

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Eric Rush [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 12, 2023 5:00 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Opposition to Notice of Public Hearing (Case 23-1-033)  
**Attachments:** IMG\_0.MOV

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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To Planning & Zoning Commission:

We are providing this letter in response to the Notice of Public Hearing (Case 23-1-033) on the 7/19 PZC meeting agenda regarding the chicken coops / farm located at 2300 Flambeau Drive. Unfortunately, we will be out of the country at the time of the meeting and will not be able to represent ourselves at the hearing. We are the neighbors directly to the east of the property and the most impacted by this operation. We oppose the requested variances to the city code that are being presented in this case.

We have been in communication with Naperville Code Enforcement since October 2021. Over that time, Enforcement Officers have requested that the chickens be removed from the property and have issued various citations to the residents due to City Code infractions. As a result of the citations / violations not being resolved, the City of Naperville initiated a court filing in 12/2022. The case remains open and continues to get delayed monthly with no resolution.

The Montalbano's initiated this project with a single chicken coop in 2020. Over the past 3 years they have continued to build new structures and add onto existing structures. However, during the past 8 weeks construction has drastically increased and the property has significantly changed. It is our understanding that a permit for these chicken coops has never been approved by the city. The permit should have been acquired prior to any coop was added to the property in 2020. It is also our understanding that there hasn't been a filing for the modifications and additions to the coops.

Attached please find current photos to compare with the Coops and Runs Footprint document that has been submitted as part of the variance request. One item that we do not have a photo of is the structure that they have built / expanded behind our shrubs. That area used to be an open pen, but they have now extended the structure with the roof to the end of our shrubs. An area of concern is that neither of the documents that have been filed for the meeting that was to be held on June 21st or the documents for the upcoming July 19th meeting, reflect the ongoing building or accurately represent the current state of the property. We aren't quite sure how the entire process of requesting a variance works. However, since they have been continuously building every day, we aren't sure

how the documentation they submitted is verified, updated and submitted for the PZC to review at the meeting.

The other discrepancy is the document "Exhibit B - Coop Screening". It says: "This neighbor likes to walk to the back of their property to "visit" the chickens". I think they might have mistakenly assumed that when we are neighborly or kind when we see them, that means we are happy with what they are doing. We don't "walk the back of the property to "visit" the chickens". In actuality, we use our yard / deck much less than ever due to the noise of the chickens and noise and lack of privacy from the groups of people they have over there. The document also indicates that our shrubs cover 60% of the coops. As you see in our pictures, they cover approximately a 1/3 of the length of the property. Either way, the code says they should have either a 6 foot fence or shrubs/screening of at least 75% opacity around the perimeter of the lot where the pen/coop/enclosure is located or around the perimeter of the pen/coop/enclosure itself. As the top of the roofline is currently 8' above the ground, a 6' fence would not block the structures from the view. In addition, our shrubs are nearing the end of their life and we have been considering removing them. However, since they are our only barrier blocking a small portion of our view of the coops/runs, it gives us a little bit of privacy from the groups of people they have over and might be blocking some of the noise from the groups and the chickens themselves, we don't want to risk taking them out.

I am also including a video that provides the sound of the chickens during certain times of the day. During warmer times of the year, the odor from the chickens can also be an issue in our yard. Which raises the questions around issues related to health and environmental concerns from having that many chickens on a residential property.

Regarding the variance to Home Occupation Regulation (Section 6-2-8), the size of groups of people / volunteers that go through the property has been very unexpected. We are not sure how this type of business can be supported in a residential environment. In addition, they have permanently installed a port-a-pot on the side of their house which we would think is outside of city code.

We appreciate and respect the Monalbano's desire to provide a service to the community. However, an operation of this magnitude should not be in a neighborhood of Naperville. It should be located in rural setting with larger lots to accommodate the number of chickens they currently have, and the amount and size of coops/runs needed for that many chickens, and enough space to allow the groups of people and volunteers frequenting their current location. Since they built their first coop in 2020, they have continuously talked about acquiring land to relocate their operation. We kept hoping those plans would come to fruition. We could have never imagined then that it would become what it is now or how much of an impact it would have on us.

Thanks,  
Eric & Stacy Rush



















## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Curt Riemer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 30, 2023 2:10 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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To whom it may concern,

As a 20+ year resident of Naperville, living at [REDACTED], I have had the honor and pleasure of knowing and working with Rick and Wendy Montalbano. They live across the street from me, and are involved in a terrific outreach ministry, Touch My Heart. TMH, as it is know by those of us involved, is setup to serve the special needs community, which are primarily adult age. The work they do with many organizations is nothing less than amazing, and I hope that you take all of this into consideration as you make a decision on their petition for approval of variances which would be listed in case #23-1-033.

My wife and I ask you to honor their request for approval on all variances involved, so they can move forward with any and all plans to enhance their outreach. This would be a show of good faith, that Naperville does care about the special needs community!

I know about all the hard work that was involved with assisting Little Friends when they decided to move from Naperville to Warrenville, now is time to help an organization that is planning on staying and serving Naperville and beyond.

Thank you for you consideration!

Curt and Sabrina Riemer

Sent from my iPad



## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** DANIEL KOYS [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 10, 2023 5:55 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Montalbano Petition

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Blue Category

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I DO NOT SUPPORT Richard Montalbano's petition seeking variances:

Variance to "waive then screening requirement for coops." I DO NOT SUPPORT this because screening requirements are important for maintaining quality of the neighborhood.

Variance "to increase the allowable number of fowl on the property from eight to twenty." I DO NOT SUPPORT this because the neighborhood is zoned residential. A large number of fowl do not belong in a residential neighborhood. I think that eight fowl is even too many for a residential neighborhood.

Variance "to allow an accessory structure to be located less than five feet from the rear property line." I DO NOT SUPPORT this because granting this request may encourage other people in this neighborhood to request such a variance. In addition, I do not think this request shows consideration for the immediate neighbors of the property.

Variance "to allow class sizes of up to twelve for a home occupation." I DO NOT SUPPORT because a residential neighborhood is not appropriate for a home business that attracts twelve people.

July 11, 2023

Re: Case # 23-1-033 – Richard Montalbano (Petitioner)

To Whom It May Concern:

Our property lies southeast of the Montalbano's. When we first were told about the hens, we were informed that there would be restrictions to how many hens and the size of the coups and run. But over the years, their coups and run have turned into a monstrosity. They just keep building and growing. We have put up with the noise, the smells, the crowds of visiting people and now they are requesting to increase the count of their hens and no restrictions on the coups. We live in a residential neighborhood. Not a farm. They should not be allowed to have what they have in their backyard and we as their neighbors should not have to endure this any longer.

Listed below are our concerns:

- Documents mention "illness" of the chickens. What kind of "illness" are talking about and can it spread? Do we need to be concerned about 'bird flu.' Can these illnesses affect the wild life?
- The Montalbano's talk about looking for other property to house these hens. But they have been looking for three years. What is taking so long and if they are looking for another facility then why are they asking to increase the amount of hens and coups?
- Depending on the direction of the wind, we get the smell of the hens.
- I work from home and we have a four season room that I would like to work in but I can't open my windows on nice days because I endure the noise and smell of the hens and the noise of the people visiting.
- This is bringing down the value of our property. Anyone who visits and we go outside the first thing they see and ask about is the monstrosity that is in their backyard. If our friends see it immediately, I cannot imagine what it would be like if we tried to sell. This is an eyesore. Even worse for the neighbor whose view of their yard includes their porta potty.
- They mentioned that it would be expensive to move but over the last six weeks they have been building and adding to the structure. So I don't believe they have any intentions in moving the structure.
- With the amount of people coming through their backyard, we are concerned about the security of our neighborhood.

We understand what they are trying to achieve and it is admirable BUT their backyard is not the place for this to be housed. It needs to be taken down and moved. It definitely should not be allowed to continue to expand. If the structure is allowed to stay then they need to install a 6 – 10 ft. fence around their property. It would help with the noise and let us have our privacy.

Sincerely,

John & Barb Buzzelli





## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Teresa Rogers [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 12, 2023 10:11 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Cc:** Rick Montalbano, Jr.  
**Subject:** Touch My Heart Request For Variance

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Green Category

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July 10, 2023

To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team

Re: Approval of Variances for Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL

Touch My Heart NFP (TMH) makes therapeutic and educational resources available to multiple entities including but not limited to organizations serving adults and post-secondary students with special needs without said organizations having to create such programs and facilities themselves and having to dedicate staff and resources in this current era where budgets are already “stretched thin’.

TMH provides opportunities to “destress and unplug” with a carefully planned environment and programming for not only the adults and students with special needs but also for the staff who work with them. Relaxing, calming activities in an intentionally soothing sensory setting allow both the staff and those they care for to connect with nature and enjoy a respite from their regular routines and stressors. (I have observed in my ten years of working part time for District 203 the value of providing a dedicated space or classroom that minimizes distracting stimuli for students who become overstimulated, overwhelmed or anxious. The same principle applies here. Additionally, the State of Illinois recognizes the value of outdoor education and has required it as part of all fifth graders’ curriculum. That same value is afforded to the people TMH serves.)



TMH also provides similar benefits to its volunteers who appreciate the opportunity to “decompress” from their jobs and also from demands at home. Additionally, TMH provides opportunities for Eagle Scouts to complete their service projects, for individuals to put in required community service hours, and for young adults to gain experience, skills and confidence to utilize in their future endeavors.

Lastly, TMH is a peaceful presence in the neighborhood as evidenced by the neighbors who occasionally stop by with their grandkids or who leave an ornament on the “community holiday tree” that graces the front lawn during the winter holiday season. This is much needed in our increasingly turbulent culture to maintain the social health of our community.

In consideration of the points set forth above, please approve the request for variance as it is financially and therapeutically beneficial to grant the variance so that multiple entities may continue to utilize the resources of TMH NFP, allowing these said entities to focus their own resources on their own internal supports and programming.

Respectfully submitted,  
Teresa Rogers, Volunteer TMH NFP

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Christine Pullen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2023 11:22 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team  
Re: Approval of Variances for Richard and Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case #23-1-033

Hello, My name is Christine Pullen and I am a 20 year resident of Naperville and I'm also a mom of a young adult with special needs. I have been navigating the special needs world here and have watched it grow from virtually non-existent to a loving community with many outreach programs. One such program I am delighted to be involved with is Touch My Heart Farm. My son has had the incredible opportunity of experiencing the farm with his day program and I've had the immense pleasure of volunteering at the farm.

Wendy and Rick are so compassionate and knowledgeable with their efforts to support the special needs community with chicken therapy. I am so overjoyed to have a place here in Naperville that my son can go to with his peers and enjoy the calm, serene and beautiful farm. Wendy takes so much time explaining everything to the groups and is so patient with all the participants. The farm is full of love and I got to experience that first hand as a volunteer, observing individuals just like my son, happy and enjoying the moment.

Please allow approval for all the variances the Montalbano's are seeking so they can continue to offer and expand this most needed service to individuals who are most deserving. Below is a picture of my son loving every minute of his visit to the farm.

Very respectfully submitted,

Christine Pullen





## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Warren, Scot [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 12, 2023 10:36 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033, Petition for Approval of Variances

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Red Category

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Naperville Planning and Zoning Commission:

My name is Scot Warren, and I reside at [REDACTED] in Naperville. I am the northside next door neighbor of Richard and Wendy Montalbano, and I fully support Richard's petition (Case #23-1-033) in seeking variances (i) to waive the screening requirements for coops, (ii) to increase the allowable number of fowl on the property from eight to twenty, (iii) to allow an accessory structure to be located less than five feet from the rear property line, and (iv) to allow class sizes of up to twelve for a home occupation. I've known Rick and Wendy for many years, I consider them wonderful neighbors, and I'm very familiar with all the good that their Touch My Heart organization does for our Naperville community. The chickens that they care for in their backyard provide comfort to individuals who have stresses in their lives, and the habitat is meticulously maintained by the Montalbanos and their team of supporters. Rick and Wendy are committed to providing a meaningful volunteer and support environment for individuals who may have limited options to participate in a community-oriented cause. I have donated to their Touch My Heart organization because I believe in its mission and the overwhelmingly positive impact it has for our community. The quality of our neighborhood has been enhanced by Rick and Wendy's generosity and dedication, and I enjoy seeing the smiles from their guests and volunteers who visit their backyard. The Montalbanos are providing a unique high quality service for our community, and I strongly encourage the Planning and Zoning Commission to approve the requested variances to the Naperville Municipal Code.

Respectfully submitted,

Scot Warren  
[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

--  
Scot Warren, P.E.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2023 7:33 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Red Category

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Jerome T. Walters  
[REDACTED]  
Warrenville, Illinois [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

July 12, 2023

City of Naperville Planning Services Team  
Naperville, Illinois

Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case #23-1-033

Dear City of Naperville,

My name is Jerry Walters and I am writing to you about the variance being requested for the property located at 2300 Flambeau, Naperville, Illinois. The variance is needed to allow an important service to special needs people to continue at that address. The special needs service is organized by a non-profit group called Touch My Heart (TMH).

I have worked as a volunteer for TMH for several years now. During that time, I have witnessed the many significant benefits TMH brings to the Naperville community. The work that TMH does for the special needs community and for Naperville is indispensable. The visits that these special needs people take to 2300 Flambeau provides a much needed answer to a Naperville community need. Without the work of TMH, this service to the special needs people would be very difficult, if not impossible to replace.

For the benefit of the Naperville community, there should be more community-minded activities like what TMH offers rather than less. I urge the City of Naperville to grant TMH with the variance they need to keep

this vital service to continue. Please consider the benefits to the City of Naperville offered by the services of TMH and grant them the variance they need.

Sincerely,

Jerome T. Walters

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2023 8:24 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Touch My Heart

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

I write this note in support of Touch My Heart based on the experiences our parent support group has had over the past few years. Each parent has a unique story with a common thread of moving to and remaining in Naperville because of the outstanding school district. As adult persons with special needs, support from the school district ceases at age 22 and parents are left to their own devices to find caring organizations to support our young adults.

