

**FREDERICK COUNTY BOARD OF APPEALS**  
**STAFF REPORT FOR OCTOBER 22, 2020 @ 7pm**

**Case Number:** B-19-20-14 (B260327)

**Applicant:** David Spence

**Appeal:** Requesting a Special Exception for a Limited Agricultural Activity in the Residential Districts.

**Location:** Property is described as, 7510 Rockwood Drive, Frederick MD 21702, Tax Map 66, Parcel 0614, Tax ID# 24451011, Zone Low Density Residential (R1), Size .468 Acres.

**Planning Region:** Frederick

**Zoning District:** Low Density Residential (R1)

**Comp. Plan Designation:** Rural Residential

**Applicable Ordinances:** Sec. 1-19-3.210 Special Exceptions  
Sec. 1-19-8.325 Limited Agricultural Activity in the Residential Districts  
Sec. 1-19-11.100 Definitions

**Background:**

The subject parcel is zoned Low Density Residential (R1) and contains .468 acres.

Ordinance Section 1-19-11.100 defines *AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY, LIMITED* as “The keeping of farm animals in residential districts on lots with less than 3 acres. Apiaries are excluded from this definition.”

Ordinance Section 1-19-11.100 defines *FARM ANIMALS* as “Those animals ordinarily found on a farm, including but not limited to: horses, ponies, sheep, goats, bulls, buffalo, cows, steers, rabbits raised for commercial purposes, turkeys, pigs, ducks, geese, chickens and guinea hens.”

**Proposal:**

The Applicant is requesting Special Exception approval for a Limited Agricultural Activity for the purpose of keeping chickens, on a residential lot that has less than 3 acres.

The Applicant has submitted a site plan showing that the proposed pen area will meet the 50 foot setback requirement. (Attachment 1) The applicant is proposing no more than 10 chickens and no roosters.

## **General Criteria – Special Exception:**

### **Special Exception.**

- A. An application for a special exception may be made only by persons with a financial, contractual or proprietary interest in the property for which a special exception is requested.

The applicant states that they are the owners of the property.

- B. A grant of a special exception is basically a matter of development policy, rather than an appeal based on administrative error or on hardship in a particular case. The Board of Appeals should consider the relation of the proposed use to the existing and future development patterns. A special exception shall be granted when the Board finds that:

1. The proposed use is consistent with the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Development Plan and of this chapter; and

The applicant states that we intend to raise a small number of chickens in our wooded neighborhood, which is consistent with the more rural nature of the area.

2. The nature and intensity of the operations involved in or conducted in connection with it and the size of the site in relation to it are such that the proposed use will be in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development of the neighborhood in which it is located; and

The applicant states that the coop and run will be located 50 feet from all property lines and the small nature of the coop will be such that neighbors would not be aware of its existence. (Attachment 1)

3. Operations in connection with the special exception at the proposed location shall not have an adverse effect such as noise, fumes, vibration or other characteristics on neighboring properties above and beyond those inherently associated with the special exception at any other location within the zoning district; and

The applicant states that there will be no roosters on the property, so noise will not be an issue. In addition, we will clean the coop weekly to be sure the area will be clean and free of odors.

4. Parking areas will comply with the off-street parking regulations of this chapter and will be screened from adjoining residential uses, and the entrance and exit drives shall be laid out so as to achieve maximum safety.

The applicant states that this is a private residence, and no further parking would be necessary.

5. The road system providing access to the proposed use is adequate to serve the site for the intended use.

The applicant states that Rockwood Road is an adequate roadway to serve us and having chickens would not add to any needs on the road. There will be no additional traffic.

- C. In addition to the general requirements listed above, uses requiring a special exception shall be subject to the specific requirements for each use outlined in §§ [1-19-8.320](#) through [1-19-8.355](#) of this Code.

[The applicant understands this requirement.](#)

- D. A special exception approval may be granted in accordance with the general and specific requirements enumerated in this section. The Board of Appeals may, in addition to other requirements imposed under this chapter and is hereby authorized to add to the specific requirements any additional conditions that it may deem necessary to protect adjacent properties, the general neighborhood, and its residents or workers. Violation of such additional conditions, when made a part of the terms under which the special exception permit is granted, is a violation of this chapter and may be grounds for termination of the special exception.

[The applicant understands this requirement.](#)

- E. The Board of Appeals shall not grant a special exception unless and until:

1. A written application for a special exception is submitted indicating the section of this chapter under which the special exception is sought and stating the grounds on which it is requested; and

[The applicant understands this requirement.](#)

2. A public hearing has been held; and the Board had made a finding of fact that the special exception requested meets the general and specific requirements outlined in this section.

[The applicant understands this requirement.](#)

- F. The grant of special exception may include approval of customary incidental accessory uses as reviewed and approved by the Zoning Administrator.

[The applicant states that our request is that we and our children \(ages 11 and 14\) are allowed to raise up to 10 chickens for their 4-H project and we would assist our children with running the coop and 4-H project consistent with Frederick County zoning ordinances.](#)

- G. No use or activity permitted as a special exception shall be enlarged or extended beyond the limits authorized in the grant of special exception. All enlargements, extensions, and changes in use shall require grants of special exception, as in the case of an original petition.

[The applicant states that they understand this and would not increase the size or change the location of the coop or increase the amount of chickens raised on the property in a manner that is inconsistent with Frederick County zoning requirements.](#)

- H. If a grant of special exception is denied, no new petition for the denied use on the same property shall be accepted by the Board of Appeals for 1 year after the date of denial of the petition.

