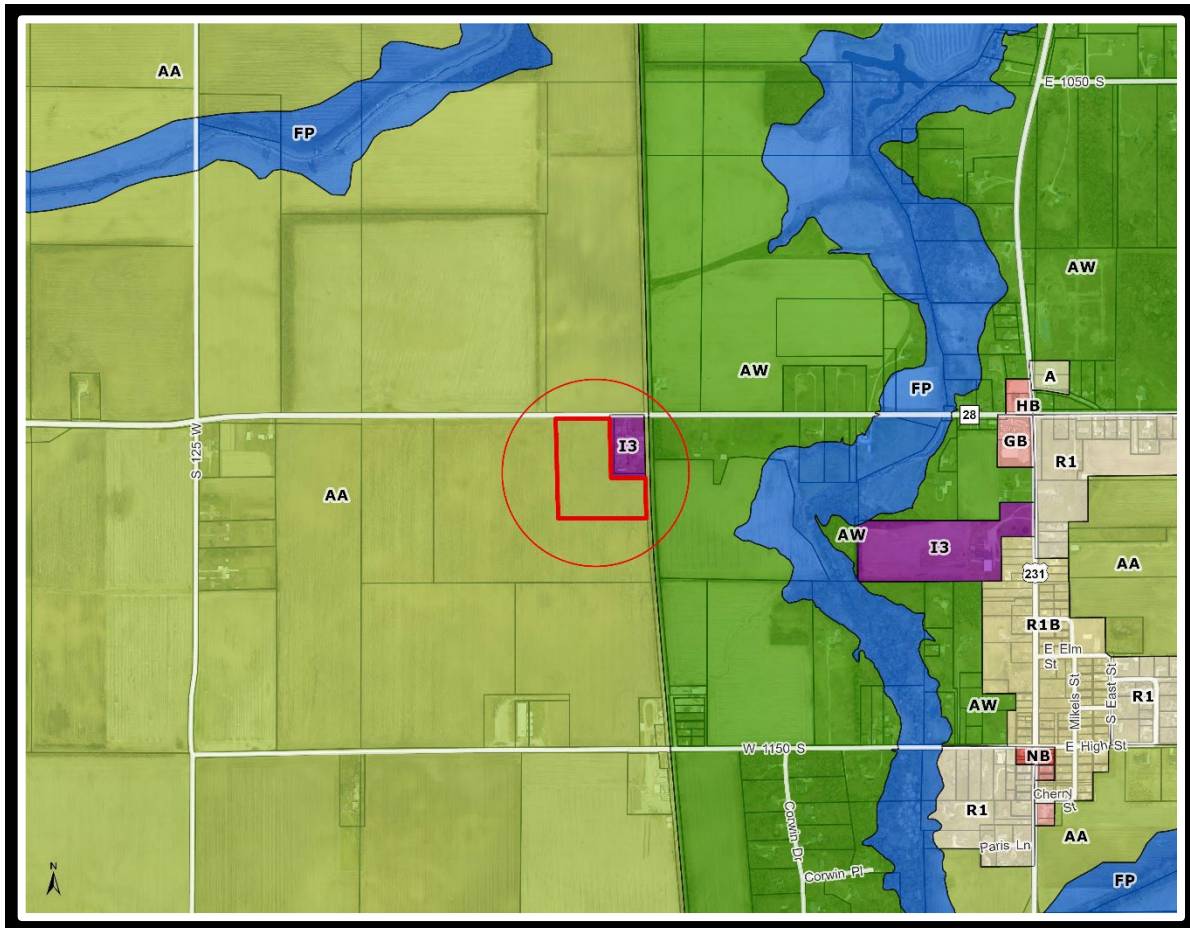

Z-2876
CERES SOLUTIONS COOPERATIVE, INC.
(AA to I3)

STAFF REPORT
March 9, 2023



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REQUEST MADE, PROPOSED USE, LOCATION:

Petitioner, with consent from the landowner, Joan Pell, and represented by Eric Runyan of Ceres, is requesting a rezoning of 10 acres from AA to I3. The ten-acre tract in this request is “L-shaped” and surrounds their existing 3.19-acre operation which is located on the south side of SR 28 West immediately west of the CSX rail line. The agricultural fuel storage and distribution center (SIC 598) would be expanded if this rezone is successful. Petitioner intends on combining the existing Crawfordsville and Lafayette operations onto this newly expanded site. The business is located at 601 SR 28 West, Randolph 19 (NW) 21-4.

ZONING HISTORY AND AREA ZONING PATTERNS:

The 3.19-acre location of the existing business was rezoned in January 2007 from AA to I3 (Z-2317). AA zoning is located north, west and south and AW zoning can be found to the east. There have been no recent rezones in the immediate area.

AREA LAND USE PATTERNS:

The business stores and distributes fuel in the form of gasoline, diesel, propane and kerosine. The site contains two storage buildings and numerous above-ground storage tanks. The existing driveway and parking areas are graveled. Paving is not required in the AA zone; however, paving is required in the I3 zone. Petitioner will need to either bring the existing site into conformance or receive a variance from the Area Board of Zoning Appeals to not require paving.

Farm fields dominate the area surrounding the site. A cell tower is located just northeast of the site. Large lot residences are located east across the railroad tracks towards the town of Romney with the nearest residence over 400 feet away.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:

State Road 28 is classified as a rural secondary arterial. Any change in the driveway may require approval from the Indiana Department of Transportation.

Paving is required in the I3 zone for driveways, maneuvering aisles and parking spaces. Parking standards for this use require 1 space per employee on the largest shift, plus 1 space per 200 square feet of office, sales or similar floor area. Sufficient area exists to meet the parking standard.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

The Health Department has no record of a septic system on-site and it has received no complaints regarding the use of a septic system.

The zoning ordinance requires a “type c” bufferyard, 30 feet in width, where I3 zoning abuts AA zoning. This was a requirement in 2007 when the site was improved but no record exists of the bufferyard being installed and no variance was ever filed.

STAFF COMMENTS:

This site has an interesting history. The earliest zoning maps show an area of approximately ¼ of a square mile with industrial zoning centered around the intersection of SR 28 and the railroad. Then in 1985 a township-wide rezone was done changing the zoning to AA. This was done for three reasons: 1.) there was no industrial land uses in the area at the time with staff noting only the presence of a grain elevator, 2.) the soils in this area are highly productive warranting the AA zoning designation, and 3.) under the old zoning ordinance, this use (SIC 598- fuel dealers) was permitted by special exception in the AA zone. (Today this use is only permitted by right in the I2 and I3 zones.)

Then, in 2006, a portion of the land (3.19 acres) was rezoned to I3 to allow the site to be used for fuel storage and distribution center. Staff was able to support that request noting the property’s history as an agri-business for chemical storage and distribution and its relatively small size for an industrial user.

Now petitioner is wishing to expand the site with 10 additional acres (to be added to the existing 3.19-acre site) which will accommodate a new office, a shop building and possibly more LP storage tanks. Staff understands that only 3 or 4 acres of land is needed for this proposed expansion and the remainder will be farmed as it is now. While staff agrees that this business at this location on both a state highway and railroad tracks, surrounded by farmland makes sense, staff is also concerned about preserving highly productive farmland and fears that rezoning the entire 10 acres may someday result in the entire acreage being taken out of farming. Rezoning only the 3-4 additional acres needed, instead of the entire ten acres, is more supportable to staff.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of a reduced acreage; denial of the entire ten acres.