Enter Touch My Heart. Rick and Wendy are providing an inclusive, loving, outdoor activity so that our young adults can learn new information, socialize and communicate in a relaxed atmosphere. Finding opportunities in Naperville to engage our young adults who operate on a limited budget is very difficult and Touch My Heart provides therapy animal interactions, agricultural experiences and community engagement. To lose this valuable resource would be very detrimental to the families who are blessed on each visit by the entire team at Touch My Heart.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Murray, PhD  
Proud Parent of Christian



To: The City of Naperville Planning Services Team

Re: Approval of Variances for Richard and Wendy Montalbano –Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case # 23-1-033

To Whom It May Concern,

Our family have been residents of Naperville for the past 12 years and met Rick and Wendy shortly after our move to the area. We became acquainted with them through their Touch My Heart organization who has ministered to our two young adults with autism since our move. Their current chicken therapy outreach has been a welcome respite for our son and daughter as a calming atmosphere filled with love and acceptance.

My father more recently has been diagnosed with dementia and has visited the farm as well. He also enjoyed the comfortable atmosphere and felt calm during his time there.

Rick and Wendy have compassionate hearts in working with these populations that tend to be pushed aside in our society. They fill in the gap with all their dedication so these individuals can have a wonderful experience. My father, son and daughter always want to come back because they love it there.

Due to this, I ask that you approve all the variances for Rick and Wendy with the Case #23-1-033. Then they can move forward with this wonderful outreach not only for my family but many others working with special needs.

Sincerely,

Terese Biondo

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Susan Rink [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2023 7:44 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team

Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case #23-1-033

My name is Susan Rink. Our family of five has lived in Naperville for 16 years. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] One of our children (now age 22) has autism. We have been blessed to have all three of our children go to the fantastic IPSD 204. We have also been blessed to receive services from and volunteer with Touch My Heart.

TMH has been a not-for-profit for 13 years, but the Montalbano's have been serving people with disabilities in the Naperville area for decades. (In 2014 the American Legion Post 43 named Rick Montalbano Citizen of the Year for Service to the Community.) Long before their Farm initiative (which was an ingenious response to the COVID crisis,) TMH was providing social, recreational, and material support to the most invisible yet vulnerable and isolated group in our community: adults with disabilities who live in group homes, many of whom are protected wards of the state.

The TMH Farm provides something rare and needed in our community. Our son with autism loves visiting the TMH Farm. It is one of the few places we see him truly relax and feel at peace. Now that our son has left the STEPS Transition program at IPSD 204, he attends various Day Programs. The days he visits the TMH Farm are extra special for him.

I ask you to please grant the variances needed for TMH to continue offering the amazing experiences they have created for our son and so many others. The Montalbano's have a long history of giving selflessly to this community. I would hope that our community could find a way to extend back to them some of the good will they continuously share with us.

Sincerely,

Susan Rink

**July 13, 2023**

**TO: CITY OF NAPERVILLE PLANNING SERVICES TEAM**

RE: APPROVAL OF VARIANCES FOR RICHARD &  
WENDY MONTALBANO – TOUCH MY HEART, NFP,  
2300 FLAMBEAU DR, NAPERVILLE CASE #23-1-003

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Mary Muszynski, a 13-year resident of Naperville, living at [REDACTED]. I am currently employed by District 203 working as Social Worker servicing Connections Transition Program and Steeple Run Elementary. My four children are students at District 203 Schools: Naperville Central High School, Lincoln Junior High, and Kingsley Elementary.

My child [REDACTED], a Naperville Central Sophomore, and I have volunteered on a weekly basis for Touch My Heart for over a year. We began our involvement as an intervention for [REDACTED] who had been struggling with significant mental health issues. An animal lover, [REDACTED] found attending to the needs of the chickens therapeutic, as the work is more than simply maintaining the coops. Engaging with the chickens for their mandated human contact hours serves as a rewarding practice, enriching [REDACTED]'s life as well as the hens'.

Additionally, I serve on the advisory board for Community Access Naperville (C.A.N.), a non-profit empowering young adults with exceptionalities by providing opportunities to work in, contribute to, and enjoy their community. Touch My Heart has worked successfully in partnership with C.A.N., providing meaningful experiences for its participants.

I strongly appeal to the City of Naperville Planning Services team to approve the variances for which the Montalbanos have petitioned. I observe the positive impact their program has on individuals weekly, and serve as witness to their invaluable contributions to our community.

SINCERELY,

MARY MUSZYNSKI





Ray Graham  
Association®

Empowering people with disabilities  
to reach, grow, and achieve.™

July 13, 2023

To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team

Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300  
Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case #23-1-033

Ray Graham Association has been providing services and supports to children and adults with intellectual and other types of developmental disabilities since 1950. Our organization provides a variety of services that support people to live their life to its fullest. At our Hanson Center in Burr Ridge, we provide therapeutic horseback riding and a variety of other programs and services that integrate animal therapy, such as our Barn Buddies program.

Rick Montalbano has been a wonderful volunteer and supporter of our organization for many years. He and his wife have dedicated much time and resources to enhancing people with I/DD's lives. They are truly generous and always looking for ways to better their community. Touch My Heart (TMH) makes therapeutic and educational resources available to multiple entities including but not limited to organizations serving adults and post-secondary students.

TMH has created an engaging calm atmosphere that integrates nature with sensory support needs. I am very supportive of this person-centered organization and the value it brings to people and the community. We hope to see this experience continue to be available in the future.

Sincerely,

Kim Zoeller

President & CEO

Kimberly R. Zoeller, President and CEO

Lisle, IL

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Amy Phillips [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2023 4:29 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Red Category

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**To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team**  
**Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case #23-1-033**

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Amy Phillips, a 14 year Naperville resident and staff member at The Conservation Foundation. I first became acquainted with Rick and Wendy and the important work they do with Touch My Heart last year, and I have enjoyed getting to know them through our collective work with the DuPage Nature Rx Coalition. This coalition seeks to find new an interesting ways to bring people into nature for their mental and physical health while fostering a love of and connection with open space and the outdoors.

When I first saw their facility, I was blown away. It is clean and neat and the birds are so friendly – their backyard “farm” is truly a gem in the middle of south Naperville. But when they described their mission to support adults with autism in care homes through hands-on experience with animals and the positive impact it has for this population, I knew I had found something truly unique and special.

I hope that the City of Naperville not only supports their requested variances but also recognizes in some way the unique and impactful work they do for our community.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Phillips

**Amy Phillips**  
**DuPage County Programs Director**

The Conservation Foundation  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]



July 14, 2023

Re: Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL  
Case #23-1-033

Dear City of Naperville Planning Services Team,

Founded in 1960, Aspire's mission is to empower people with disabilities to shape and succeed in more inclusive communities. We provide direct service support to over 400 adults with disabilities living across Cook and Lake County. Since 2009, Aspire's partnership with Touch My Heart has moved our mission of inclusion forward in a multitude of ways including visits to the farm, donations of critical foods and product supplies, and more!

In 2020, Rick was awarded Aspire's 2020 Community Hero Award for his incredible support, service, and contributions during a time of crisis. Rick and his team of volunteers not only showed up but exceeded our expectations in providing life-saving supplies for adults living in our community homes when COVID-19 hit.

Since then, we've partnered with Rick and Wendy to bring dozens of adults with disabilities participating in Aspire's day programming services to visit, unwind, and enjoy the benefits of their therapy chickens—traveling from our Academies in Hillside and Waukegan. The positive feedback we get from the people in our programs is a testament to the impact of Touch My Heart and we hope that the people we serve and support at Aspire have the opportunity to continue benefitting from these incredible opportunities for years to come!

