

September 25th, 2025

Valo Refuge
2630/2680 N Highway 39
Huntsville, UT 84317

Variance Request with Board of Adjustment

We are seeking a Variance with the Board of Adjustment, to comply with the hard surface parking requirement for our retreat center along Beaver Creek, as part of our Conditional Use for our conference/education center.

Sec 108-8-7 Parking Lot Design And Maintenance (b).

"Public parking lot standards. Every parcel of land hereafter used as a public parking area shall be paved with an asphalt or concrete surface. Exceptions to this requirement will be made for seasonal, temporary, or transient uses, including, but not limited to, a fair, festival, short-term vendor, park and ride lots, and legitimate agricultural uses and agriculturally related uses, including, but not limited to, a petting farm, corn maze, green house, garden plant sales, and/or approved agri-tourism operations.

We feel that compacted crushed road base with an overlay of compacted decomposed grey granite would be the ideal surface for our parking lot. Aesthetically, we are trying to create an environment that is as natural and cohesive with the native flora as possible. From the beginning, our desire has been for our retreat center to blend into nature visually. Black petroleum based asphalt is, in our opinion, not ideal for our use characteristics and will look out of place, and concrete also does not give the feeling of being an extension of the natural grounds. This is the reason, in our opinion, that all over the world, regardless of climate, we have found that most retreat centers have asphalt only on major roads leading up to these properties.

It is unclear to us what this provision in the code seeks to address. Our parking area and pathways have been plowed for the last two seasons under our ownership including during the record snowfall of 2022/2023, with only grass and dirt as the underlying surface. Our plowing operator resides up the road on Highway 39 as well. He has no qualms about plowing *any* type of subsurface, but does prefer crushed rock or asphalt over raw earth. We noticed that there is a carve out not requiring asphalt for agritourism among other uses above, and that our neighbor to the south, Dancing Moose Farm, therefore did not need to pave their parking lot. While we are seeking a different type of conditional use permit as a conference/education center, and they fall under the agritourism umbrella, in actuality the use characteristics will be exactly the same - parking lots right off the highway, for guests that are staying in one of four short term rental units (yurts for them and mirrored tiny homes/domes for us). Their parking area, like our driveways, do not, and will not, see heavy use. It will be light cars and parking. Decomposed granite/crushed rock blends seamlessly with a rustic, creekside setting.

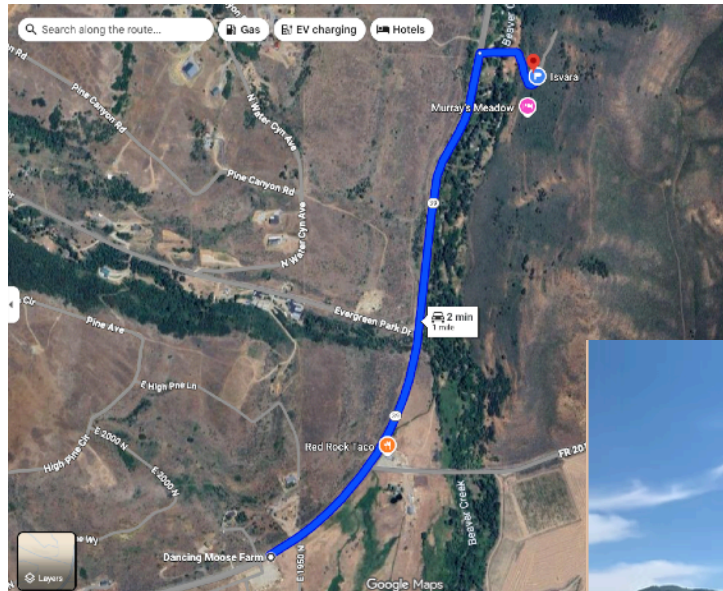
We asked about this when presenting our retreat center to the planning commission for approval in June of this year. The commission unanimously approved our vision subject to a few follow up requirements, one of which was a hard surface parking lot. There was some surprise about this provision in the code that it must be asphalt or concrete, and we were encouraged to submit this variance request to the Board of Adjustment for consideration.

Exhibited here are photos of our parking area (the second photo shows a vehicle for scale). Cars will park parallel to the black vehicle in this photo, along the dirt berm that runs along the western flank of the property that provides noise abatement and privacy from Highway 39.



1. Dancing Moose Farm (dancingmoosefarmut.com) - 13485 E. Hwy 39 Huntsville, UT 84317.

This is perhaps the best illustration of what we are seeking. Only a 1 mile (2 min) drive from our property. 4 Yurt roadside short term rentals on a compacted gravel hardscape. Only the entry point to the gate is paved with asphalt, off of Highway 39. This is a UDOT requirement that we were compelled to do as a requirement for all properties that turn off highways. Our asphalt turn in was recently completed.



2. Conrad Ranch - Provo. A wedding and event center up Provo Canyon. They are three season, but this shows close ups of the crushed rock evident there and ubiquitous elsewhere for three and four season retreat centers in rural areas that see abundant snowfall.



Another example (they are all over the US but this has similar feel)

Wild Rice Retreat (wildriceretreat.com) - Bayfield, Wisconsin. 4 season retreat center with short term accommodation:

