

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
APPROVED MINUTES
May 6, 2026

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- **absent**
Michael Borg, Vice Chair
Anthony Raimondo, Secretary
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: 5

Vice Chair Borg 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. Vice Chair Borg noted that he is sitting in for Mr. Gerathy due to his absence and the alternate, Mr. Probe, also sat in on this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. CASE NUMBER: 26-06
ENFORCEMENT: **EE25-0304**
ZONING: R1.5 – Single Family Residential
PARCEL #: 11-14-302-001
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 2280 Harvey Lake Rd
APPLICANT: Dylan Lewton
OWNER: Dylan Lewton
VARIANCE REQUESTED: A 19.1-foot variance from the required 50-foot north front yard setback to 30.9-feet provided.
(Sec. 4.15 Table 4.1 Schedule of Reg.)
This request is for a reduction of the north front yard setback for the construction of a covered porch.

Vice Chair Borg introduced the case and asked if the applicant was present and, if so, to please step up to the podium. Mr. Borg asked the Zoning Administrator if all the mailings had been sent and were there any responses from the public. Mrs. George stated that all the mailings had gone out and there was no public response.

Discussion from the Applicant:

Mr. Lewton stated that he is currently renovating his home. He started to rebuild a porch off the front entrance when he received notice that a building permit is required. When he went to the office to apply, he found out that a variance would be required to build in that location. This is a corner lot with two front yards. The Harvey Lake setback is a 100-foot setback which the new porch meets but the Wardlow Rd setback is 50 feet which the new porch does not meet. Since the house was built in 1930, it was built well before the current zoning laws, so any exterior structure added to the house requires a variance. Approximately, 90% of the house is too close to the road.

Discussion from the Public:

None

Discussion from the Board:

Mr. Hoffman stated that he doesn't have any problem with this request because this is a typical house that was built before current zoning laws. The whole house is non-conforming, and it has got two front yards.

Mr. Borg stated that he thinks all the work done so far is beautiful.

Mr. Raimondo asked if the footprint for the new deck is changing. Mr. Lewton stated that the new porch matches the current roof pitch off that part of the house to have a clean transition between the two roofs and will be a little larger than the original porch.

Mr. Raimondo stated that he is concerned that this covered deck may be turned into a four seasons room or an addition to the house. He further stated that the house is nonconforming with two front yards. The house is currently zoned under 1.5 R, and so the parcel size is substandard to one point three acres. Mr. Raimondo also stated that he is excited to see the transformation and is in favor of this variance.

Mr. Zeolla stated that the answer is no to number 7 on the application "Will the proposed variance be the minimum necessary?" He stated that the minimum necessary would be what existed, not what it's been expanded to. Mr. Lewton stated that even though the porch is getting larger and covered, it doesn't extend any closer to the road than it already is.

Mr. Eichinger stated that there were a lot of flags and stakes on the property. Mr. Lewton stated that he was asked by the Zoning Administrator to mark out all the utilities on the property for the board members.

Mr. Probe stated that everything is marked well.

Mr. Eichinger stated that the parcel is unusual with the address on Harvey Lake Road, but the porch and the front door are facing the opposite direction.

Motion:

Mr. Hoffman made a motion in Case #26-06, parcel # 11-14-302-001, commonly known as 2280 Harvey Lake Rd, to approve a 19.1-foot variance from the required 50-foot north front yard setback to 30.9-feet provided for the construction of a covered porch. Mr. Raimondo supported the motion.

Facts and Findings:

The parcel is substandard in size for R1.5.

The parcel has two front yards (Address on Harvey Lake Rd/Front door on Wardlow).

This request is the minimum necessary.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Probe-yes, Mr. Childs-yes, Mr. Hoffman -yes, Mr. Eichinger-yes, Mr. Zeolla -no, Mr. Raimondo -yes, Mr. Borg-yes, (6 yes votes, 1 no votes). The motion passed and the variance requests were approved.