On behalf of all of us at Aspire, thank you to the Montalbano family and his team of volunteers for their consistent commitment to building more inclusive communities—where adults with disabilities and their families can experience the benefits of belonging where they live, learn, and work.

Powered by possible,



Sharon Lawrence  
Chief Operating Officer

Powered by possible.

Aspire Eamon Shannon Center, [Redacted]



## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Brandon @ ALA [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 9:07 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case# 23-1-033 ; Letter of Support for Touch My Heart!

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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To Whom It May Concern:

Awesome Life Academy was pleased to have visited Touch My Heart in June!! We had the most amazing experience; were able to ignite awesome lives and torch limitations! Many of our students have never touched or held chickens before! They were all so excited! The program was transformative and will leave an everlasting impression on our students!

At Touch My Heart, they were so excited to share what they do with us! We got to meet 5 of their chickens and everyone got to hold them and pet them! We got to learn the life cycle of chickens, how they help us, gardening, and how to take care of chickens. We did some chicken yoga, got to walk the beautiful garden, and see how the coop works! Each student gained a unique experience.

Student testimonies:

Caroline: has a huge fear of animals she does not like to get close at all, but after seeing everyone hold the chickens and seeing how calm they were, she decided to hold them! She was afraid at first but the kind staff helped her work through her fear! It was so exciting to tell Mom and Dad that she overcame her fears!

Jon: After visiting, Jon said this was his favorite place! He mentioned that he would go there every day if he could! He got to hold Stella and she was so soft. He loved learning about what chickens do and enjoyed their

nice picnic spot where he had lunch! He said it was so cool to be that close to a chicken and cannot wait to do it again!

Mathis: he had the biggest smile on his face when he got to hold the chickens. After talking to him he got so excited to share how much fun it was! He says the chickens were super soft and that it was so cool to check out the butterfly garden they have!

Nehemiah: he loved the chicken farm and wants to go back! He was scared at first to have a chicken sit on his lap but after holding it he was so excited! He loved checking out the caterpillars and butterflies and doing the silly chicken yoga exercises!

Daniella: she said this experience changed her life! She had so much fun holding the chicken! It was scary at first but after a while, she warmed up and was excited! She loved that there were so many things to do there and wants to go back!

Andrew: he said it was the coolest thing holding a chicken and was so excited for a chance to hold them. He loved everyone there and wants to go back! He had fun doing the yoga and learning about chickens!

Tim: his favorite thing was that he got to hold a chicken named Stella and he knows someone named Stella! He said everything was so awesome! He loved learning about the plants they have there and seeing how much they grow! He loved learning about butterflies and their life cycle!

Hannah: it was the most amazing thing to hold a chicken! I have never been so close to one and they were so cute and calm! The chicken was so soft and I just got so excited because this was such a unique opportunity! There is so much to offer here! I absolutely loved their garden they had so many plants and all were looking so successful! The butterflies were so awesome too! I got to learn so many fun facts about chickens and butterflies! I absolutely can not wait to go back!

In the end, Touch My Heart has made a wonderful impact on our students and staff. Everything they offer gives all of us a unique opportunity to learn and try new things! The chickens were so loving and the staff was absolutely fantastic! We are so excited to go back!!

We appreciate your time and consideration,

The Staff, Students, and Families of Awesome Life

Academy!!

Written by Hannah Bogdan intern/staff- Outdoor Recreation Leadership Student at the University of  
Prince William Sound -Alaska

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Brandon @ ALA [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 9:33 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case # 23-1-033 ; Approval of Variances for Richard and Wendy Montalbano- Touch My Heart NFP

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** Red Category

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City of Naperville Planning Services Team,

Hope this message finds you well. As a local non profit leader I am constantly trying to find ways to help serve my community. In 2021 I launched my organization to serve special needs adults in the Naperville area. Early on I met Rick & Wendy and we connected as service driven leaders. The Montalbano's have dedicated their lives to serving others. The Touch My Heart program is just one of many ways they create meaningful, inclusive, and amazing opportunities for the special needs community.

As my organization has grown so has our community partnership with Touch My Heart. Together we have amplified our impact and served 100's of individuals through engaging and unique opportunities. They are a foundational piece of Awesome Life Academy and it's mission to ignite awesome lives and torch limitations. The programs and events that we do with Touch My Heart allow these amazing and capable humans to grow and thrive by providing a holistic approach to learning through experience. I have witnessed significant and life changing personal growth amongst our clients that resulted directly because of the impact of Rick & Wendy Montalbano.

I can tell stories, give statistics, and provide hardcore evidence that programs like this enhance the quality of life for those they serve. I urge you to watch these videos and tell me that Touch My Heart does not add exponential value to our community and bring joy to the world.

[ALA visits TMH](#)   [Joy on The Farm](#)

Naperville is known for it's forward thinking mentality when it comes to providing services for individuals we special needs. Organizations like Touch My Heart and Awesome Life Academy are at the forefront of that initiative. Lets continue to lead the way for other communities to follow. Together we can create the awesome and inclusive world we all deserve.

Have an Awesome and Blessed Day,



Brandon Quaintance  
President/Founder  
Awesome Life Academy NFP

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

## Beaver, Adam

---

**From:** BRIAN Walker [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 9:26 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** Red Category

**CAUTION:** This e-mail originated outside of the City of Naperville (@naperville.il.us).

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To whom it may concern,

I have been a resident at [REDACTED] for 20 years now. I have never met Rick and Wendy Montalbano at Touch My Heart NFP (TMH). I have seen the impact they have made on my friend, her brother and her daughter who is one of the lucky ones who they have touched. Brian and Colleen really enjoys all his time at TMH. Brian and Colleen has grown as a person and is getting the stimulation outside the house he deserves.

I know as a community it can be hard to find volunteers to help with anything. I also know budgets are tight everywhere. I also understand there has to be rules for everything and sometimes to help others people they have to jump through hoops to make it happen. Please help Rick and Wendy jump through the hoops so they can focus on helping those who are not being recognized as much as they should be. Rick and Wendy are here to take their time to help others. They are saving Naperville money to help others that the budget does not have time to help.

I fully support Richard's Petition (Case #23-1-033) in seeking variances (i) to waive the screening requirements for coops, (ii) to increase the allowable number of fowl on the property from eight to twenty, (iii) to allow an accessory structure to be located less than five feet from the rear property line, and (iv) to allow class sizes of up to twelve for a home occupation.

Please support Rick and Wendy so they can support our community.

Thank you for your consideration !

Jill Walker

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Christine Y [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 6:37 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** TMH

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** Red Category

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I have volunteered for TMH in Naperville for two years... My experience has been so positive and Rick and Wendy have been the example of presenting a wonderful, educational and positive experience for the population for which they serve.

They are dedicated and so empathetic to the population for which they serve.

I fully believe in the benefits that this program offers and support the goals and plan of care that Wendy puts forth for the population that she serves.

