

Minutes of the Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting held July 24th, 2025, at 7 pm

8555 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Caledonia, MI 49316

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Haagsma, with notice

STAFF PRESENT: Dan Wells, Community Development Director; Dakota Swan, Assistant Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Giarmo called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

One correction was made to the agenda. Item VI.3.a is a final site plan review, not a site plan amendment.

III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

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

Motion: Motion by Rober, supported by Wiersema to approve the minutes of June 26th, 2025.

DISCUSSION:

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (6-0)

IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearings

a. 4645 100th Street – Revoke Special Use Permit

Jennifer Ranero, explained that in 2023 she sought approval for a Special Use Permit to operate a small home business that specializes in auto detailing. Ranero apologized for the mess on the property and added that it has been cleaned up since the time of inspection. She added that her and her husband are committed to achieving compliance and remaining in good standing with the Township. Ranero concluded by asking the Planning Commission to not revoke the Special Use Permit since this was their first warning.

Planner Wells explained that the Special Use Permit was issued solely for an auto detailing business to operate in the existing garage and two car ports, and it was approved with very specific conditions. The SUP approval stipulated that no more than one car could be stored on the premises at a time, and that it must be within a completely enclosed building. Detailing work was restricted to indoors, chemicals from engine washing were not to be discharged into the drain behind the property, and all work was to be executed by the homeowners using residential cleaning supplies.

The Township received a complaint regarding inoperable vehicles and accumulation of solid waste/ junk on the property. Wells and Community Policing Officer, Deputy Jeff Bylsma, inspected the property and noted between 10-12 vehicles on the property, including several without license plates which renders them inoperable vehicles. Section 17.20.J of the Zoning Ordinance stipulates that inoperable vehicles must be stored within a completely enclosed building or stored elsewhere. Wells noted that an adverse impact on the neighborhood is apparent since the Township received a complaint. Section 18.150.E of the Zoning Ordinance states that home occupations must maintain low visibility, which is being violated by the accumulation of vehicles on the property. Planner Wells added that he was unable to inspect the inside of the garage and is unsure of the state of the interior. Staff felt it was appropriate to bring this back to the Planning Commission for consideration; Wells noted that any conditions from the original approval that aren't met are grounds for revocation of the Special Use Permit.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing.

Terry DeVries of 4635 100th Street stated that there have always been several cars at the property, and the conditions of approval have been unsatisfied almost since the initial approval of the Special Use Permit. DeVries added that the business operates 7 days a week and has anywhere from 3-5 employees, and that at one point he has counted almost 20 cars on the property. DeVries also noted that he is concerned about his well and any negative impacts that may occur to it as a result of the home occupation.

Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing.

Billips began discussion and expressed that she was rather shocked about the state of the property. Thomas agreed and noted that 20 vehicles is significantly more than what was specified in the Special Use Permit, and that she is unsure of what potential effects the business may be having on groundwater and the wells in the area. Billips noted that the Planning Commission grappled with the decision in the first place, and it appears as though from early on the operations manifested into something that was not approved. Billips expressed disappointment as the Planning Commission wanted to support a local business by granting approval in 2023.

Vice Chair Rober noted that this situation is not what the Planning Commission bargained for.

Chair Giarmo noted that there are several Special Use Permits that have been issued in the Township, and if the Planning Commission wants residents to take them seriously, they have an obligation to enforce the conditions of Special Use Permits.

Wiersema pointed out that it seems as though this was a continuous situation that occurred over time, and that restrictions the Planning Commission put in place were clearly not met.

Chair Giarmo concluded that a Special Use Permit isn't something that is collaborative between the applicant and Planning Commission; either the conditions of the permit are met, or they're not. Giarmo noted that although the Planning Commission wanted to support a small business, they do not have a lot of confidence that the operation in question could be trusted to adhere to the conditions of the Special Use Permit.

MOTION: Motion by Rober, supported by Billips, to revoke the Special Use Permit for a home occupation at 4645 100th Street based on conditions of approval not being satisfied.

DISCUSSION: Waayenberg clarified that as per Section 25.30.E of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission has the ability to revoke a Special Use Permit if the applicant violates any of the conditions of the permit. Chair Giarmo requested that staff prepare a formal resolution for the revocation.

AYES: ALL

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (6-0)

2. Site Plan Review

a. None

3. Items not requiring a Public Hearing

a. 3316 68th Street – Dutton Center PUD Phase I – Amendment

Dan Larabel of Allen Edwin Homes explained that in 2024, approval was granted by the Planning Commission for a final PUD and site plan approval for the Dutton Center project, and that they are currently in the construction and engineering phase of the project. Larabel noted that the development team anticipated excess offsite stormwater to impact the stormwater plans, and as a result were required to increase the size of the proposed detention basin and propose a larger retaining wall on the west side of the basin. Residential units on the south side of the basin were eliminated to account for the increase in size, and enabled the commercial units on 68th Street and Hanna Lake to remain

unchanged. Larabel added that they are also in the final stages of getting approvals squared away with the Kent County Drain Commission and Kent County Road Commission.