[The applicant understands this requirement.](#)

- I. A decision of the Board of Appeals granting a special exception will be void 5 years from date of approval by the Board of Appeals unless the use is established, a building permit is issued, construction has begun, or final site development plan approval has been received in accordance with the terms of the decision. Upon written request submitted to the Zoning Administrator no later than 1 month prior to the expiration date and for good cause shown by the applicant, a 1 time extension may be granted by the Zoning Administrator for a period not to exceed 6 months.

The applicant understands this requirement.

**Limited Agricultural Activity In The Residential Districts.**

**A limited agricultural activity shall be permitted in the residential districts where the following provisions are met:**

- A. The keeping of farm animals in conjunction with a single family residence, on lots less than 3 acres, shall be permitted in residential districts provided that no pens, stalls, or runs will be located closer than 50 feet of any lot line (see also § [1-19-8.240](#)).

The applicant states that they intend to locate the coop/run at least 50 feet from all property lines. (Attachment 1)

- B. All criteria in § [1-19-3.210](#) and all other provisions of this chapter shall be met.

The applicant states that they have reviewed Frederick County zoning ordinances and requirements and our proposal meets the requirements of a limited agricultural activity special exception.

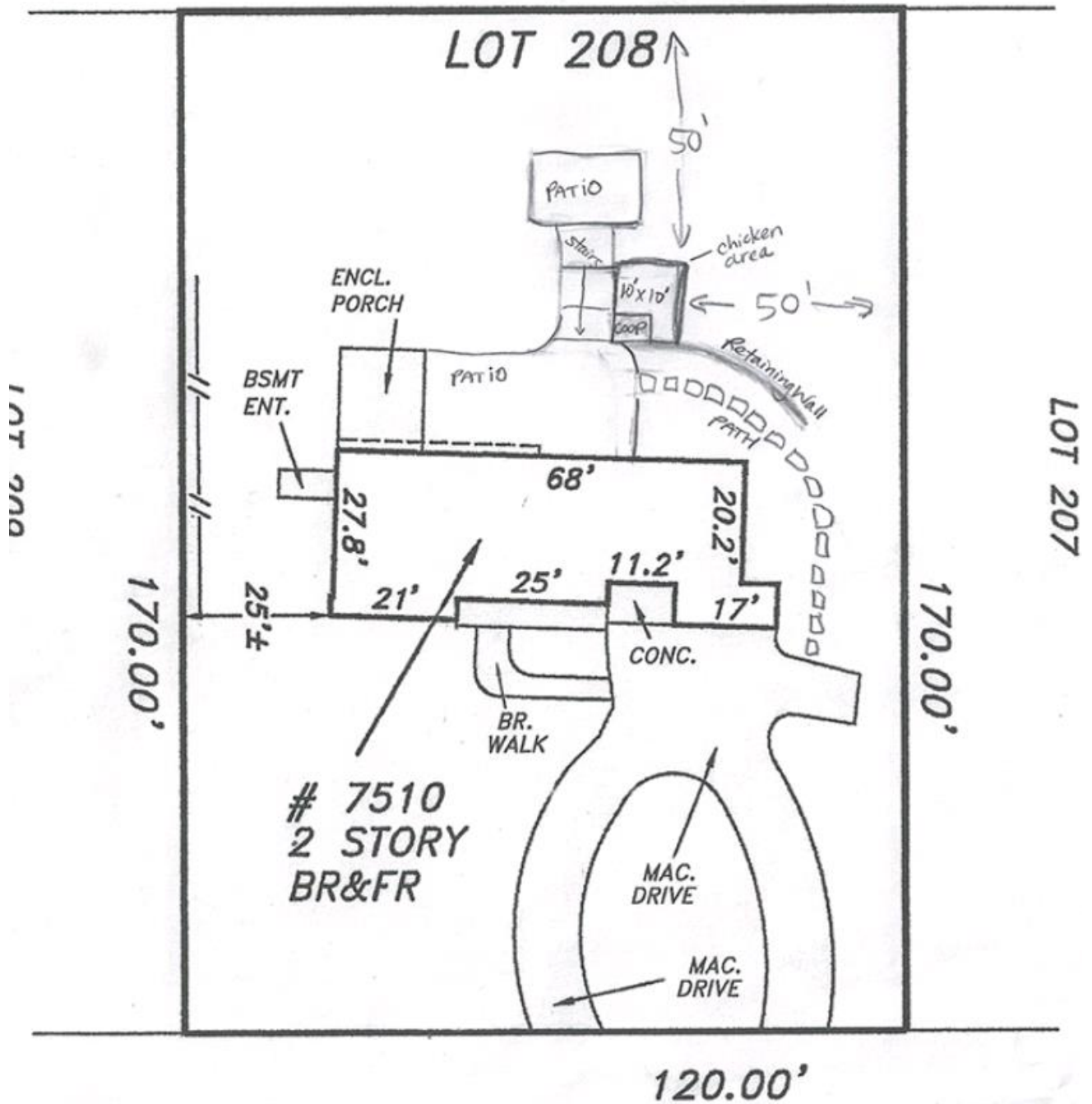
- C. The limited agricultural activity shall not cause any odor, dust, smoke, vibration or unreasonable noise which can be detected at or beyond the property line.

The applicant states that as the coop/run will be located 50 feet from property lines, and since the coop will be cleaned and maintained on a regular basis, no odor, dust, or smoke, should be detectable at or beyond the property line. As we will house no more than 10 hens, no unreasonable noise should be detected at or beyond the property lines.

**Action Required:**

Staff requests that the Board review the general and specific criteria for Special Exception under Section 1-19-3.210 (*Special Exceptions*) and Section 1-19-8.325 (*Ltd Ag Activity in the Residential Districts*) and render a decision on the applicant's request to allow no more than 10 chickens with no roosters on their property

Attachment 1





## GIS Maps

