



## BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS STAFF REPORT

**To:** Members of the Board of Zoning Appeals

**From:** Sergio Mendoza, Planning Director

**Meeting Date:** November 18, 2025

**Agenda Item:** BZA 25-010

**Application Type:** Developmental Standards Variance

**Hearing:** Preliminary Hearing

**Summary:** Applicant is seeking a Developmental Standards Variance from TABLE 26-6.405. B. CIVIC ZONE STANDARDS: Lighting to refence SECTION 26-6.405.Q Private Lighting Standards 2.b., 3.c. and TABLE 26-6.26-6.405.Q-1 PRIVATE LIGHTING TYPES to increase the permitted height, color temperature, and head type at 8718 White Oak Avenue, Elliott Elementary

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**Applicant:** Sean Begley, School Town of Munster Director of Operations

**Property Address:** 8718 White Oak Avenue

**Current Zoning:** CZ – Civic Zone (Elliott Elementary School)

**Adjacent Zoning:** North: CD-3. R2 – Single Family Residential  
South: CD-3. R1 – Single Family Residential  
East: CD-3. R1 – Single Family Residential  
West: CD-3. R1 – Single Family Residential

**Action Requested:** Public Hearing

**Additional Actions Required:** Findings of Fact

**Staff Recommendation:** Schedule for public hearing  
Review Conditions of Approval Questions  
Review of Zoning Code(s)

**Attachments:**

1. Exhibit A: Application
2. Exhibit B: Conditions of Approval
3. Exhibit C: Site Plan
4. Exhibit D: Photometrics
5. Exhibit E: Lighting Specs

**PROJECT LOCATION**

The site of the proposed variance is located at Elliott Elementary, located south of 35<sup>th</sup> Street, and west of White Oak Avenue adjacent residential homes to the south along Janice Lane and to the west, residential homes along Greenlawn Drive.



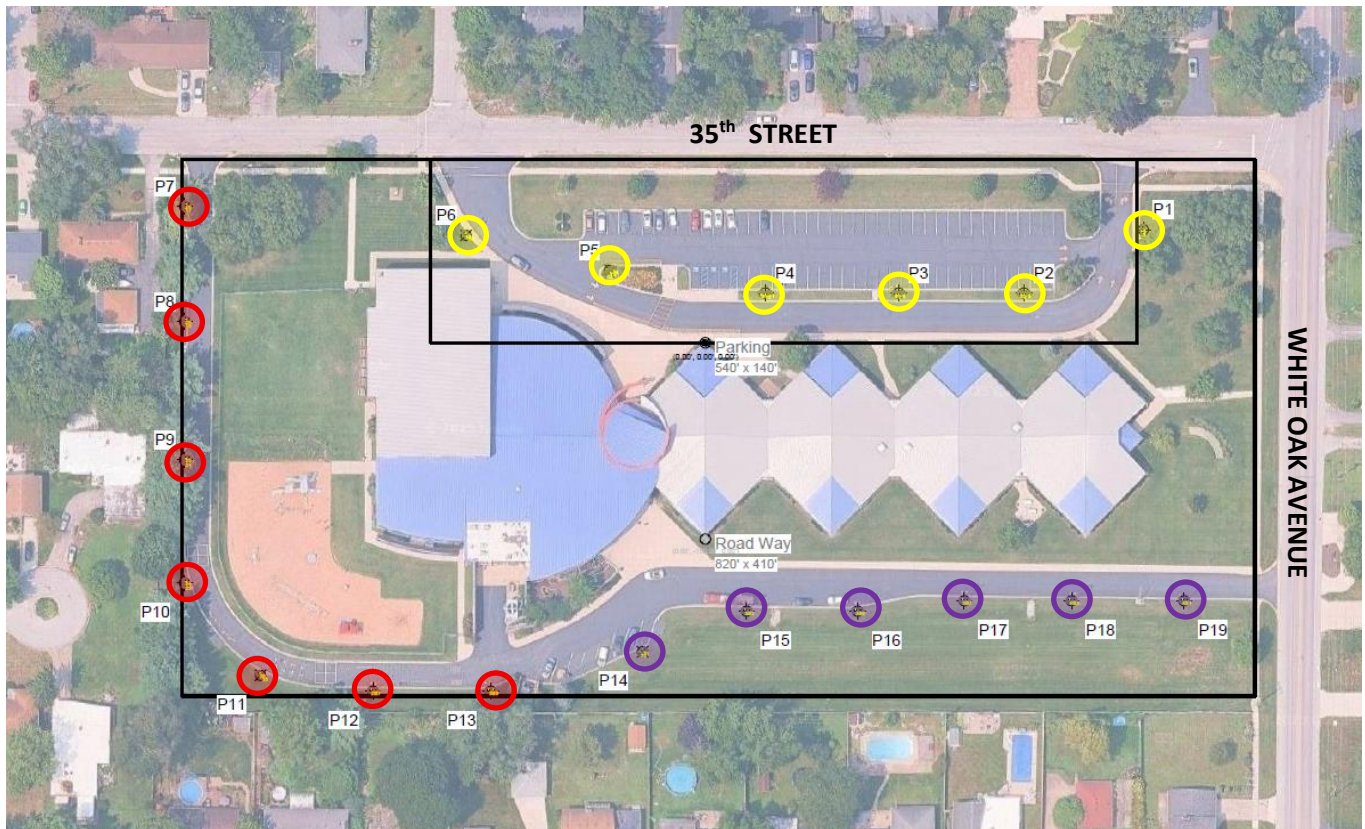
**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The applicant, School Town of Munster, would like to replace a total of nineteen (19) parking lights at Elliott Elementary School fronting along 35<sup>th</sup> Street and White Oak Avenue. Also, adjacent the rear yards of residential homes along Janice Lane and Greenlawn Drive. Six (6) parking lot lights fronting 35<sup>th</sup> Street; six (6) parking lot lights along the rear drive aisle off White Oak Ave., and seven (7) pole drive aisle lights along the school and residential shared lot lines. All pole lights are to replace the existing height (25'), similar light head shape (shielded down light source), and same color temperature (5,000K).