2. CASE NUMBER: 26-08
ENFORCEMENT:
ZONING: IM–Industrial Manufacturing
PARCEL #: 11-22-176-010
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 958 N Milford Rd
APPLICANT: B.F. Thompson, P.C
OWNER: J & J of Highland LLC
VARIANCE REQUESTED: A 10-foot variance from the required 20-foot north side yard setback to 10-feet provided.
(Sec. 4.15 Table 4.1 Schedule of Reg.)
This request is for a reduction of the north side yard setback for the construction of an industrial detached pole barn.

Vice Chair Borg introduced the case and asked if the applicant was present and, if so, to please step up to the podium. Mr. Borg asked the Zoning Administrator if all the mailings had been sent and were there any responses from the public. Mrs. George stated that all the mailings had gone out and there was no public response.

Discussion from the Applicant:

Mr. Thompson stated he is representing Julia Dowson for J & J of Highland LLC, who owns several lots and existing buildings south of this parcel. They have similar existing garages like this and need another one for vehicles, due to safety concerns regarding damage and theft. The existing house is not in great shape and would be turned into record storage for the company. The lot itself is only 80 feet wide and was initially zoned residential and the township changed it to industrial. The reason for the variance is due to a 35-foot turning radius that’s needed to safely get in and out of the garage, hence the request to reduce the 20-foot required setback to 10-feet to allow the garage and continue with drainage of the southside. The septic system will be abandoned and there will be no sanitary facilities on this parcel.

Discussion from the Public:

Tim Mikula, 658 Meadow Dr, stated he is in favor of this request.

Discussion from the Board:

Mr. Borg asked the applicant to clarify about the septic system and the driveway that would be used to exit off Milford Road to go northbound and the driveway immediately to the south that will be used to exit on to Milford Rd to go southbound. Mr. Thompson stated the septic system would be abandoned and was not necessary because the building on this parcel would be strictly for storage. He also stated that the driveways are to help with safety for the drivers when they all leave at the same time. Mr. Zeolla stated the building could be moved 10-feet and then there would be no need for a variance. He further stated that he feels that too many variances are approved by this board. Mr. Thompson again stated they needed a 35-foot turning radius for safety and efficiency, which is why they need the extra 10-feet.

Mr. Hoffman wanted to remind everyone that this was an industrial site, not residential and that you want to utilize as much space as possible. He stated that these parcels are not meant to be homes anymore which is why the zoning was changed from residential to industrial. He also noted that this same variance was granted on a few other industrial sites in the past.

Mr. Childs stated the new building would be farther away from the property line than the existing structure.

Mr. Raimondo wanted to remind the board to focus on the facts of this case and that they are exclusively related to the standards of review, as found in section 7.04 of the Highland Township zoning ordinance. He has some concerns about the house being gutted.

Mr. Borg asked if the parcel is being replatted or if it's a separate lot unto itself.

Mr. Hoffman asked for clarification on which parcels would be combined if the approvals of the board(s) went through.

Mr. Thompson stated they have a Planning Commission meeting the following night and if they can get all the approvals from the board(s) the end goal will be to combine all parcels. Until that time, it will remain. He would be incorrect to suggest to his client to combine the parcels until they can gain approvals, because once it's combined, they will not be able to divide it later since it cannot meet the minimum 120 feet of width required in the industrial zoning district. Mr. Thompson clarified that this parcel would be combined with the parcel to the south.

Mr. Raimondo asked if the Planning Commission has reviewed the site plan yet. Mr. Zeolla stated they have not, so Mr. Raimondo suggested tabling the case.

Mr. Hoffman & and Mr. Childs felt it would be unnecessary to table the case.

Mr. Childs noted that this request is the minimum necessary and would ensure the safety of the business property. He also stated that there are two exits provided for safe ingress and egress.

Mr. Borg noted that the existing structure is only 7-feet from the north property line which is 3-feet closer than this request. He further stated that this request would accommodate the additional drainage detention.

Mr. Raimondo noted that this parcel is zoned industrial as are the surrounding parcels and this parcel backs to the railroad tracks.

Motion:

Mr. Childs made a motion in Case #26-08, parcel # 11-22-176-010, commonly known as 958 N Milford Rd, to approve a 10-foot variance from the required 20-foot side yard setback to 10-feet provided for the construction of an industrial pole barn per the facts and findings provided during discussion. Mr. Probe supported the motion.

