The new investment along with the walkability and access to public transportation shows that a reduction in off street parking will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.

3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property because:

The proposal is located in a historically urban neighborhood that was developed without today's focus on passenger vehicles. The density of the area, along with the character of large surface parking facilities would be contrary to the character of the neighborhood and the City's classification of the property in the compact context area. These factors serve as a practical difficulty when strictly applying the terms of the Zoning Ordinance for parking at this location.

Photographs



Photo of subject site, existing bar/tavern, looking south.



Photo of existing and proposed bar/tavern space, looking south.



Photo of existing parking lot, looking south.



Photo of adjacent protected district to the south, with existing on-site 6-foot tall fence buffer adjacent to alley on the south, looking south.