Highlighted in yellow, purple, red, and numbered below are the location of the nineteen (19) existing parking lot pole lights proposed to be replaced at the same location, height, similar head type, and color temperature.

**Light Pole Locations – 25' High with off-road light head types at, LED 5,000 K**

- 6 pole lights fronting 35<sup>th</sup> Street
- 6 pole lights along rear drive aisle
- 7 pole lights at school/residential property line



**ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS**

**SECTION 26-6.405.Q Private Lighting Standards:**

The following standards and requirements are applicable within all Districts and Civic Zones, except as otherwise noted:

**1. Areas to be Lighted.**

Except in Districts CD-3, CD-3.R1, CD-3.R2, CD-3.R3, and CD-4.R4, and SD-PUD, all Parking Areas, Parking Lots, Parking Structures, and accessways within the Lot shall be lighted.

**2. Lighting Standards or Poles.**

a. Lighting standards shall comply with **Table 26-6.405.Q-1 (Private Lighting Types)**.

b. A lighting standard shall be of a height and design consistent with the surrounding area Buildings but in no event higher than twenty feet (20').

c. Standards shall be located at distances of four times their height.

**3. Illumination.**

a. Illumination of Parking Areas, Parking Lots, Parking Structures, and all pedestrian ways shall be provided at an average of 1.0-2.5 foot-candles and a minimum of 0.4 foot-candles.

b. Illumination at all Lot Lines shall meet the standard of **Table 26-6.405.Q-2 (Private Lighting Standards)**.

**STANDARDS)**

District	Min/Max Lighting Level at Property and Frontage Lines (in foot-candles)
CD-3, CD-3.R1, CD-3.R2, CD-3.R3	0 fc @ property line Adjacent to CD-3, CD-3.R1, CD-3.R2, CD-3.R3 Otherwise, 0-1.0 fc
CD-4.R4, CD-4.A & CD-4.B, CD-5 & SD-M	0 fc @ property line Adjacent to CD-3, CD-3.R1, CD-3.R2, CD-3.R3 Otherwise, 1.0-2.0 fc
SD-PUD	Per PUD Approved Standards

c. Color temperature of lighting shall not exceed 3000K.

**4. Lighting Fixtures.**

Lighting fixtures must be full cut off or fully shielded and directed down.

**5. Building Spotlights Not Allowed.**

Spotlights installed on Buildings shall not be used to meet the lighting requirements of this Article.