Please

Contact me for any further information

Christine Yracheta

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Diana Waldron [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 7:59 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** Red Category

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**To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team**  
**Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case #23-1-033**

I recently became aware of the upcoming meeting regarding Touch My Heart. I wish I could physically be at the meeting to show our support of this amazing organization, but since we can't, we are hoping you will take the time to consider our written support.

My husband, Mike, and I have been residents of Naperville for over 30 years and have resided that entire time in the same neighborhood as Rick & Wendy Montalbano. I don't know of a couple that has given more of their sweat and tears to those in our community that are often forgotten.

I first met them when they helped organize a musical for families at Clow Elementary School, even though they didn't have children in attendance! Hundreds of neighborhood children and family members gathered and many relationships I have to this day in our community, began due to the efforts of the Montabanos. It did not surprise me to learn about Touch My Heart and all the incredible social opportunities they provided for those in the special needs community.

When the pandemic shut down the world, there was a population of people who did not have the ability to remain "virtually" connected and I saw first hand the devastation of so many.

Where many were focused on how they were enduring all of the difficulties of that season, Touch My Heart focused on finding a way to care for the previous special needs community by opening their home/backyard and creating a safe and healing place. I would love to see the work they started, continue. Their property is a beautiful, peaceful haven and I am extremely proud to have it in our neighborhood. Just last week I stopped by with a neighborhood teenager to the home, where the Montabano's showed their beautiful hospitality and extended such kindness to the teen as they introduced them to the enclosed chickens.

Please do not decline this petition without seeing firsthand the gift that it is to all who experience it. I truly cannot understand how any negative can be associated with this gift to our city. I understand the setback variance request is a



mere 6 inches. I can't see how that 6 inches could impact any neighboring property and urge you to consider approval of this variance.

Naperville needs to support efforts of those who extend themselves to serving others versus creating any unnecessary barriers. I truly hope you will do so by approving the requested variances to the Naperville Municipal Code.

Respectfully submitted,

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Diana Waldron

[REDACTED]

Naperville

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Holly Ramsey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 15, 2023 12:47 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033 2300 Flambeau Rick & Wendy Montalbano

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Red Category

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Dear Commission Members Athanikar, Losurdo, Van Someren, Richelia, McDaniel, Castagnoli, Wright, Robbins, and King:

I lived in Naperville for 14 years and am an active supporter of Touch My Heart. I am asking you to approve all the variances requested in order for the Montalbanos to continue to serve the community they love.

The Planning and Zoning Commission may be concerned about a "slippery slope" and precedence that a variance can convey.

Fortunately, that's not the case with this request.

Rick and Wendy stand alone in providing the first chicken animal-assisted therapy venue in the United States. Wendy studied & received certifications in Backyard Poultry Education and Animal Assisted Therapy and Activities.

This isn't "another backyard chicken case." This is the Montalbanos and Touch My Heart filling a need in the special needs community. Feel free to ask IPSD 204, who brought some individuals just this week for a visit to the TMH chickens.

This variance request is utterly unique because what the Montalbanos are doing is utterly unique. What a privilege for Naperville to be leading the nation in this regard!

There is no smell associated with their coop. The Montalbanos have a regular rotation of volunteers who assist them in maintaining the highest standard of cleanliness. Additionally, they employ an autistic young adult to assist with opening and closing, providing a needed job for an often overlooked segment of Naperville.

There is no issue with crowds. TMH limits its offerings to only small groups of special needs adults and only during daytime hours. All parking is done in the Montalbanos U-shaped driveway. There is no impact on street parking.

There is no issue with noise or crowing. Only softly clucking hens reside in the coop. There are no roosters.

The placement of the coop was done deliberately to allow for 360-degree motorized wheelchair turns by guests. The six inches to a foot variance will make no difference to any isolated neighbor complaint.

It makes a world of difference to the accessibility of the community Rick and Wendy serve.

Disapproving the variance would cost a huge investment in time and money to move the coop, and could have a shuttering effect on this aspect of the Touch My Heart non-profit.

I don't think dismantling significant and beloved community non-profits is probably why any of you decided to serve in local government.

The Montalbanos and Touch My Heart enjoy near unanimous support from their neighbors who have sent their own letters about how the chickens have brought the community together. Additionally, when public documents revealed a sole neighbor complaint, Rick and Wendy took immediate steps to address the concern.

The Montalbanos' work with Touch My Heart chickens has resulted in them being recognized as Illinois' first 4-H Partner to serve those 18+.

Naperville itself recognized Rick as a Citizen of the Year not too long ago.

The Nature Rx Coalition, which includes many of the parks in the Naperville area, asked Rick and Wendy to be a part of their coalition. The Montalbanos have already bolstered a sense of community within that organization by inviting partners to their backyard to see chickens and the benefits of outdoor education.

The variances allow Touch My Heart to continue to build community, serve marginalized groups, and establish Naperville as firmly at the forefront of innovative animal-assisted therapy.

After the Planning and Zoning Commission approves the variances, I might also suggest visiting the chickens yourself.

You may find this makes you an enthusiastic supporter in aiding the Montalbanos in finding several affordable acres within Naperville for Touch My Heart Farm to find its permanent home. These variances are a stop-gap measure as the Montalbanos continue to search for permanent land for the chickens.

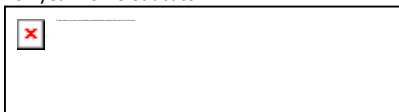
I have to think that such win-win propositions like approving these. variances and using your knowledge to find accessible permanent land for amazing groups like TMH are probably why each of you chose to serve in local government.

I look forward to seeing how your commission might help keep Touch My Heart firmly within Naperville!

Sincerely,  
Holly Ramsey

[Independent Educational Consultant](#)

Brave Writer Coach  
20+ year home educator



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## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Isabella Udziela [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 3:12 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033 , To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team. Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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To whom it may concern:

My name is Isabella Udziela. I have lived in Naperville my whole life. I'm a college student, and in my spare time I volunteer at Touch My Heart. I started volunteering in the height of the pandemic and while it was a very rough time for the whole world, Wendy and Rick started something that brings much needed joy and education to the people that need it the most. I've seen this firsthand the many times that I volunteered during a farm visit. The pure excitement that visiting TMH gives to visitors is proof enough that Rick and Wendy and Touch My Heart have been able to provide a safe, enriching, fun, educational environment for a demographic that the government often neglects. These people often are looking forward to visiting for weeks or even months and these trips are the light of so many people's days.

While we mainly do serve people that are in group homes, I have seen how therapy animals and things like access to community gardens affect everyone that spends time at (or around) Touch My Heart. People like to see beautiful flowers and a garden and comforting therapy birds in their own neighborhood. When I volunteer, I get to spend time with and socialize the therapy chickens and it truly does help to be with animals during a rough time. I'm going to Michigan State next semester to study and hopefully work with therapy animals in the future. Therapy chickens are pretty uncommon compared to therapy dogs or horses etc. I believe that Wendy and Rick's hard work is going to have a positive impact on the animal behavior community as well. Through TMH, I have gotten to take care of the chickens, be of service, spend time with therapy animals weekly and bonus: gain some needed experience for my future.

I think it's unfair to *everyone* to focus on technicalities and boundary lines when this charity is caring for a part of our community that has been very neglected. This time and energy could be much better spent elsewhere instead of holding back an organization that provides a great service to so many people in need. We need more programs like TMH that are accessible to *everyone*. The City of Naperville should recognize this and be part of the solution. **Please allow TMH to continue serving the community and keep brightening their neighborhood.**

Thank you.

