



STAFF REPORT TO THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

FROM: Alex Nelisse-Blankenship, AICP, Senior Planner / Zoning Officer

CC: Vic Whitney, Legal Counsel; Daryl Hennessy, City Administrator;
Carla Odebralski, Director of Planning and Engineering

SUBJECT: Home Occupation – 125 Harrison Street, Little Critters Pet Sitters LLC

DATE: February 18th, 2026

Action Being Requested

The applicant is requesting approval of a home occupation for a pet sitting and pet care business to be located at 125 Harrison Street, seen in Figure #1 below. The Sunbury process provides for review and approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission, with no required action from Sunbury City Council.



Figure 1: Property Location



Project Summary

The applicant is requesting approval of a home occupation for her dog sitting and care business located at 125 Harrison Street. The business operates as an alternative to a dog kennel by providing a typical home setting, limiting the number of dogs that can be watched at one time (10), not using kennels, and providing more predictive routines and schedules for the dogs being watched. This method allows for more focus on individual dogs and their needs, which is more compatible with a residential area than a typical kennel or doggy daycare. Most of the business will be conducted within the home on the property, with occasional trips into the fenced rear yard for brief, supervised outdoor breaks. The business does not have on-site employees aside from the owner and does not allow for walk-in appointments. In addition, there will be no outdoor signage and any business visit to the property is scheduled and staggered to prevent congestion and keep consistent with the residential traffic of the area. The applicant has included a noise mitigation plan, that calls for preventive measures for noise control and provides steps for the noise control through grouping methods, activity schedules that promote activity and rest, and intervention if any excessive noise is exhibited. All dogs cared for by the business must meet established vaccination and health requirements that are informed by industry best practices including the International Boarding & Pet Services Association (IBPSA).

Submittal Documents Provided

The applicant has submitted the following documents in association with this application:

- Completed Certificate of Use Application
- Cover Letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission
- Narrative Statements for:
 - Statement of Use
 - Operational Plan
 - Neighborhood Compatibility
 - Noise Mitigation Plan
 - Animal Welfare & Safety Plan
 - Site & Yard Use Description
- Compliance Statement, referencing the City's "Dog Kennel" Use & Home Occupation Ordinance
- Seven (7) Neighbor Letters of Support
- Three (3) Client/Local Business Letters of Support
- Three (3) Licensed Professional Letters of Support
- Certifications, Licenses, and Memberships related to the Business and Business Owner
- IBPSA Infectious Disease/Cleaning Standards



Staff Comments

- Section S81.03.36 gives specific requirements that home occupation need to meet. Of the 9 listed, the proposed business does not comply with one, and staff has concern with one, both of which are listed below with staff's comments.
 - 1) The home occupation shall be carried on solely within the confines of the residential structures and architecturally compatible accessory buildings which are customarily associated with the residential use and character of the neighborhood.
 - With the brief, supervised outdoor access listed in the application, this requirement would not be met.
 - 8) No activity shall be conducted or permitted which creates a nuisance to neighboring properties.
 - With dogs, noise and odor could cause a nuisance to the neighbors. Based on the applicant's response regarding noise mitigation and immediate pickup of waste, staff believe the applicant has responded to the concern. In addition, staff have not received complaints or concerns related to either of these issues at the subject property in the past.
- The applicant provided an extensive submittal that addresses each provision of the Home Occupation code, identifies potential impacts, and outlines corresponding mitigation measures.

Applicable Zoning Language

- Section S81.03.36 Home Occupation
 - An occupation conducted in a dwelling unit meeting the requirements of S81.14.03(c).
- Section S81.14.03 (c)
 - Home occupations conducted by the resident of a permitted dwelling shall be subject to the following restrictions:
 - 1) The home occupation shall be carried on solely within the confines of the residential structures and architecturally compatible accessory buildings which are customarily associated with the residential use and character of the neighborhood.
 - 2) Only one sign, not illuminated, not larger than three (3) square feet and three (3) feet in height above grade of the surrounding yard, may be erected advertising the home occupation. The sign may be located at eye level if mounted flat against a building.
 - 3) The home occupation shall occupy not more than twenty percent (20%) of the total floor area of the dwelling unit or fifty percent (50%) of the floor space in any garage or accessory building.
 - 4) No non-resident employee shall work on said premises.
 - 5) All parking demands created by the conduct of a home occupation shall be met off the street and other than in a front yard. Off-street parking may be permitted



in a side or rear yard, but shall not be located any closer to the street than the required setback line. The required number of off-street parking spaces shall equal the spaces required for the residential use plus those required for the commercial use which constitutes the home occupation (if no parking requirement is given for a particular home occupation, the parking requirement for the most similar commercial use shall be used in order to calculate the required minimum number of spaces).

- 6) No equipment, process, or storage associated with the home occupation shall create odors, noise, vibration, glare, electrical interference or other nuisance detectable to normal senses off the lot. In the case of electrical interference, no equipment or process shall create visual or audible interference in any radio or television receivers or other audio appliances used off the premises, or cause fluctuation in line voltage off the premises. No equipment, process, or storage associated with a home occupation shall create any fire or explosion hazard or involve the storage or use of hazardous materials in any concentration greater than that which would normally be found in a dwelling containing no home occupation.
 - 7) Waste materials, solid or liquid, shall not be created on the premises at a level greater than normal to the residential use, unless provisions for the disposition of said wastes are acceptable to the Delaware County Department of Health and do not create a burden on adjoining property.
 - 8) No activity shall be conducted or permitted which creates a nuisance to neighboring properties.
 - 9) No home occupation shall be permitted to operate until a certificate of compliance is issued for such establishment by the Zoning Inspector after approval by the Sunbury Planning and Zoning Commission.
- [Section S81.15.04 Low Density Residential District \(R-3\)](#)
- 3. Permitted Uses
 - e) Home occupations in association with a permitted dwelling, and in accordance with S81.14.03(C).