

Minutes of the Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting held April 23rd, 2026, at 7 pm

8555 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Caledonia, MI 49316

MEMBERS PRESENT: Waayenberg, Rober, Giarmo, Wiersema, Thomas

MEMBERS ABSENT: Haagsma and Billips, with notice.

STAFF PRESENT: Dakota Swan, Assistant Planner

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Waayenberg called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

2. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

Motion:	Motion by Giarmo, supported by Thomas to split the public comment period, allocating agenda item 5 solely for comments on the advertised agenda item, and adding an additional public comment period following agenda item 6.A.
DISCUSSION:	Member Wiersema inquired to confirm that agenda item 6.A does not require a public hearing; Waayenberg confirmed that and added that the additional public comment period is a courtesy to the audience members in attendance specifically to speak on behalf of agenda item 6.A. Giarmo stated that she would like to hear comments on agenda item 6.A prior to deliberation.
AYES:	All
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
DECISION:	Motion Carried (5-0)

3. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

Consideration of the March 26th, 2026, regular Planning Commission meeting minutes.

Motion:	Motion by Rober, supported by Thomas to approve the minutes of March 26 th , 2026, with corrections.
DISCUSSION:	None.
AYES:	All
NAYS:	None

ABSTAIN: None
DECISION: Motion Carried (5-0)

4. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Wiersema disclosed that a relative owns property adjacent to the site of agenda item 6.A but noted that he felt confident in his ability to make an unbiased decision. Other Planning Commission members in attendance were comfortable with Wiersema participating in deliberation.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Joel, a resident who lives on East Paris Avenue near 3805 92nd Street, expressed concern regarding drainage controls, and which properties in the area may qualify to be included in a special assessment district.

Brian Diemer of 9621 Meadow Valley expressed similar concerns, specifically about fertilizer in runoff being directed towards adjacent properties. Diemer also noted that he feels as though the development at this density is not appropriate for the area.

Matt Marvin of 92nd Street echoed previous concerns, noting that although the proposed layout has been modified to incorporate feedback from the neighborhood, he is worried about implementing a system engineered on the minimum standards.

A resident of 9750 Meadow Valley reiterated previously stated concerns and added that the proposed development does not seem to be in alignment with the intent and goals identified in the 2023 Master Plan.

Carrie Diemer, also of 9621 Meadow Valley, agreed with previous comments and noted that she is uncomfortable with the idea of a road being placed directly across the street from Meadow Valley.

Eunice Vanderlaan of 3690 92nd Street expressed that she is worried about the proposed community septic system and potential impacts should the system fail due to a power outage or other unprecedented emergencies.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A. 3805 92nd Street SE – Major Condominium (Open Space Development Option) and Site Plan Review – Caledonia Meadows

Paul Henderson of Roosien & Associates, the representative for the project, gave an overview of the proposal and elaborated on what has changed since initial consideration from the Planning Commission

in 2024. The development is proposed in the Agricultural/Rural-Residential (ARR) zoning district and features thirty single-family detached homes on a cul-de-sac and 22 acres of open space using the open space development option, which allows for smaller lot sizes in exchange for preservation of open space. The development team connected with neighbors in the area and redesigned the site layout to incorporate some of the feedback, including relocating the detention basins to the western property line to serve as a buffer between the existing and proposed housing. The site plan also includes an amenity area with a walking path, and playground/picnic area.

Henderson explained that environmental testing was conducted under supervision from the Kent County Health Department and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). A community septic system is being proposed as part of this development, and although controversial, this type of system is mandated and permitted at the state level; Henderson reassured the Planning Commission that the system is advanced and will be robust and subject to oversight at the State level.

The setbacks requested in the proposal are lesser than what is typically required of structures in the Agricultural/Rural-Residential zoning district and are also lesser than what is required in the Suburban Residential zoning district, which calls for more residential density than the current zoning designation. Henderson noted that the development team would be open to increasing the proposed setbacks to bring the development closer to what is required of the ARR district.

Assistant Planner Swan gave an overview of the project from staff's perspective, focusing mainly on items that were not found to have met the applicable standards of review. Standard 4.30.I.2 ensures that applicants seeking the open space development option maintain compliance with the provisions of the existing zoning district, in this case ARR. Staff identified this as being undetermined, as the proposed setbacks are a stark difference from what is called for in ARR. Staff called on the Planning Commission to determine whether the proposed setbacks are appropriate.

Initially, all standards of review pertaining to water, sewer, and stormwater controls were found to be deficient on behalf of the Township Engineer's review (dated 04/15/2026). Staff has since been in communication with both the developer and the Township Engineer, who ultimately stated that granting preliminary site plan approval would be acceptable. Based on new information and continued communication, deficiencies pertaining to utilities and stormwater have been mitigated, therefore staff's review has been modified to endorse preliminary approval.

Wiersema expressed concern regarding the addition of new information not previously included in meeting materials and a change in the staff recommendation. Wiersema also noted that he has previously witnessed how challenging stormwater mitigation can be in this area and endorsed staff's recommended condition that the walking path must be ADA-compliant. Wiersema posed a question about enforcement, inquiring about how the Township would ensure compliance with conditions. Assistant Planner Swan noted that the Planning and Zoning Department often conducts compliance reviews and ensures conditions of approval are adhered to.

Commissioner Thomas inquired about which entity may be responsible for maintenance of the common areas; Assistant Planner Swan replied that the HOA would likely be responsible for overseeing and implementing any improvements.

Commissioner Giarmo noted that she does not feel as though this area is appropriate for residential development at this density, and that this is not necessarily what she had envisioned when updating the 2023 Master Plan and endorsing more dense development in select areas of the Township. She also expressed hesitancy and concern regarding the proposed community septic system and noted that she may be more comfortable with this project if public utilities were available in the area.

Vice Chair Rober echoed previous concerns regarding the STEP system. Thomas agreed that this type of development seems to be too dense for the area and out of character.

Chair Waayenberg noted that in this square mile, there are 43 homes, and the developer is proposing 30 additional homes, which would be a big and rather incompatible change for this area. Waayenberg expressed that he agrees with the neighbor's remarks, and that he would like to see more information on the potential impacts to the water table, preferably from the Township Engineer.

Tjapkis and Henderson argued that the proposed plan is consistent with the provisions of the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, and that runoff from already developed areas would feed into the proposed stormwater basins, which would help to alleviate existing stormwater challenges in the area.

Giarmo concluded by stating that the development team is giving a lot of reassurances but without a substantial amount of evidence, as determined by the Planning Commission, to support their position.

Motion:	Motion by Giarmo, supported by Rober, to table the request for preliminary site plan review and major condominium review using the open space development option at 3805 92 nd Street to allow the applicant to compile further information to assist the Planning Commission in making an informed decision.
DISCUSSION:	None.
AYES:	All
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
DECISION:	Motion Carried (5-0)

Chair Waayenberg opened the second public comment period.

Dale DeWitt of 3750 92nd Street expressed concerns regarding stormwater controls pertaining to agenda item 6.A.

Jeff of the Vantage Pointe neighborhood expressed concern regarding a rezoning request by Microsoft Corporation and their intention to build a data center in the Township, while also demanding further details on the specifics of the project prior to the Planning Commission making any decisions on this matter.

Stephanie Pratt of 4642 76th Street shared a letter with the Planning Commission that she also distributed to the President, the Governor of Michigan, and the Michigan State Representative for the 36th District in which she expressed concerns over the potential long-term health impacts of data centers, specifically from low frequency vibrational noise and emissions.

A resident of 9750 Meadow Valley expressed appreciation to the Planning Commission for heavily considering guidance from the 2023 Master Plan during deliberation.

Karina, a resident of the Township, requested that the Planning Commission demand independent research into the potential impacts of data centers prior to making any decisions on the Microsoft project, and encouraged a one-year moratorium.

Kristine, a resident from Cook's Crossing, expressed similar concerns.