TABLE 26-6.26-6.405.Q-1 PRIVATE LIGHTING TYPES

LIGHTING TYPE	CD-3	CD-3 R.1	CD-3 R.2	CD-3 R.3	CD-4 R.4	CD-4.A CD-4.B	CD-5	SD-M	SD-PUD	CZ
<b>HEAD/LUMINAIRE TYPES</b>										
Cobra Head	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
Off-Road Head	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
Colonial Head	P	NP	NP	NP	NP	P	P	NP	NP	P
Coach Head	P	NP	NP	NP	NP	P	P	NP	NP	P
Acorn Head	P	NP	NP	NP	NP	P	P	NP	NP	P

**PROPOSED:**

**Elliott Elementary School Parking**

Munster, IN

**LIGHTING SYSTEM**

Structure/Fixture Summary			
Structure ID	Structure Height	Fixt. Attachment Ht.	Fixture Qty
P1	25'	25'	2
P2-P5	25'	25'	3
P6-P19	25'	25'	2
19			42

Circuit Summary	
Circuit	Description
A	Parking

Fixture Type Summary			
Type	Circuit	Source	Wattage
LSI VALS	A	LED 5000K - 70 CRI	111W

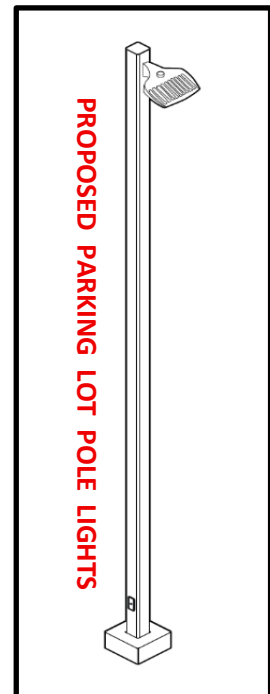
**Photometric Characteristics**

**Lumen maintenance factor<sup>2</sup>**

25k hours <sup>3</sup> .....	0.94
50k hours <sup>3</sup> .....	0.88
75k hours <sup>3</sup> .....	0.83
100k hours <sup>3</sup> .....	0.78
Typical Lumens <sup>4</sup> .....	18,000

**Available Color Temperature and CRI**

5000 K. ....	70 CRI
4000 K. ....	70 CRI
3000 K. ....	80 CRI



## **VARIANCE REVIEW**

The variance process is established to provide relief to a property owner when, due to unique circumstances, compliance with the zoning code imposes a hardship or practical difficulty on a property owner. The BZA is under no obligation to grant a variance. It is the petitioner's responsibility to prove a hardship or practical difficulty. The BZA should ask the petition to address the criteria listed below.

**Section 26-6.804. I. Deviation from Standards & Requirements** (pg 392) of the Munster Zoning Code states that the basis for a variance is as follows:

g. General Standards.

A variance may be granted only if the Decision-Making Authority has made the following determinations for such variance:

- i. The practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships that would be incurred by strict application of the Use or Development standard, as applicable, are unique and not shared by all properties in the vicinity and are not self-imposed;
- ii. Such Variance is the minimum Variance that will relieve such practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, as applicable;
- iii. Such Variance is in the spirit of the general purposes and intent of this Article as stated in Division 1; and
- iv. Such Variance is so designed as to provide reasonable consideration to, among other things, the character of the neighborhood, District, or Civic Zone, the conservation of property values in the vicinity, and the guidance of Development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

h. Specific to development standards variances:

A variance from development standards may be approved or approved with conditions only if:

- i. It will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community;
- ii. The use and value of the area Adjacent to the property included in the Variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner; and
- iii. The strict application of the Development standards will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.

**The applicant has addressed these criteria in Exhibit B**

## **STAFF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Staff finds all documents are in order to proceed with a public hearing and recommends the BZA review the Developmental Variance Conditions of Approval Form, attached as Exhibit B, as well as scheduling a public hearing for BZA25-010 on December 9, 2025. In addition, staff request that the applicant be asked if an additional variance request should be incorporated into this application for a 10' high fence for a pending ½ court basketball addition to the existing playground.

## **MOTION**

The Board of Zoning Appeals may consider the following motions:

*Motion to schedule a Public Hearing on December 9, 2025 for BZA25-010, a Developmental Standards Variances request to install Parking lot lighting not to exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height, utilizing off-road or similar type light fixtures with a color temperature not to exceed 5,000K, including all discussion and findings.*