

The Richland Township Zoning Hearing Board met November 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to hear the Appeal or Application of the Applicant, Blews-Lipniskis Real Estate, for property owned by Richard Ross, located at 2831 Bedford Street, Richland Township, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, which is zoned R-2 Residential. The Applicant requested a special exception to change the current nonconforming use as a chiropractic office to another nonconforming use, namely an insurance office, as authorized in Richland Township Zoning Ordinance Section 240-22A.

Present:

Bill Patrick, Chairman

Pat Wess, Vice-Chairman

Rodney Kniss

PJ McGowan

David Strushensky

Eric D. Hochfeld, Solicitor

Tiffany Shomo, Secretary

Absent:

Mark Rychak

Mr. Patrick began the hearing at 6:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Hochfeld listed exhibits. Board Exhibit #1 was the appeal application with attachments. Board Exhibit #2 was the Richland Township Zoning Ordinance, by reference, and Board Exhibit #3 was the posting of the municipal building, the property involved, advertising in the Tribune-Democrat and notification of this hearing to adjoining property owners via certified mail.

Court stenographer Lori Behe swore in the following:

1. Richard Ross
2. Jay Blews
3. Don Colvin
4. Jeff Duryea

Mr. Jay Blews stated that he and his partner, Shanon Blews, own two insurance agencies. They have one in Indiana and one on Scalp Avenue under the name Trent Insurance. Their business is growing, and they are seeking a new, more suitable location. They were presented with the opportunity to use Dr. Ross's building, which they believe is an ideal fit.

Mr. Blews explained that the agency's business hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with four employees and an expected traffic flow of six to nine customers per day. He noted that most business activity now occurs online or by phone. Regarding signage, he stated that they plan to use the same sign area, maintaining the current height and width. The sign will be back-lit but not a message board. Although the existing lights currently do not function

due to timer issues, the intention is to repair them or transfer the existing sign from their Scalp Avenue location. No exterior changes are planned, and Dr. Ross will retain an interior office for part-time use.

No changes will be made to the parking lot, which currently contains 22 spaces, and there will be no on-street parking. The rear entrance will continue to serve Dr. Ross's chiropractic practice. Dr. Ross reported that he works Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 or 6:00 p.m., with occasional emergency weekend visits. He typically sees 15–17 patients per day, each staying 30–40 minutes and he has never experienced parking issues. He noted that his practice historically generated more traffic than the incoming insurance office is expected to produce.

Mr. Jeff Duryea of 2826 Bedford Street asked about the illuminated sign. Mr. Blews stated that the sign would not remain lit past 10:00 p.m. and that he would be willing to turn it off earlier if it caused any disturbance. Mr. Duryea, whose property is directly across the street, reported no previous problems with the sign when it was illuminated.

There were no comments from the township and no questions from the board.

Solicitor Hochfeld explained that the property is located in an R-2 zoning district and that a non-conforming use had been granted more than 20 years ago for its current commercial use. Mr. Ross confirmed that the property has always operated as a business. In response to Mr. Blews's inquiry, Mr. Hochfeld clarified that the zoning classification could not be changed through this process; the request pertains solely to a use variance. The R-2 classification will remain unchanged. If the business were sold to another insurance agency, the use could continue; if sold for a different purpose, the new owner would need to return to the board.

Mr. Wess moved to grant the request to change the existing non-conforming use from a chiropractic office to an insurance office. The motion was seconded by Mr. Strushensky. All in favor.

Mr. Kniss moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:17 p.m. Seconded by Mr. McGowan.

Respectfully submitted,

*T. Shomo*

Tiffany Shomo, Secretary