Joel, a resident of the Township, reiterated that the soils on site at 3805 92nd Street are very wet and did not pass the perc test necessary for individual septic systems.

Ellie of 1082 Haven Drive said that the Planning Commission's deliberation on agenda item 6.A was encouraging, and she would like to see the same approach towards the Microsoft project.

Tammy of 5140 N. Morgan Lane explained that she is not in support of the Microsoft project and is also asking for a one-year moratorium

Chair Waayenberg closed the second public comment period.

7. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Assistant Planner Swan noted that in May, the Planning Commission will be considering a request for site plan review and a special use permit for a proposed credit union, and a request for a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

Wiersema addressed deficiencies he observed on the Township website and suggested potential solutions.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:	Motion by Giarmo, supported by Rober, to adjourn at 8:45 PM.
DISCUSSION:	None.
AYES:	All
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
DECISION:	Motion Carried (5-0)

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the April 23rd, 2026, Planning Commission Meeting of the Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission held at the time and place mentioned above pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Respectfully submitted,



Lani Thomas,

Secretary

Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission

Date: May 28, 2026

PUBLIC COMMENT — OPPOSE THE MICROSOFT DATA CENTER

We have talked to this board to oblivion about the risks of this project.

This is not just another development project.
This is a permanent decision that could reshape Gaines Township and nearby communities for generations.

WATER IS THE #1 ISSUE

Data centers use enormous amounts of water.

Residents are concerned about:

- Lower water pressure
- Strain on infrastructure
- Groundwater depletion
- PFAS and chemical contamination risks

If something goes wrong, residents live with the consequences — not Microsoft.

This affects more than Gaines Township:

- Byron Center
- Hudsonville
- Holland
- Kentwood
- Wyoming
- Other nearby communities

Water damage is not easily reversed.

THIS PROJECT CHANGES OUR COMMUNITY

Families moved here for:

- Farms
- Open land
- Quiet neighborhoods
- Residential growth

—not industrial server complexes.

If approved:

- Property values could decline
- Families may choose not to move here
- Our township becomes more industrialized

You cannot undo:

- Industrial expansion
- Lost farmland
- Lost rural character

WHY THIS LAND WAS TARGETED

Microsoft reportedly bought 300 acres for about \$44 million.

That is roughly:

- \$146,000 per acre

Large corporations target areas with:

- Cheap land
- Loose zoning protections
- Rural communities easier to industrialize

Residents believe that is exactly what is happening here.

THE ZONING CAN STILL BE CHANGED

Yes, the land is currently zoned light industrial.

But zoning is not permanent.

Even if the master plan says otherwise:

- Plans can be amended
- Zoning can be changed
- The township still has legal options

Please consult your legal counsel and reconsider this zoning.

This land could still support:

- Agriculture
- Residential housing
- Green space
- Community-centered growth

Microsoft can:

- Farm the land
- Hold the land
- Sell it to developers

But our township should not become a massive data center complex.

THE ECONOMIC TRADEOFF DOES NOT MAKE SENSE

We are risking:

- Our water
- Property values
- Farmland
- Community identity

For:

- About 100 permanent jobs

- Temporary construction jobs

Meanwhile, those same 300 acres could support:

- Approximately 600 homes
- Around \$200 million in long-term residential tax revenue and economic growth

That creates lasting value for:

- Families
- Schools
- Local businesses
- The township itself

FINAL MESSAGE

Once this project is approved, there is no going back.