Isabella Udziela

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Janet Anderson [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 6:26 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** case# 23-1-033, pin# 07-01-02-207-024 --2300 Flambeau Dr, Naperville, IL 60564

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Red Category

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Dear Sir or Madam:

We have been residents of Springbrook Crossing subdivision since August of 1990. We regularly take walks in our neighborhood primarily for exercise, but it also keeps us aware of any changes to the neighborhood. We frequently walk passed the above residence and have always found it to be well maintained and quiet. We learned about the variance request last week after seeing the sign posted on their lawn.

The Touch my Heart Farm is a welcome addition to our neighborhood. We first visited the farm last December and was able to get a closer look at the facility and learn more about their outreach programs and goals for the future. We also met some of the volunteers (some who are their neighbors), which is impressive,

We support their decision to expand the farm which will allow them to reach and accommodate more children and adults into their programs.

Thank you for taking the time and consideration,

Jan and John Anderson  
[REDACTED]



## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Jean Schue [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 4:26 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** Red Category

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Dear City of Naperville Planning Services Team,

This letter is in support of the variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP 2300 Flambeau Dr. Naperville, IL Case#23-1-033

My name is Jean Schue. I was born and raised in Naperville, and am a volunteer for Touch My Heart organization(TMh). I work with the therapy chickens and have for the past 2 years. I also work with the special needs groups that come to Touch My Heart Farm. Rick and Wendy along with TMh volunteers are a dedicated, conscientious, exceptional team that cares for the chickens and their habitat. The program they have centered around the special needs groups that visit TMh Farm has positive impact on these people. These groups get to see, pet and hold a chicken in the chicken's environment. For these special needs groups it is a huge part of connecting with animals, being outdoors and learning all about chickens while impacting their health and wellness.

The only way this happens is a clean, meticulous environment that Rick and Wendy have built. Our visitors would not want to come to a place that is dirty, smells and not in order. TMh Farm is cared for by many volunteers with Rick and Wendy's capable leadership. I encourage you to give them the variances for their property.

Regards,  
Jean Schue

To whom it may concern,

My name is Diane Kennedy, and I am currently an active and involved volunteer at Touch My Heart (referred to as TMH).

I, along my family, fully support Richard Montalbano's petition (Case #23-1-033) seeking approval of variances (i) to waive the screening requirements for coops, (ii) to increase the allowable number of fowl on the property from eight to twenty, (iii) to allow an accessory structure to be located less than five feet from the rear property line, and (iv) to allow class sizes of up to twelve for a home occupation.

My husband Shawn and I have known Richard and Wendy Montalbano for several years, thanks to our involvement in Boy Scouts while our sons were in their teenage years. Montalbano's long time commitment to enriching the lives of the special needs community (defined as individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities) was on full display throughout those years and remains so. Myself, my husband, and my son have all assisted Montalbano's in their pursuit of making sure that special needs individuals have access to meaningful experiences in a safe (and non-judgmental) environment.

At the same time, those scouting volunteer service hours to the special needs community also enriched the lives of the scouts and parents/guardians volunteering year-after-year in events provided by Montalbano's. The scouts, my child included, were from diverse backgrounds in the Naperville/Aurora area, and students in both Naperville 203 and IPSD 204 at the time of their participation. The scouts, all adults now, will tell anyone who asks, that interacting with special needs individuals enriched THEM too and served as a building block to their maturation to adulthood.

Annually since 1986, Naperville American Legion Post 43 has presented a Citizen of the Year Award for extraordinary service to the Naperville area community. In 2014, the Post expanded the program to recognize winners in three categories: Service to Community, Service to Youth and Service to Veterans. That year, Richard Montalbano Jr. was recognized as the Citizen of the Year for Service to the Community. Richard has been impacting the lives of those with disabilities since the age of nine. In addition to being the founder of Touch My Heart, Richard is a member of the International Order of Alhambra, an organization dedicated to assisting people with disabilities and has previously served as the Special Needs Vice Chairperson for the Three Fires Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Up until my recent retirement, I was employed full-time for the past 42 years continuously as a Registered Nurse. I would visit TMH as a guest intermittently so I could hold a therapy chicken, decompress, destress from my stressful job role.

In my current role as a TMH volunteer, I have had a joyful experience assisting guests during the "farm" visits. It is a ministry I plan to continue to volunteer for years to come. The joy and delight the guests receive during farm visits is contagious and life-enriching to me as a volunteer.

There are so many barriers/obstacles, the majority of which are financial and governmental in nature, that special needs individuals (and their caregivers) must deal with to garner any sort of life enriching experience. The quality and quantity of accessible enrichment resources is IMPORTANT to them, their parents/guardians/caregivers. Such resources are a valuable part of this community's psychosocial well-being.

Therefore, in consideration of all that as stated above, please approve the variances petition thereby Touch My Heart can continue providing such a valuable resource to so many in Naperville.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Kennedy

*Diane A. Kennedy*

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Patti Growney [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 1:29 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case# 23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Red Category

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To whom it may concern,

I am sending this letter on behalf of the organization Touch My Heart. I understand that there are some discrepancies regarding zoning which could possibly jeopardize the future of this organization. What I would like to present to you is a testimonial of positivity as a direct result from the efforts of Touch My Heart. Not only am I legal guardian and full time caretaker to my brother with Down Syndrome, I am also a mother of an 18 yr old with autism. As parents, we worry about our children's future, but when that child has disabilities that limit the opportunities presented before them, the worry turns to genuine concern. My daughter lives in a world where animals are her refuge. Human interaction has always been a struggle so she surrounds herself with all things animal. As a parent, we understand that that is just not conducive for sustainability in the long run. Social skills are imperative for whatever life brings her with animal care. For the past several months, my daughter has been helping at Touch My Heart. There are no words to describe the impact this organization has had on her. In the words of my daughter "I have found my forever home." The growth I have seen in these past few months is indescribable. She has blossomed with a confidence and purpose that I have prayed for. She is an asset to Touch My Heart with her innate ability to connect with animals building a trust with them in a very short amount of time all the while learning communication and social skills with 'coworkers' - a life skill that can only be achieved in this setting! If she feels overstimulated, she just walks into a coup and holds a chicken for support - the actual thing they are being trained to do.

My daughter found her 'forever home'. She found her voice, she found her purpose. My personal story is only the tip of the iceberg and only one of MANY success stories as a direct result of Touch My Heart. As a society, our goal should be to help lift these programs and help facilitate success - not focusing on trivial technicalities. Why not take the energy that was wasted on triviality, - the time, the money, the paperwork and funnel into support for a program that focuses on the needs of the disabled. As the guardian and caretaker of a 45 yr old man with Down Syndrome, I can personally attest to the shortcomings in this state for adult disability enrichment. I find it disheartening that now there is finally a program addressing the needs of an overlooked demographic and our village is not providing the support and encouragement for success. I beg of you positive resolution in this matter so Touch My Heart can carry on and focus their energy on those that need them. Their servitude to those in need and their dedication to their calling should resonate humility, not angst. End this matter and let all those like my brother and my daughter reap the benefits from an organization that genuinely has their best interest at heart.