Planner Wells elaborated further and noted that the pedestrian path around the detention pond will not be effected by the changes, and that the Township Engineer has reviewed and is comfortable with the engineering plans for stormwater management. The development team is attempting to nail down final site details so they can begin installing utilities and roads. Wells also noted that the site plan was found to be consistent with all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, and that the request does not alter the nature and/ or character of the PUD.

Chair Giarmo inquired about the height of the retaining wall; Planner Wells responded that it is about 4-5 feet above grade with a 9-foot-wide footing and a 16 inch thick wall. Giarmo checked to ensure there was a way to get around the wall, to which Planner Wells responded that the pedestrian path will remain intact and will get foot traffic around the wall. Wiersema noted that his only concern with the request was the pedestrian path, and he is pleased to see it will be unaffected by these changes.

MOTION: Motion by Wiersema, supported by Waayenberg, to approve the final site plan for Dutton Center Phase I.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: ALL

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (6-0)

b. Prairie Wolf Station PUD – Site Plan Amendment

Eric DeYoung of Nederveld, the Project Manager for Prairie Wolf Station, explained that they are seeking an amendment to the approved site plan for Prairie Wolf Station to account for various changes that are necessary as a result of final engineering requirements. DeYoung noted that the multifamily and mixed-use portions of the development have received approval and construction on them has begun, and they are to remain the same as approved.

Planner Wells explained the changes being requested. The Consent Judgement for the project stipulates that buildings along Gull Prairie Drive are required to be 5 feet from the sidewalk so as to promote a “boulevard feel” and a vibrant pedestrian experience; the applicant is requesting that be increased to 10 feet to allow for a utility easement. The section of the development referred to as “Lot B” in the Consent Judgement calls for neighborhood commercial use; the applicant is requesting to locate the senior housing component there instead. This location has been identified as being preferable by staff, as the senior housing will offer a buffer to the residential property to the south. The senior housing phase will also include a mixed-use element, as the developer intends to include a café on the north side of the senior housing complex, and the number of units increased from 110 in the Consent Judgement to 140 units. Similarly, the north side of Gull Prairie Drive was originally intended to be senior housing and is now intended to be solely neighborhood commercial development.

Final engineering of the stormwater management plan also required changes to be made to the residential element of the site plan. The developer was required to expand the proposed stormwater basin in the northeast, and also to realign Gray Wolf Drive as per the Kent County Road Commission. As a result, four terrace homes and four single-family detached lots were eliminated from the development, however, the overall character of the development is unchanged.

Parking calculations based on land use and are highly complex for the PUD as there is a dynamic mix of uses throughout. Wells noted that staff is comfortable with the proposed parking and finds that it meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Typically nursing homes have a parking calculation of their own, but since the senior housing component includes independent living units, the developer has used a calculation of 1 space per unit, which staff finds to be appropriate.

Planner Wells noted that although details for utilities need to be worked out, the developer is seeking an amendment to the PUD to allow these changes to happen. Since the site plan is under a Consent Judgement, the proposed changes must be approved by the Planning Commission before getting reviewed and approved by a judge.

MOTION: Motion by Waayenberg, supported by Thomas, to make a positive recommendation to the Township Board recommending approval of the revised PUD site plan

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: ALL

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (6-0)

c. 1264 100th Street – Stoneworks Development – Major Preliminary Condominium

Randy Koetje, applicant and owner of Koetje Builders, explained that he is seeking preliminary approval for a major condominium plan for a parcel that was recently rezoned to Village Residential at the corner of 100th Street and Pease Avenue. The condo plan is anticipated to feature 53 single-family detached homes and 32 attached single-family homes. There will also be six parcels split off that have frontage on Pease Avenue, which will feature single-family construction. The developer intends to bring in public water and sewer from 100th Street; the six parcels on Pease will have public water but will be on septic systems for sewer maintenance.

Wiersema emphasized that although this is the preliminary phase of approval, the intent of Village Residential is to promote a strong sense of neighborhood character through inviting front porches and high-walkability design. Wiersema encouraged the development team to strongly consider the intent of the Village Residential zoning district as the project moves forward.

Wiersema also inquired about wetlands on the parcel; Planner Wells clarified that EGLE has determined that the wetlands in question are part of a larger wetland system in the area, and that they must remain intact.

Commissioner Thomas inquired about whether the homes would be built with zero-entry accessibility; Koetje responded that the units will feature zero-step entry.

MOTION: Motion by Waayenberg, supported by Thomas, to accept the preliminary site condominium plan with the condition that the applicant must adhere to all review comments provided by the Township Engineer and Fire Department.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: ALL

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (6-0)

VII. GENERAL DISCUSSION

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the July 24th, 2025, 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lani Thomas". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Lani Thomas,

Secretary

Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission

Date: August 28, 2025