

The Richland Township Zoning Hearing Board met May 19, 2026, at 6:40 p.m. to hear the request of the Applicant, the Humane Society of Cambria, Inc., for property located at the corner of Oakridge Drive and Jari Drive, Richland Township, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, to grant an additional eighteen (18) month extension of time to obtain a building permit as required by Richland Township Zoning Ordinance Section 240-102 for the use as authorized by Ordinance Section 240-62A(62) granted by the Board on February 13, 2025. This hearing was conducted in the Richland Township meeting room, 322 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA 15904.

Present:

Bill Patrick, chair

PJ McGowan, vice-chair

Rodeny Kniss

Dave Strushensky

Eber Verhovsek

Eric D Hochfeld, Solicitor

Tiffany Shomo, Secretary

Mr. Patrick began the hearing at 6:40 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Hochfeld began the hearing by listing exhibits. Board Exhibit #1 was the letter from Toby MacIlwain, Council for The Cambria County Humane Society. Board Exhibit #2 was the Richland Township Zoning Ordinance, by reference, and Board Exhibit #3 was the posting of the municipal building and advertising in the Tribune-Democrat.

On February 13, 2025, the Zoning Hearing Board approved the original request and gave the applicant 18 months to obtain a building permit. They are now requesting an additional 18 months to secure a permit.

Court stenographer Ashley Hamilton swore in the following:

1. Devin Helmick

Ms. Helmick stated that the Humane Society has an engineer who is finalizing the project design and that the organization is currently in the midst of its capital campaign. While progress is being made, they are not yet prepared to begin construction. Their current focus is on completing the engineering plans, conducting the necessary land testing to ensure the site is build-ready, and raising the remaining funds needed for the project. She noted that there is not yet an exact date for the groundbreaking, as the next meeting will be held to finalize the project designs.

Ms. Helmick further stated that the Cambria County Humane Society officially owns the property. The original use variance approval is set to expire on August 13, 2026, and the Humane Society is requesting an additional 18-month extension, which would extend the approval through February 2028.

Mr. Hochfeld explained that applicants generally have six months to obtain a permit; however, at the original hearing, the Humane Society requested and was granted a 12-month period. They are

now requesting an additional 18-month extension to allow sufficient time to complete the planning, fundraising, and pre-construction requirements before breaking ground.

There were no further questions from the board and no comments from the Township.

Additional residents were present in the audience but were not present for this hearing.

Mr. McGowan motioned to extend the approval of the use as authorized by Section 240-62A(62) as granted by this board on February 13, 2025 until February 29, 2028. Seconded by Mr. Strushensky. All in favor.

Mr. Kniss motioned to adjourn the hearing at 6:52 pm. Seconded by Mr. Verhovsek. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*T. Shomo*

Tiffany Shomo, secretary