Facts and Findings:

The parcel is substandard in width, being only 80-feet wide as opposed to the required 120-feet wide.

The parcel was rezoned from residential to industrial by the township in 2010.

This request is the minimum necessary.

This request encroaches less than the existing structures.

This request would provide safe ingress and egress.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Probe-yes, Mr. Childs-yes, Mr. Hoffman -yes, Mr. Eichinger -no, Mr. Zeolla-no, Mr. Raimondo-no, Mr. Borg-no, (3 yes votes, 4 no votes). The motion failed and the variance request was denied.

3. CASE NUMBER: 26-09
ENFORCEMENT:
ZONING: LV – Lake and Village Residential
PARCEL #: 11-09-476-024
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 658 Meadow Dr
APPLICANT: Timothy & Angela Mikula
OWNER: Timothy & Angela Mikula
VARIANCE REQUESTED: A 30-foot variance from the calculated 40-foot front yard setback to 10-feet provided; and
A 4-foot variance from the calculated 5-foot west side yard setback to 1-foot provided.
(Sec. 9.02.B.b.)
This request is for a reduction of the front yard setback and the west side yard setback for the construction of a detached accessory structure.

Vice Chair Borg introduced the case and asked if the applicant was present and, if so, to please step up to the podium. Mr. Borg asked the Zoning Administrator if all the mailings had been sent and were there any responses from the public. Mrs. George stated that all the mailings had gone out and there were two public responses.

Discussion from the Applicant:

Mr. Mikula stated he had just moved to Highland and realized the existing structure was dangerous, so he removed it. When he applied for a building permit to replace the structure, he was informed a variance was necessary to place a new structure in the same location. He requests to build a 12 x 24 structure, one-foot from the property line so that he doesn't block his driveway.

Discussion from the Public:

Mr. Borg read into record two letters of support from Meryle Mudd, 631 Meadow Dr., and Scott Goldstein, 664 Meadow Dr.

Discussion from the Board:

Mr. Borg stated the applicant's home is the only one on the block with an attached garage and feels that a second garage is unnecessary. Mr. Mikula stated that the accessory structure would be for lawn and lake equipment.

Mr. Zeolla stated that an addition to the garage would satisfy that need. Mr. Mikula explained that an addition to the garage would be too close to the septic system.

Mr. Borg and Mr. Probe asked why the septic system has not had a final approval yet. Mr. Mikula stated that he was unaware of this issue.

Mr. Borg asked the Zoning Administrator if she had information regarding the septic system. Mrs. George said she did not have any more information and could reach out to the Oakland County Sanitarian.

Mr. Probe read the letter from Oakland County Health Division regarding the necessary items to finalize the septic system.

Mr. Raimondo and Mr. Borg each stated that having a full discussion at this time would be unproductive.

Motion:

Mr. Raimondo made a motion to table Case #26-09, parcel # 11-09-476-024, commonly known as 658 Meadow Dr, for a 30-foot variance from the calculated 40-foot front yard setback to 10-feet provided, and a 4-foot variance from the calculated 5-foot west side yard setback to 1-foot provided for the construction of a detached accessory structure. Mr. Zeolla supported the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Probe-yes, Mr. Childs -yes, Mr. Hoffman -yes, Mr. Eichinger -yes, Mr. Zeolla-yes, Mr. Borg-yes, Mr. Raimondo-yes, (7 yes votes, 0 no votes). The motion passed and the case was tabled.

MINUTES:

Mr. Borg made a motion to approve the minutes of April 15, 2026, as corrected. Mr. Raimondo supported the motion, and it was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Borg asked about the next meeting. Mrs. George stated that it would be a minutes only meeting unless the tabled case comes back to the board.

Mr. Probe asked if ZBA26-09 would need to be readvertised. Mrs. George stated it would not have to be readvertised because it was tabled during this meeting.

ADJOURN:

At 8:28 p.m., Mr. Borg made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Raimondo supported the motion, and it carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Raimondo, Secretary
AR/kpl