

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
APPROVED MINUTES
December 17, 2025

The meeting was held at Highland Township Auditorium, 205 N. John St, Highland, MI, 48357.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

David Gerathy, Chair
Michael Borg, Vice Chair
Anthony Raimondo, Secretary - **absent**
Michael Zeolla, P.C. Liaison
Peter Eichinger
Robert Hoffman
Gary Childs
Chuck Benke, Alternate
Jacob Probe, Alternate

Kariline P. Littlebear, Zoning Administrator
Samantha George, Assistant Zoning Administrator

Visitors: 1

Chair Gerathy welcomed the public to the meeting and reviewed the procedures for addressing the Board, stating that four affirmative votes are required to approve a variance. If a variance is approved, the applicant has one year to act upon the variance. He noted that Secretary Raimondo is absent and so alternate member, Jacob Probe, will sit in on this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. CASE NUMBER: 25-24
ENFORCEMENT: **Tabled from December 3, 2025**
ZONING: R3 – Single Family Residential
PARCEL #: 11-08-400-009
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 3563 Mantua Farms
APPLICANT: Michael Mantua
OWNER: Michael Mantua
VARIANCE REQUESTED: A 9-inch variance from the 48-inch maximum allowable height to 57-inches provided.
(Sec. 8.09.A.2)
This request is for an increase in the height of a fence in the required front yard.

Motion:

Mr. Probe made a motion to remove the case from the table. Mr. Hoffman supported the motion, and it was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

Chair Gerathy introduced the case and asked if the applicant was present and, if so, to please step up to the podium. He then asked the Zoning Administrator if there was anything new to add.

Mrs. Littlebear stated that there has not been any new public comment sent to the Planning Department regarding this case.

Discussion from the Applicant:

Mike Mantua, applicant, apologized for missing the last meeting and thanked the board for hearing his case today. He reviewed the case as presented. He stated that the fence is not proposed to be on the property line but rather 43 feet from the edge of the road along Middle and Mantua Farms.

Discussion from the Public:

Chair Gerathy noted that he read a letter of support signed by several neighbors at the previous meeting.

Discussion from the Board:

Bob Hoffman stated that he has a similar fence on his farm property. He stated this is an ideal fence for agricultural properties. He also noted that people driving past this property could never tell if the proposed fence is 9 inches taller than the ordinance allows due partly to speed on Middle as well as the fact that the property is rolling. He notes that it will not change the character of the neighborhood and will increase the usability of the parcel for farm activities.

Mr. Childs agreed with Mr. Hoffman.

Mr Eichinger stated that because drivers have to concentrate on the curves on Middle Rd the 9 inch difference will not be noticeable.

Motion:

Mr. Childs made a motion in Case #25-24, parcel # 11-08-400-009, commonly known as 3563 Mantua Farms, to approve a 9-inch variance from the 48-inch maximum allowable height to 57-inches provided for the construction of a fence in the required front yard per the facts and findings provided during discussion. Mr. Eichinger supported the motion.

Facts and Findings:

This request is the minimum necessary.

This request is consistent with the surrounding large acreage parcels.

This request will not interfere with lakefront sightlines for any of the neighbors.

This request will not be detrimental to nor alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gerathy-yes, Mr. Borg-no, Mr. Probe -yes, Mr. Zeolla-no, Mr. Hoffman-yes, Mr. Childs-yes, Mr. Eichinger-yes, (5 yes votes, 2 no vote). The motion passed and the variance requests were approved.

2. CASE NUMBER: 25-25
ENFORCEMENT: Tabled from December 3, 2025
ZONING: C-1 – Local Commercial
PARCEL #: 11-15-127-003
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 2800 N Milford Rd
APPLICANT: Phillips Signs & Lighting LLC
OWNER: AML Ventures LLC
VARIANCE REQUESTED: A 3-foot variance from the 6-foot maximum allowable height to 9 feet provided.

(Sec. 14.07. Table 14.2)

This request is for an increase in the height of a sign in the required front yard.

Motion:

Mr. Probe made a motion to remove the case from the table. Mr. Borg supported the motion, and it was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

Chair Gerathy introduced the case and asked if the applicant was present and, if so, to please step up to the podium. He then asked the Zoning Administrator if there was anything new to add.

Mrs. Littlebear stated that she had received an emailed request from the applicant to table the case until January 21, 2026.

Motion:

Mr. Probe made a motion in Case #25-25, parcel # 11-15-127-003, commonly known as 2800 N Milford Rd, to table the case to January 21, 2026. Mr. Hoffman supported the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gerathy-yes, Mr. Borg-no, Mr. Probe-yes, Mr. Zeolla-no, Mr. Hoffman-yes, Mr. Childs-yes, Mr. Eichinger-yes, (5 yes votes, 2 no votes). The motion passed and the case was tabled.

MINUTES:

Mr. Borg made a motion to approve the minutes of December 3, 2025, as corrected. Mr. Childs supported the motion, and it was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Benke asked what was coming up for the next meeting on January 7, 2026. Mrs. Littlebear stated that there are no cases for the next meeting so it would be to review the minutes only. She then noted that since Mr. Mantua stated that he does not plan to start his project until spring she could cancel the January 7, 2026 meeting and they could review the minutes for this meeting at the January 21, 2026 meeting. Each ZBA member stated that they would be comfortable cancelling the January 7, 2026 meeting.

ADJOURN:

At 7:49 p.m., Mr. Probe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Eichinger supported the motion, and it carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacob Probe, Acting Secretary
JP/kpl