

**ZONING HEARING BOARD OF DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP
BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

Docket No.: Z-1-26

Applicants: Ralph & Carrie Shults
139 Beulah Road
Doylestown, PA 18901

Owners: Same.

Subject Property: Tax Parcel No. 09-003-041, which is located at the address of the Applicants set forth above.

Requested Relief: Applicants seek a variance from the Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance, including §175-16(11) Use H-11 Raising of livestock, in order to permit two (2) ducks on the subject residential property. The property measures 25,526 square feet in area. §175-16(11) permits the raising and keeping of chickens on residential properties, on a non-commercial basis, if the property owner complies with all elements of Use H-11, including utilizing a property of at least 40,000 square feet in area. Applicants seek a variance for the use accordingly.

Hearing History: The application was filed in Doylestown Township on January 16, 2026. The hearing was held on February 26, 2026 at the Doylestown Township Building, 425 Wells Road, Doylestown, PA 18901.

Appearances: Applicants, *Pro Se*

Mailing Date: April 10, 2026

DECISION

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The Zoning Hearing Board of Doylestown Township met the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, the Municipalities Planning Code, and other relevant statutes as to legal notice of the hearing held.

2. The Applicants are the Owners of the Subject Property and therefore possessed of the requisite standing to make application to this Board.

3. During the hearing held, the following exhibits were marked and admitted:

ZHB-1: Application with attachments and amendment

ZHB-2: Legal advertisement, proof of publication and posting for Hearings held

ZHB-3: Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance (the "Ordinance")

4. The Subject Property is located in the R-1, Residential Zoning District of Doylestown Township. The lot area is 25,526 square feet. The property accommodates the Applicants' single family dwelling with customary residential amenities.

5. Applicants seek a variance from the Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance, including §175-16(11) Use H-11 Raising of livestock, in order to permit two (2) ducks on the subject residential property. The property measures 25,526 square feet in area. §175-16(11) permits the raising and keeping of chickens on residential properties, on a non-commercial basis, if the property owner complies with all elements of Use H-11, including utilizing a property of at least 40,000 square feet in area. Applicants seek a variance for the use accordingly.

6. Applicants have two (2) Khaki Campbell ducks on the Subject Property.

7. The ducks are emotional support animals for the Applicants' child.

8. Applicants' child is also studying animals in college and caring for the ducks assists with the studies.

9. Applicants do not allow any other ducks to hatch on the Subject Property and agree to limit it to just these two ducks.

10. Applicants agreed to the conditions imposed.

11. No one spoke in opposition to the application.

12. Doylestown Township took no position with regard to this application.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

1. The Subject Property has been developed and used consistent with the requirements of the Ordinance.

2. The competent evidence presented leads the Board to conclude that, if the variance relief is granted, there will be no negative impacts upon surrounding properties or uses.

3. The evidence establishes that the relief sought by the Applicants are the minimum variance necessary.

4. The variance sought will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or district in which the Subject Property is located.

5. The Applicants have presented evidence of sufficient factors to warrant the grant of the dimensional variance requested under the relaxed variance standard applicable to dimensional variance cases, as articulated by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, in Hertzberg v. Zoning Board of Adjustment of the City of Pittsburgh, 554 Pa. 249, 721 A.2d. 43 (1998).

6. Accordingly, the Doylestown Township Zoning Hearing Board determined, unanimously, to grant the Applicants request for relief, as is set forth hereafter.

