

**GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
September 8, 2025**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Grajek called the meeting of the Genoa Charter Township Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were Chris Grajek, Marianne McCreary, Greg Rassel, Eric Rauch, and Bill Reiber. Absent were Tim Chouinard and Glynis McBain. Also present was Planning Director Amy Ruthig.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The pledge of allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner McCreary, to approve the agenda as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

The call to the public was made at 6:31 pm with no response.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING #1...Consideration of an ordinance amendment to Article 13 entitled "Environmental Protection Regulations."

A. Recommendation of Zoning Ordinance Amendments to Article 13 entitled "Environmental Protection Regulations".

Ms. Ruthig stated this was a difficult ordinance to write because she wanted to ensure that the changes equally served all of the properties in Genoa Township. She checked other townships' ordinances. She also met with an arborist, who is also a wetlands specialist for the State of Michigan, and he provided a lot of information to her. She reviewed the proposed changes and the reasons why they are being made.

Commissioner McCreary requested to have additional definitions added.

The Commission and Ms. Ruthig discussed the changes.

- The requirements of the woodland preservation section requiring developers to do more surveys and studies and provide more information is costly, and this could risk the development of attainable housing in the township.
- The requirement for a property owner to replace a certain percentage of trees that were removed to build a home could be a financial hardship.

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- The commission agreed there is a need for natural feature protection in the township, but the regulations should not prohibit any owner from developing their property nor affect their property rights.
- It could be difficult for staff to enforce these regulations.
- There were some statements in the original ordinance that were recommended for removal, but the commissioners agreed they should remain.
- The definition of the term clear cutting should be revisited or removed from the ordinance.
- The commission discussed the maximum size and number of storage tanks allowed on a site and how far they should be from wetlands. The risk for spills for underground tanks is not their size or while the material is in the tank, it is when they are being filled. Other regulations for storage tanks are determined by the State of Michigan.

The call to the public was made at 7:12 pm.

Ms. Mary Jane Hebert of 6899 Lyle Lane stated that Michigan has a lot of trees, compared to the east and west coasts of the United States. There are communities surrounding Genoa Township that are built up and have no trees. Genoa township has trees. There is not a need for housing in the township. If more people move into the township, that can cause an increase in the need for more schools and increase in property taxes. The natural features need to be protected.

Ms. Deb Beattie of 3109 Pineview Trail stated that trees should be protected and respected for their value to the planet and they are not treated that way. There needs to be a way to protect the trees.

Ms. Melanie Johnson of 3990 Chilson Road spoke about the preservation of trees and affordable housing in the township.

The call to the public was closed at 7:25 pm.

After further discussion, the Planning Commission recommended Ms. Ruthig review the items discussed this evening, make appropriate changes, and return to the commission for review.

Moved by Rassel, supported by Reiber, to postpone the approval of the zoning ordinance amendments to Article 13 entitled "Environmental Protection Regulations". **The motion carried unanimously.**

The Planning Commission agreed to open a call to the public at 8:07 pm.

Ms. Deb Beattie provided comments on the discussion this evening. She suggested a larger wetland setback buffer and a larger separation distance for the underground storage tanks.

The call to the public was closed at 8:09 pm.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

Staff Report

Ms. Ruthig stated there are no items scheduled for the October meeting.

She will be sending a link for the planners conference. If any commissioners are interested, please let Kathleen know.

Approval of the August 11, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes

Needed changes were noted.

Moved by Commissioner McCreary, seconded by Commissioner Rassel, to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Member Discussion

Ms. McCreary commented on the nice facade upgrades of the building where the Hobby Lobby is going.

Chairman Grajek suggested opening a second call to the public instead of having a back and forth discussion between the commission and the members of the public.

Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner McCreary, seconded by Commissioner Rassel, to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas, Recording Secretary