

Application

Craig and Sharon Okerberg are requesting a Human Services Conditional Use Permit, in order to continue an existing Mental Health Counseling Office located on their property in Story County. The project is located on a 6.88- acre parcel between the City of Ames and the City of Gilbert on the west side of US Highway 69. (Assessor's Parcel Map Number 05-15-400-465, Address: 6139 US HIGHWAY 69, Ames Iowa.)

Along with the use permit application the owners are requesting a variance to the county development standard that requires a 50-foot-wide easement be recorded for access. Currently a 30 foot wide recorded access easement exists across the neighboring property from HWY 69 to the property site's eastern property line.

Although this would not be required to be built at this time (as per discussion on September 1, 2022 with the Story County Planning Director), the placement of the future development of the road would not be practical. There are several physical constraints and limitations within the 50 -foot-wide strip including the Korean Methodist Church's existing parking area, a large oak tree and natural drainage to the south.

A conceptual review of this proposal was completed on September 1, 2022.

Project Site Specifications

The acreage is a varied shape with the eastern property line abutting both the Korean Methodist Church as well as portions of the property abutting US HWY 69. Access to the property is byway of a shared paved encroachment and a recorded access easement from US HWY 69 that transverses the church property. The concrete driveway to the property is approximately 15 feet wide. The easement is 30 feet wide.

The property is currently developed with a single family residence with an attached garage (Built in 1994), a 7,200- square- foot private horse arena (Built in 2021) and 1,296- square -foot barn with a hay loft. There is a bricked driveway in front of the garage that would allow two cars to be parked along with two parking spaces within the garage. This would allow for 4 cars to be parked tandem in two rows on a parking surface. There is additional parking on unpaved portions (gravel) of the property allowing for 8 more parking spaces.

The property is used both as a mental health counseling office and a private residential home, with personal uses which include family dinners, family bbqs, horseback riding, caring for livestock, and animal husbandry. At this time, no one resides at the property, but Melinda Wadsley (Craig and Sharon Okerberg's daughter) plans to use it as a second home.

The property is served by an on-site private well and septic system. Per the conceptual review recommendations, the septic system was inspected on February 8th, 2023; a report of this inspection is attached.

The property is currently being used as a mental health counseling office with a licensed mental health counselor on-site along with caring for private livestock, which are also used in the counseling program.

Proposed use: Continuation of the Mental Health Counseling Office.

Eventually, the Okerbergs would like to include Behavioral Health Intervention Services (BHIS) which will also fall under the Human Services use, and use the residence as a location to host mental health retreats with programming, serving a maximum of 8 people. The average frequency of mental health retreats would be 2 weekends a month.

One licensed counselor is proposed to see clients on-site on a regular basis. The estimated appointments are four a day, three days a week, year round.

The applicants are concerned with limiting uses on the property and don't want to be constrained by the use permit as to what other uses are allowed as a matter of right (i.e. livestock and residential uses). Although no new structures are proposed at this time the owners would like to have the option to further develop the property for their personal use.

Prior to making recommendations to the board, the applicants request a discussion about any possible limitations to the proposed application.