Sincerely,

Patti Growney

P.S. My son is doing his eagle project for Touch My Heart. That is how important this program is and their success is imperative to the livelihood for so many people.

Sent from my iPad

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Shannon Hedman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 1:13 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033 Approval of Variances for Richard and Wendy Montalbano- Touch My Heart NFP  
2300 Flambeau Dr Naperville

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Red Category

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Members ,

My name is Shannon Hedman and I am writing to show my support for Rick and Wendy Montalbano and Touch My Heart (TMH).

Everyone has the opportunity to enhance another's life through volunteer service, yet very few people actually do. Rick, Wendy, and the TMH team are the exception. They give selflessly and have devoted their lives to improving life for special needs individuals. Each time I visit the Montalbano home I leave with a smile on my face. I am lucky, I have multiple reasons to smile throughout my day. Not everyone is this lucky. For some people, the time spent visiting Rick, Wendy, and the Girls (chickens) is the only time they might even feel relaxed or focused enough to smile. This is because of the calming effect of interacting with the chickens. The Montalbano property is beautiful and Rick and Wendy are meticulous about keeping a clean and healthy space for all. The space is a therapeutic and educational environment, and is maintained as such. I have been an animal control officer for 11 years and I have never seen chicken enclosures as nice as the enclosures on the Montalbano's property.

If the variances requested by TMH are not approved and TMH is forced to change or limit their operations, the community will suffer and the individuals served by TMH will suffer a setback. Anything that can be done to support the Montalbano's and TMH is a service to the community. For these reasons I request the approval of all variances associated with this case.

Thank you for your consideration and review,  
Shannon Hedman



July 14, 2023

Re: Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL  
Case #23-1-033

Dear City of Naperville Planning Services Team,

My name is Cindy McCarty, I am the Director of Academy at Aspire. In July of 2021 I was a part of the leadership team Rick and Wendy invited to learn about the benefits of therapy chickens. Since then, Rick and Wendy along with their wonderful volunteers at Touch My Heart have allowed everyone at Aspire the opportunity experience the benefits of therapy chickens, growing your own food, healthy eating, environmental conservation, animal care and health.

As the team member that accompanies groups to Touch My Heart regularly, I have been able to see the benefits of the program Rick and Wendy run first hand. Interacting with the therapy chickens is a unique opportunity to experience relief from over stimulation and anxiety for both people with disabilities and the team members that support them. Rick and Wendy have created an inclusive environment where people of all abilities feel welcome. Please approve the variances requested so the important work that Touch My Heart does can continue.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cindy McCarty  
Director of Academy

Powered by possible.

Aspire Eamon Shannon Center, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 7:50 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** Red Category

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To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team

Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case #23-1-033

We are homeowners, taxpayers, and community members, living in Springbrook Crossing, a Naperville neighborhood that is zoned residential. Our property is near 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL 60546. We respectfully oppose any variances in residential regulations, laws, or zoning ordinances requested by the owners of 2300 Flambeau Drive. Any further reference in this communication to regulations, laws, and ordinances governing any activities on Naperville residential property and real estate will be referred to as "Naperville Residential Zoning."

Rationals Influencing Opposition:

- Likeminded families bought homes with lifestyle expectations in a "residential" neighborhood. Naperville Residential Zoning defines and protects those expectations. Variances in conflict with the Naperville Residential Code compromise those expectations.
- Home and real estate values and desirability will be impacted. The proposed variances in Naperville Residential Code will significantly move outside the code-defined usage of such properties.
- Operating a profit or nonprofit business or agenda is the individual's prerogative. The activities and materials required to operate the business and agenda successfully should comply with the zoned purpose of the real estate on which the materials needed and activities take place. Unfortunately, the variances requested seek to circumvent the purpose of zoning at the expense of the community.

-Springbrook Crossing Resident

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Victoria [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 11:25 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Red Category

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**To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team**

**Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL Case #23-1-033**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am fully in support of Rick's petition Case #23-1-033 in seeking variances to waive the screening requirements for coops, to increase the allowable number of fowl on the property from eight to twenty, to allow an accessory structure to be located less than five feet from the rear property line, and to allow class sizes of up to twelve for a home occupation. Touch My Heart organization makes a tremendous impact serving the community, those with special needs, and providing volunteer opportunities. I have seen tremendous benefits of the Touch My Heart organization from a personal perspective. Touch My Heart had a life changing impact on my special needs daughter. There are not too many places that service those with special needs in a therapeutic setting. Chickens are social and proven empathetic creatures. As such they can form bonds with humans and caretakers. These bonds can tremendously help individuals who are suffering from many types of issues resulting from anxiety, depression, PTSD, and special needs. Therapy chickens have been found to lower levels of isolation and loneliness. . The chickens Rick and Wendy care for in their backyard provide comfort to many individuals. My family and I would ask you to honor their request for approval on all variances involved,

so they can move forward with any and all plans to enhance their outreach that is greatly impacting many in the community and surrounding area.

Thank you for your consideration,

Victoria Tiberi

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Vincent Montalbano [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2023 7:47 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team

Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL

To whom it may concern,

My name is Vincent Montalbano. My wife Emily and I are Naperville residents. I am also the son of Rick & Wendy Montalbano. I'm asking you to please pass all variances requested by my parents regarding Touch My Heart. Of course you may assume that my request is biased because they are my parents, but I'd like to offer a little insight beyond that. I've watched my parents give selflessly their time, talent, and treasure to the special needs community my entire life. I've watched them develop countless programs and opportunities right here in Naperville for this very special and sometimes forgotten community of people. In addition to that I've had the privilege of seeing so many individuals inspired to do more within their own communities by following the leadership of my parents. I'm proud to say that I am one of those individuals that my parents have inspired to do more for others. Of course they always encouraged me to pursue my own personal goals and dreams but I don't know if they realize how much they did for me by setting the example of what it truly means to do for others. As an Eagle Scout with Naperville Troop 106, I took an oath to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean & reverent. This oath is not just made up of words, but actions lived out through the work my parents have done and still continue to do today supporting the special needs community. My wife and I are proud to be Naperville residents. We look forward to raising a family in a city that not only supports, but encourages people to work together making a difference. By allowing for these variances, I believe that is exactly what the city of Naperville will be doing, making a difference.

