

**Highland Township Planning Commission  
Record of the 1439th Meeting  
Highland Township Auditorium  
January 15th, 2026**

***Roll Call:***

Kevin Curtis, Chairman (absent)  
Grant Charlick  
Chris Heyn (Acting Chairman)  
Mike O’Leary (absent)  
Roscoe Smith  
Scott Temple  
Russ Tierney (absent)  
Guy York  
Michael Zeolla

***Also Present:***

Elizabeth Corwin, Planning Director

Visitors: 3

Acting Chairman Heyn called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**Agenda Item #1: Call to the Public: Opportunity for anyone to bring forward issues of interest or concern for Planning Commission consideration. Each participant limited to 3 minutes.**

No public comment offered.

***Work Session:***

**Agenda Item #2:**

Parcel #	11-01-351-002
Zoning:	ARR, Agricultural and Rural Residential Zoning District
Address:	2075 Oakland
File #:	RZ 25-02
Request:	Rezoning with offer of conditions to RM, Multiple-Family Residential ZD
Applicant:	David Dowling, Yukon Building Company
Owner:	SIGA Corp

Mr. Heyn introduced the agenda item for rezoning with offer of conditions on a portion of parcel, 11-01-351-002, commonly known as the Highland Hills Golf Course. The public hearing for the request was conducted on December 4, 2025.

Mr. David Dowling, applicant presented an overview of the two projects proposed for this parcel, covering both the rezoning proposal for housing and the Special Land Use proposal for improvements at the golf course. He has not altered the housing proposal since the public hearing; but has removed the proposed golf simulator from the special land use request and replaced it with a smaller, netted practice area.

Mr. Temple asked about the verbal offer to divide the attached condominium units into separate single family housing units from December 4, 2025. Ms. Corwin explained that the applicant is entitled to a decision on the original request, and that if he chooses to proceed with separate single-family units, a different approval process would be appropriate.

Mr. Charlick offered his observation that the public was primarily opposed to the golf simulator and might be open to the multiple family housing with the conditions offered, tied to this specific site plan. He noted that the underlying plat would have allowed for more than eight homes. He noted that most of the homes on the south side of Oakland Drive are on 60- to 80-foot-wide lots, which would mean 8 driveways instead of the 2 driveways proposed. There are also opportunities for screening and landscaping that would be lost if the project were designed as single-family lots

Mr. Temple expressed frustration that there was a not a specific boundary identified for the rezoned area. Ms. Corwin explained that until the Oakland County Health Division has reviewed and approved the concept for sewage disposal for the site, it is premature to draw the specific limits. There may be a need to allow cross-easements to allow for the use of golf course property to satisfy these requirements.

Mr. Charlick explained that while the footprint of the septic field might be small, the Oakland County Health Division still has a requirement of one acre of land to accommodate a three-bedroom home. He asked if this site had been reviewed by the Health Division.

Ms. Corwin explained that until the concept is approved by the Township, Oakland County will not offer binding decisions about how they will handle compliance with the environmental protection clause of one acre per three bedrooms. There may ultimately be a legal agreement binding the development potential of the golf course, or they might require that the area be deeded with housing.

Mr. Dowling explained that he has discussed the project with a local engineer, who believes the septic systems can be contained under the fairway, but that individual wells will be required.

Mr. Charlick explained that ultimately the boundary is not as important as the site plan, since the approval will be for eight housing units in the configuration noted on the concept plan. Adding more acreage will not allow for more housing. He noted the housing is also self-limiting, since there is still the desire to operate an 18-hole golf course.

Mr. York asked if the development will be governed by a homeowners' association (HOA), with bylaws and deed restrictions. Mr. Dowling confirmed that there will be common space managed by an HOA, and that the units will be established as condominiums.

Ms. York asked if Oakland Drive was privately owned, and about the statement that the homeowners on Oakland Drive finance the maintenance and improvement of the road. Ms. Corwin noted that Oakland Drive is under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC). Their policy is that they allow improvements using a Special Assessment District to recover the costs from homeowners. Oakland Drive was improved in 1995 with other streets in the subdivision, with a ten-year assessment by 70 property owners. That investment as obviously depreciated by now. They do allow subdivisions to contract independently for snow removal, since they do not have the resources to cover every subdivision street but rather focus on primary and secondary arterials and collector roads.

The Planning Commissioners commented that the audience had thanked one of their neighbors for his efforts in plowing the street.

Mr. York noted that unless one holds the position that no new traffic on Oakland Drive is acceptable, then there is not much to dislike about the duplex proposal. He noted that the drainage situation on Oakland may be

improved since the runoff from the housing will be redirected back to the enlarged pond on the golf course. He noted that there would be more homeowners in the future to contribute to a future road improvement project if it becomes necessary to repave in the future.

Mr. York further noted that the property would likely remain an attractive and well-maintained asset on the street given the HOA ownership.

Mr. Charlick stated that the benefits of allowing the condominium over the option of single-family homes is compelling and offers a housing type that is not found elsewhere in the Township; but seems to be in demand. He noted that today's home buyer seems more interested in low-key maintenance with amenities than in large yards in subdivisions. Mr. York noted that the Township should be encouraging this style of development.

The Planning Commission discussed the driveway orientation at some length, including potential modifications to limit the sweep of headlights from the exit driveway into the homes on the south side of Oakland Drive. Mr. Dowling agreed that there was some ability to shift the exit to line up with a driveway and garage instead of someone's living room.

The Planning Commission reviewed the written offer of conditions. Mr. Dowling agreed to add a clause to the final condition in that the Township could revert the zoning if he was unable to obtain all the required permits from other agencies.

Mr. Charlick moved to recommend approval of the proposal for rezoning of a portion of parcel 11-01-351-002 at the northwest corner of Highland Hills Drive and Oakland Drive from ARR, Agriculture and Rural Residential Zoning District to RM, Multiple-Family Residential with an offer of conditions and tied to the concept plan by Meier Architects, dated December 12, 2025 indicating three duplex units and two separate units on approximately 3 acres with the understanding that the written offer of conditions has been amended to recognize the Township right to revert the zoning to ARR, if all necessary outside agency approvals are not obtained within two years. Mr. Heyn supported the motion.

Roll call vote: Temple, yes; York, yes; Zeolla-yes; Charlick-yes; Heyn-yes; Smith-yes. Motion carries (6 yes votes, 0 no votes).

**Agenda Item #3:**

Parcel #	11-01-351-002
Zoning:	ARR, Agricultural and Rural Residential Zoning District
Address:	2075 Oakland
File #:	URSA 25-04
Request:	Public Hearing/Special Land Use Approval for Golf Course
Applicant:	David Dowling, Yukon Building Company
Owner:	SIGA Corp

Mr. Heyn introduced the proposal for golf course improvements on the Highland Hills Golf Course, and the establishment of a special land use permit. Mr. Dowling noted the golf course has been in continuous operation since the 1920's.

Mr. Charlick asked for an explanation of the newly proposed practice area to replace the previously proposed golf simulator that drew widespread opposition from the neighbors. Mr. Dowling explained that it was merely an open space on the grass with a net to catch balls so that the golfers would have a spot to warm up prior to starting play.

Mr. Charlick thought that the activity at a practice area would be more disturbing to the neighbors than the occasional drive from a tee box. He asked if the practice area could be spun around 180 degrees to shoot into the golf course instead of towards the homes, and if there could be some measure to mitigate the noise, such as a backstop?

Mr. Dowling agreed that this was a very small component, and he would have room to do something similar to what is suggested.

Mr. Temple said he has never seen a practice area like this on a golf course, and although he thinks the golfers would appreciate, he does not think the neighbors will. He does not believe this change in the proposal is sufficient to overcome the issues raised by the public.

The Planning Commissioners discussed ideas to mitigate the noise including walls, landscaping, and special construction materials. Mr. Temple said that he was not convinced there would be an effective solution. He thought the difference between the existing conditions and either of the proposals was similar to the neighbor living at the edge of a woods hearing the occasional hunter firing a shot and living next to a gun range.

The Planning Commissioners also discussed that there are benefits to the community of establishing the Special Land Use permit and approving the upgrades to the parking lot, club house and cart barn and third hole. They reviewed the analysis of the required findings of approval for special land uses submitted by Planning Staff in the December 4, 2025 memorandum from Ms. Corwin. They believed there was insufficient information to move forward on the practice area, but the remainder of the proposal meets the required standards of approval.

Mr. Heyn offered a motion to recommend the special land use petition for the golf course improvements for the club house, cart barn, parking lots, with the understanding that the golf practice area would not be approved at this time until and unless the applicant submits evidence that the noise concerns can be mitigated. Mr. Charlick supported the motion. Roll call vote: Charlick-yes; Heyn – yes; Temple – no; Tierney – yes; Smith-yes; York – yes; Zeolla -yes. Motion carries (5yes votes, 1 no vote)

**Agenda Item #4:** Committee Updates

- Zoning Board of Appeals:
- Township Board:
- Highland Downtown Development Authority:
- Planning Director's Update

Committee liaisons reported on the activities of their respective organizations.

**Agenda Item #5:** Minutes: December 4, 2025

Mr. Temple offered a motion to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2025 Planning Commission meeting as presented. Mr. York supported the motion which was approved by voice vote (all ayes, no nays)

***Adjournment:***

Mr. Charlick moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Mr. Zeolla supported the motion, which was unanimously approved by voice vote. (all ayes, no nays)

Respectfully submitted,  
Roscoe A. Smith, Secretary  
ARS/ejc