CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
APPROVED MINUTES
September 2, 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
Jacob Probe, Vice Chair
Anthony Raimondo, Secretary
Michael Zeolla, P.C. Liaison
Peter Eichinger - **absent**
Robert Hoffman
Gary Childs
Chuck Benke, Alternate

Tim McLean, Zoning Administrator
Samantha George, Assistant Zoning Administrator

Visitors: 5

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. Mr. Probe was appointed to the board at the Highland Township meeting on August 31st, 2026, for Mr. Borg's replacement. Mr. Benke sat in for Mr. Eichinger.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. CASE NUMBER: 26-17
   ENFORCEMENT:
   ZONING: C2– General Commercial
   PARCEL #: 11-21-426-009
   PROPERTY ADDRESS: 268 W Highland Rd
   APPLICANT: Saqib Mehmood
   OWNER: Saqib Mehmood
   VARIANCE REQUESTED: An 8-foot variance from the 6-foot maximum allowable height to 14-feet provided; and
   (Sec. 14.07.I.)
   A 12-square foot variance from the 12-square foot maximum allowable area per gasoline price sign face to 24-square feet provided.
   (Sec. 14.07.I.9.)
   This request is for an increase in the height of a sign & an increase in the maximum allowable area per gasoline price sign face, for the construction of a free-standing sign.

Chair Gerathy introduced the case, and asked if the applicant was present and, if so, to please step up to the podium.

Discussion from the Applicant:
The previous owner of Mobile, Mike Fetuni, spoke for the applicant, Mr. Mehmood. Mr. Fetuni stated he owned the gas station previously for about 10 years before selling it to Mr. Mehmood, along with his future plans for the property. Mr. Fetuni explained that westbound motorists on M-59 cannot see the luminated gas price sign, due to speed and the landscaping on the parcel to the east. He had planned to install a three-foot taller sign and relocate the sign closer to the road. Mr. Fetuni stated the reason for this request is to improve visibility for the business and to match other local competitors along M-59 such as Citgo and BP. Mr. Fetuni noted that a new sign requires a significant investment. He believes a taller sign will achieve the objective of better visibility to justify the expense.

Discussion from the Public:
None

Discussion from the Board:
Mr. Gerathy checked with the Zoning Administrators to see if there was anything additional to add, Mrs. George said no.

Mr. Probe asked if the sign will be 14 feet or 16 feet 8 inches and notes the tallest sign in the township is 12 feet. Mr. Gerathy corrected him stating the sign is 168 inches, equaling 14 feet.

Mr. Zeolla stated the new Sheetz gas station on the corner meets ordinance and does not see a need for a variance. Mr. Fetuni stated that the Sheetz gas station is on a major corner with a traffic light and Mobil is at a disadvantage for visibility challenges due to roadway geometry and obstructions.

Mr. Raimondo stated variances should not be granted due to financial hardships, and he does not see any practical difficulty. He also suggested to table the case until the planning commission can review the sign ordinance. Mr. Hoffman agreed to table.

Motion:
Mr. Raimondo made a motion to table Case #26-17, parcel # 11-21-426-009, commonly known as 268 W Highland Rd, for an 8-foot variance from the 6-foot maximum allowable height to 14-feet provided, and a 12-square foot variance from the 12-square foot maximum allowable area per gasoline price sign face to 24-square feet provided for the construction of a free-standing sign, to October 21st, 2026, meeting. Mr. Probe supported the motion.

Facts and Findings:
The proposed variance is not the minimum necessary.
The parcel has existing overhead power lines, bushes and telephone poles in the required greenbelt.
Hardship for poor visibility due to travel speeds on M-59.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Zeolla -yes, Mr. Hoffman -yes, Mr. Raimondo -no, Mr. Childs -yes, Mr. Probe -yes, Mr. Benke -yes, Mr. Gerathy -yes, (6 yes votes, 1 no votes). The motion passed and the case was tabled.

MINUTES:
Mr. Probe made a motion to approve the minutes of August 19, 2026, as corrected. Mr. Hoffman

supported the motion, and it was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Hoffman stated he was at the last planning commission meeting and was interested in the changes being made to the sign ordinance.

Mr. Raimondo let the board know that a former planning commission chairman and member of the zoning board of appeals, Scott Green, has passed away and recognized his service to Highland Township.

Mr. Probe made a motion to nominate Mr. Raimondo as Vice Chair and nominates himself as Secretary. Mr. Gerathy supported the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

ADJOURN:

At 8:13 p.m., Mr. Probe 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