Sincerely,  
Vincent J. Montalbano



## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Joyce Borozan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 7:42 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Cc:** Rick Montalbano Jr.; Joyce Borozan  
**Subject:** Case# 23-1-033

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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To: The City of Naperville Planning Services Team

Re: Approval of Variances for Richard and Wendy Montalbano - Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Drive, Naperville, IL

Case# 23-1-033

Touch My Heart is the perfect name for an organization that will simply... 'touch your heart' in ways you never thought possible. If you share only a few moments of your time, you will learn that this extraordinary organization, continues to find unique ways to reach out to the special people in our community that most of us are regretfully too busy, tired and overwhelmed to help. Here in Naperville, our schools excel in academics, but I am proud to say that the greatest gifts that this community bestows on our children is the teaching of character. Our educators focus on leadership, persistence, compassion, kindness, acceptance and inclusion. These are lifelong lessons that will be the most useful to our kids and our community. The Touch My Heart Chicken Therapy Farm embodies all of these lessons. **It puts quality lessons and words into tangible actions.**

I love that this town has a place for everyone. I love that we celebrate places of inclusion and support establishments that provide work for ALL people, including people with disabilities. I am grateful that there are gifted people, like Rick and Wendy Montalbano, the founders of Touch My Heart, that are willing to share their passion for giving everything they have to make this world a little better for someone else. I love that my kids can see the important lessons that Naperville schools instill in them in real time and in real life. The Touch My Heart Chicken Farm is doing the hard work. This place is absolutely incredible! It starts by providing adults with disabilities a fun, safe, clean and beautiful place to meet up with friends to learn about plants, gardening and an organic and sustainable lifestyle. There are seasonally inspired food, games, crafts, and activities. There is time for education about all kinds of topics while relaxing among the calmness of these special chickens. Of course this unique place also offers the exciting opportunity to provide love and kindness to a chicken that has undergone countless hours of careful attention and training to become a therapy chicken. But the best part is what is hidden the chicken coop...the valuable lessons of leadership, persistence, compassion, kindness, acceptance and inclusion. This place has it all!

,  
This chicken therapy farm is the first of its kind in the United States. The rules that the zoning committee already have in place, of course, cannot be enforced here. The Touch My Heart Chicken Farm does not fit into the same black and white box as other locations that raise chickens. This farm is a temporary working farm that provides a valuable service to an underserved population who have limited places where they can feel welcomed, safe, calm and needed. A quick visit to this beautiful farm in Naperville will help you to realize that this natural environment is not an eye-sore but rather a peaceful place to relax and enjoy the outdoors. It is a stunningly, well-crafted, natural wood coop with earthy tones and colors. The small group programs are only provided during the daytime, most of them before noon. The events are not loud or obnoxious in any way for the safety of guests, respect for the neighbors and most importantly for the care of the intensely well-trained therapy chickens.

**This organization is all heart.** They would never knowingly hurt or offend anyone. That is their entire mission. Please help Touch My Heart to continue to provide a unique space for a group of people who are often over-looked and ignored. Rick and Wendy Montalbano have been serving this population in literally countless ways for the past 40+ years. They continue to deliver food to the group homes, host holiday parties and events, offer field trips and outings to adults with disabilities, and help to raise money to help support group home household needs. This farm can now offer jobs and volunteer opportunities for individuals who are often rejected from other work environments as well!

I am hoping that we can find a way to allow them to continue their mission while they search for a forever home for this wonderful place. I am proud that Touch My Heart is part of my favorite town. Please do all that we can to show them that their work matters and that Naperville cares about ALL of its neighbors!

Thank you,  
Joyce Borozan  
20+ year resident

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Nicholas Johnson <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 3:21 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033 Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Dr, Naperville, IL

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To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team  
Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano – Touch My Heart,  
NFP, 2300 Flambeau Dr., Naperville, IL  
Case #23 -1-033

As a resident of Naperville for over 38 years and a neighbor of Richard & Wendy Montalbano, we have noticed many changes that have taken place over the years. We feel, that Rick & Wendy are providing positive services with, “Touch My Heart”, that are benefiting the needy challenges of many individuals while participating in a community-oriented cause. With this being said, we recommend that the City of Naperville embrace the approval of variance, Case #23-1-033 for TMH, (Rick & Wendy Montalbano).

Thank you for your consideration,

Norman & Linda Johnson  
[REDACTED]  
Naperville, IL [REDACTED]

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** Nicholas Johnson <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 3:21 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Case #23-1-033 Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano Touch My Heart, NFP, 2300 Flambeau Dr, Naperville, IL

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To: City of Naperville Planning Services Team  
Re: Approval of Variances for Richard & Wendy Montalbano – Touch My Heart,  
NFP, 2300 Flambeau Dr., Naperville, IL  
Case #23 -1-033

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Thank you for your consideration,

Norman & Linda Johnson  
[REDACTED]  
Naperville, IL [REDACTED]

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## Beaver, Adam

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**From:** DAVID HOFEMANN [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 20, 2023 10:39 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** PZC #23-1-033, 2300 Flambeau

**CAUTION:** This e-mail originated outside of the City of Naperville (@naperville.il.us).

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Planning and Zoning Commission;

**In reference to the public hearings on July 19 – PZC #23-1-033, 2300 Flambeau. File 23-0845.**

Please review my opposition to the variation request above.

As a close neighbor to the property in question, I stand opposed to any variances to Section 10-4-6:3.3 (Fowl and Livestock), Section 6-2-10:1 (Accessory Buildings, Structures, and Uses of Land), and Section 6-2-8 (Home Occupation Regulations) for the property at 2300 Flambeau Drive- PZC 23-1-033.

While the Touch My Heart program in question is a noble and honorable addition to the special needs community it is simply not a program that should be allowed to expand in a residential neighborhood. This is a program better suited to rural areas that do not have a direct impact to the neighbors or local community.

The property in question is located in the middle of a residential neighborhood with 1/8 acre lots that cannot and should not accommodate the current number of chickens. Nor can it accommodate additional fowl without detrimental and incremental effects to our quiet neighborhood. Note the proximity to the property line and the neighbor in the photo's provided in the 23-0845 – Response to standards document. Would you like to see this every time you look out your window or hosted friends and family in your own back yard?

The current visitor traffic is already disruptive and a regular nuisance to the street. The spare chicken coops, equipment and permanent port-a-pot are an eyesore at street level and detract from the normal standards of a residential neighborhood. I would also like to note that the current project was never in compliance with the sections listed above. Once alerted to these standards, the owner continued to **expand** the enterprise in spite of the notice of non-compliance. Furthermore, there is no indication that the property owner will comply with the requests of the commissions decisions on this matter. It seems that the property owner feels that the altruistic nature of their enterprise overrides any limitations imposed by zoning standards established for the rest of Naperville.

There is also a concern about the resale value of the properties that are effected by the chicken coops. They are very prominent from both Flambeau and from the street behind the property – Meadow. This has a real effect on the neighboring properties. The neighbor directly to the south recently constructed an 8 foot privacy fence as a consequence of the coop expansion at a considerable personal cost. This is an unnecessary expense to avoid unsightly and non-compliant chicken coop enterprise.

I'll close my opposition to this variance with two simple questions for each of the Boards and Commissions Members;

- Would you want this owner to purchase a house next to yours and begin a Touch My Heart operation?
- Would you buy a house adjacent to a large chicken coop operation?

If the answer to either question is no then you need to vote NO to any variance to the current Sections AND police compliance of those standards to insure that the property owners comply as they have already demonstrated a willingness to ignore current requirements.

As a side note, since the Touch My Heart program has expanded in recent weeks there has been a significant increase in coyote sightings on Flambeau and the neighboring community. This is a frightening problem for those of us with small pets or that walk around this neighborhood. As an example, my wife was **stalked** by 3 coyotes yesterday while walking our dog in the early evening and returned home visibly shaken. While coyotes have been seen occasionally in the past and cannot be directly linked to the chicken coops there is no doubt that it is a contributing factor to the increase in predator sightings in the area (coyotes, foxes, raccoons, hawks).

Regards,

David Hofemann

████████████████████

Naperville, IL ██████

Sent from mobile device.