You cannot undo:

- Water damage
- Industrial expansion
- Lost farmland
- Lost rural character

We are asking you tonight to protect:

- Our water
- Our residents
- Our homes
- Our future

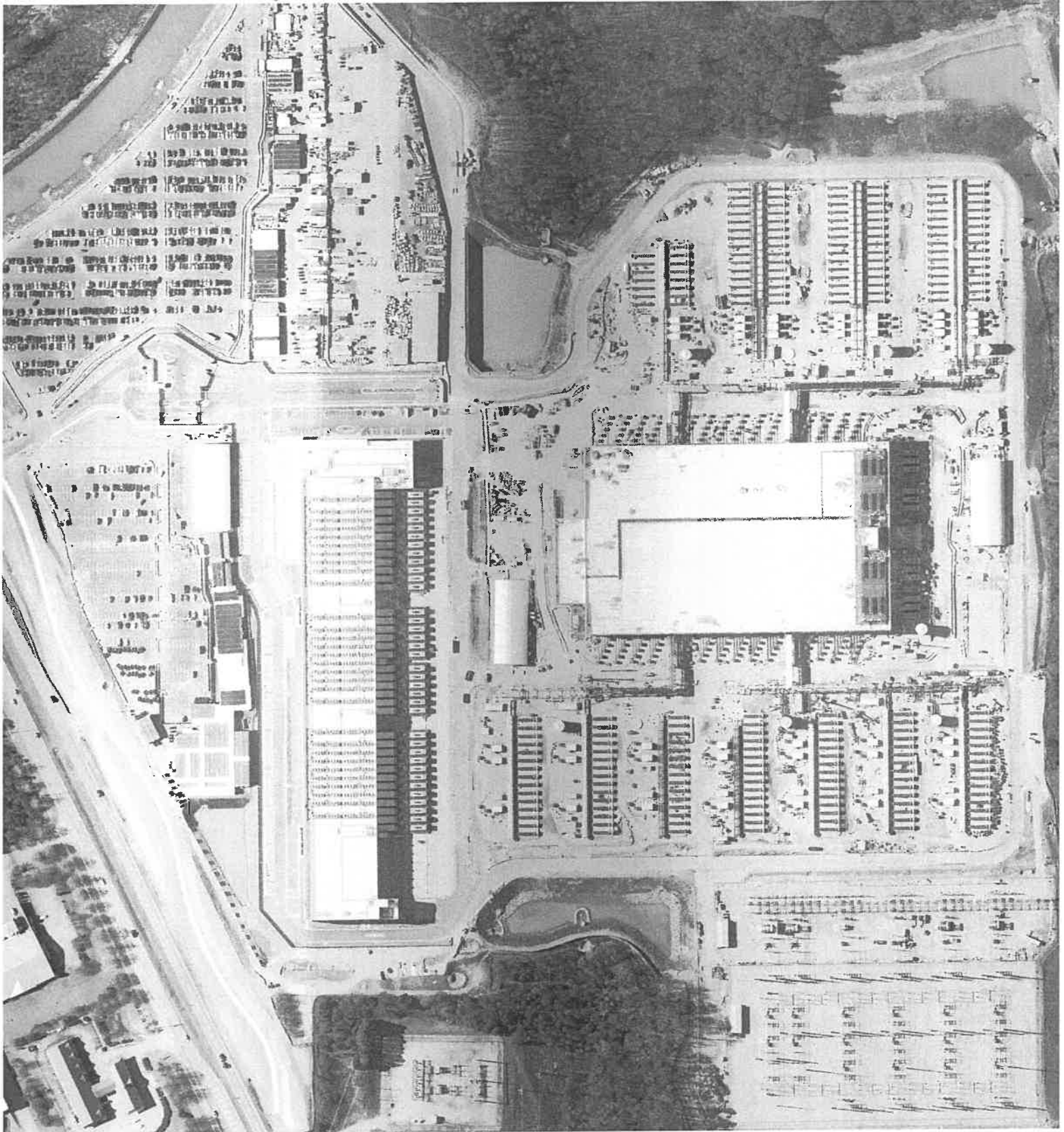
Please listen to the people who live here.

Please vote NO on this proposed Microsoft data center.

Please put this into the public comments. Thank you!

Microsoft “Fairwater 2”

1435 SR-54 W, Fayetteville, GA 30214 – Apple Maps - May 28, 2026



Massive 3-story buildings, generators, transformers, parking lots, earthen wall, security fences, runoff water storage
<https://tinyurl.com/gainesTownship>