

HIGHLAND BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
Minutes of the Meeting of
February 25, 2026

The Highland Board of Zoning Appeals met in the meeting room of the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, IN 46322, on February 25, 2026. Commissioner Murovic called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Commissioner Wright led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Present were Commissioners Helms, Thomas, Wright, and Murovic. Commissioner Smith was absent. Also present were Building Commissioner/Zoning Administrator Ken Mika, Town Council Liaison Doug Turich, and BZA Attorney John Reed.

MINUTES: The minutes of January 28, 2026, were approved as posted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next Board of Zoning Appeals meeting will take place on March 25th, 2026.

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: Public Hearing for Staci Hearne, 1006 Arrowhead Drive, Dyer, IN, requesting a Use Variance for a Tattoo Studio located at Salon Suites, 2715 Main Street, Ste D, Highland, IN 46322. {HMC 18.45.030} Listed Permitted Uses in a B-3 Zoned District do not include Tattoo Studios.

Commissioner Murovic asked Mr. Reed if the Proof of Publication was in order for this hearing. Mr. Reed responded that it was and that it was published in a timely manner. Mr. Mika added that the sign was also posted correctly.

Commissioner Murovic asked if there was anyone in attendance to present this petition. Staci Hearne stepped forward and introduced herself, stating her name and address. She proceeded to pass out a packet to each member with some information related to her presentation. She continued to explain that she had been tattooing for about 8 years and was currently working in Merrillville in a shop that opened in 2023. She was mostly interested in a shorter commute to and from work, since she lived in Dyer. Highland was considerably closer for her than driving to and from Merrillville each day. She then stated that the folders she had passed out contained lease agreement, a letter from her previous landlord in Merrillville, Robert Gerick, who had also moved to Highland and was the new owner/operator of My Salon Suites at 2715 Main Street in Highland. In the letter, Mr. Gerick provided a strong recommendation for Staci. There was also an

example of her Client Release Form that she has all her clients go over prior to tattooing. She explained that it was mostly medical information, she had been a nursing assistant prior to starting tattooing, and she was very particular about safe practices, cleaning needles, clients on medications, or clients that had skin conditions, etc. The next item in the packet was a list of her Google reviews, showing 5 stars from all of the 10 reviews. The last item in her folder contained a few photos of her current location in Merrillville.

Commissioner Murovic opened the meeting to the public. Hearing no remonstrance, she closed the public meeting and brought the discussion back to the Board. Commissioner Helms asked Staci Hearne if she was going to continue to work at the Merrillville location, or if she planned on Highland being the sole location. She replied that Highland would be the sole location, and that it was mostly due to the drive, which would be easier with her current health conditions and picking up her son every day. She stated that this would be her only employment. Commissioner Murovic asked Staci if she had an assistant, or if she was the sole artist there. She replied she worked alone. Commissioner Thomas asked what her hours of operation were. She replied that she usually started around 10:00 a.m. but occasionally made exceptions. The latest she booked anyone was typically 7:00 p.m. The doors of the My Salon Suite were locked from the outside from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Commissioner Wright asked if she would be doing any piercings or if she just did tattoos. She responded that she only did tattoos. Commissioner Helms asked if she was licensed by the State as a tattoo artist. She responded that Indiana does not currently require licensing of tattoo artists, but there were tests that they had to take and pass each year, such as blood borne pathogens and other medical tests. Commissioner Thomas confirmed that she had a business license in Indiana, and she confirmed that she did. Mr. Reed stated that he saw a listing on the Secretary of State website of a Sacred Moon LLC that was formed in 2023. Staci Hearne confirmed that it was her business. Mr. Reed continued to say that the registered agent for this company was Kristen Hearne. Staci Hearne stated that Kristen was her older sister and was the accountant for her business. Mr. Reed advised that for the record, the Use Variance, or any permits be in the name of the LLC and Ms. Hearne. Commissioner Murovic agreed and said the address and suite number, (My Salon Suite #205) should also be on record. Mr. Mika asked Mr. Reed if a stipulation could be added that this Use Variance would no longer be in effect if this individual left this location, and that any new tenant wanting to have a tattoo studio there would need to go through the same process. Mr. Reed said it could be added. He added that they would make it both person and location specific and that both would have to be present for the Use Variance to apply.

Commissioner Helms motioned that the Board give a Favorable Recommendation to the Town Council for the Use Variance for Sacred Moon Tattoo LLC, 2715 Main St., #205, proprietor Staci Hearne, and that this Use Variance does not stay with the property.

Commissioner Wright seconded and the motion passed with a 4 – 0 roll call vote.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR: None

ADJOURNMENT: Motion: Thomas Second: Helms Time: 6:25 p.m.