

**GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
February 9, 2026**

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, Tim Chouinard, Marianne McCreary, Greg Rassel, Eric Rauch, and Bill Reiber. Absent was Glynis McBain. Also present were Planning Director Amy Ruthig, Planning Coordinator Bobby Foster, Shelby Byrne of Tetra Tech, and Brian Borden of Safebuilt.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The pledge of allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Moved by Commissioner Rassel, supported by Commissioner Chouinard, 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 opened at 6:31 pm with no response.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING #1...Consideration of a special use, site plan and environmental impact assessment for a proposed family day care home (up to 14 children) located 554 S. Hughes Road on the west side of Hughes Road, south of Golf Club Road. The request is petitioned by Jennifer Duncan.

- A. Recommendation of Special Use Application
- B. Recommendation of Environmental Impact Assessment
- C. Recommendation of Site Plan

Ms. Jennifer Duncan stated she has spoken with the Fire Marshal, provided the locations of the nearest childcare center, and provided the location of the fence for the play area. It meets the requirements.

Mr. Borden reviewed his letter dated February 3, 2026.

1. Special Land Uses (Section 19.03):
 - a. Provided the Commission finds that the proposal will uphold the overall goals of the plan, the proposal may be viewed as compatible with the Township Master Plan.
 - b. The applicant must address any comments/concerns raised by the Commission with respect to the compatibility and impact criteria.

- c. The applicant must address any comments provided by the Township Engineer or Brighton Area Fire Authority.
2. Group Day Care Homes (Section 3.03.02k):
 - a. The revised submittal demonstrates compliance with the use conditions.
3. Additional Considerations:
 - a. He suggests that issuance of a State license be included as a condition to a favorable recommendation.
 - b. He requests the applicant provide the Township with a copy of their State license once obtained.

Ms. Byrne reviewed her letter dated January 30, 2026.

1. The petitioner should provide documentation from the Livingston County Health Department documenting the suitability of the existing well for the increased use. The existing residential home is connected to the existing municipal sanitary system with adequate capacity on the west side of the site, so no impact to a private septic system needs to be considered.
2. The existing driveway has six parking spaces, as shown on the provided site plan. Additionally, the existing driveway is over 300 feet long and has a turnaround near the house. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the proposed use will cause any traffic impacts to Hughes Road.

The Brighton Area Fire Authority Fire Marshal's letter dated January 20, 2026 states he has spoken with the applicant and determined that this will, in fact, remain a residence. The applicant will comply with the group home requirements of the State of Michigan and BAFA's requirements for her project.

Commissioner Reiber confirmed that there will be staggered drop off and pick up times to avoid issues with the traffic on the driveway but also requested to have an area to park alongside the driveway. Ms. Duncan stated she can review that option after she has operated for some time to determine if it is needed and how it would be done.

Ms. Duncan stated the Health Department has tested the water and checked the well, and he said that he would contact her if there were any concerns. She will be using delivered water for drinking.

The call to the public was opened at 6:41 pm.

Mr. Eric Martin of 520 S. Hughes Road asked how the children will stay on the property as there are blind spots along the private drive and the home is next to a lake. The location of the fence was shown on the plans. Commissioner Rauch stated it is a 25 x 60 square foot area that is completely fenced in.

The call to the public was closed at 6:44 pm.

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Reiber, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Special Use Application for a family day care home (up to 14 children) located at 554 S. Hughes Road, as the Planning Commission finds that the requirements of Section 19.03 and Section 3.03.02k have been met. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment dated January 16, 2026 for a family day care home (up to 14 children) located at 554 S. Hughes Road. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Site Plan dated January 21, 2026 for a family day care home (up to 14 children) located at 554 S. Hughes Road conditioned upon the applicant obtaining and providing to the township the required state licensing. **The motion carried unanimously.**

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING # 2...Consideration of a special use, site plan and environmental impact assessment for proposed two (2) two-hundred and fifty (250) gallon above ground fuel storage tanks. The property is located at 2025 Euler Road, east side of Euler Road, north of Grand River Avenue. The request is petitioned by Merlo Construction Company, LLC.

- A. Recommendation of Special Use Application
- B. Recommendation of Environmental Impact Assessment
- C. Recommendation of Site Plan

Mr. Wayne Perry of Desine Engineering and Mr. Brian Misaras, the applicant, were present. Mr. Perry stated they have relocated the tanks as requested by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Borden reviewed his letter dated February 3, 2026.

1. Special Land Uses (Section 19.03):
 - a. In order to make favorable findings related to compatibility and impacts, the conditions of Section 13.07 need to be met to the Commission's satisfaction.
 - b. The applicant must address any comments provided by the Township Engineer or Brighton Area Fire Authority.
2. Fuel Storage (Section 13.07):
 - b. The applicant must obtain any outside permits required for fuel storage.

Ms. Byrne stated that her outstanding comments have been addressed and she has no further engineering concerns.

The Brighton Area Fire Authority Fire Marshal's letter dated January 26, 2026 stated he has no objection to the proposed fuel storage area as submitted.

Commissioner Reiber confirmed that the earliest start time will be 7:00 am. Mr. Misaras stated that they will operate within the local ordinance. There will not be construction or noise issues.

The call to the public was opened at 6:51 pm with no response.

It was confirmed that the proposal meets the required buffers. Ms. Ruthig stated that the applicant will be adding more trees than are required by the ordinance.

Moved by Commissioner Chouinard, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Special Land Use. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Moved by Commissioner Chouinard, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Moved by Commissioner Chouinard, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Site Plan. **The motion carried unanimously.**

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING #3...Consideration of a special use, site plan and environmental impact assessment for a proposed indoor dog park, coffee shop and bakery. The property is located in the existing Country Corners shopping center, 4060 Grand River Avenue, on the south-east corner of Grand River Avenue and Latson Road.

- A. Recommendation of Special Use Application
- B. Recommendation of Environmental Impact Assessment
- C. Recommendation of Site Plan

Ms. Stacie Phillips, the applicant, and Mr. John Eckstein of Lindhout Associates were present. Mr. Eckstein stated they have provided the information requested for the fence and gate and the turf on the outside will be synthetic.

Mr. Borden reviewed his letter dated February 3, 2026

1. Special Land Uses (Section 19.03):
 - a. In order to make favorable findings related to compatibility and impacts, the conditions of Section 7.02.02(w) must be met to the Commission's satisfaction.
 - b. The applicant must address any comments provided by the Township Engineer or Brighton Area Fire Authority.
2. Pet Day Care Centers (Section 7.02.02w):
 - a. He is requesting the applicant identify the fence materials for the Commission's consideration.
 - b. If the Township approves the request, the applicant must obtain and submit copies of approvals from outside agencies, as required.

- c. If the Commission determines that additional and/or more detailed information is needed, the applicant must address any such concerns.

Ms. Byrne stated she has no engineering concern with the proposed site plan and special land use.

The Brighton Area Fire Authority Fire Marshal's letter dated January 26, 2026 states the fire authority has no objection to the proposed special use for the existing tenant space. Further review will be required during the tenant construction application for a permit.

When asked what material the fencing will be, Mr. Eckstein stated it will be a PVC product.

Commissioner McCreary asked for confirmation on specific details of the proposal, and all were answered by Ms. Phillips. She is in favor of the business; however, she does not believe this is the right location. She would like to have it as a stand-alone business. Mr. Eckstein stated that Ms. Phillips did a lot of research and this location already had many of the elements that she needed for this type of business.

Commissioner Reiber noted there are requirements from the Fire Marshal in his letter that must be met by the applicant.

The call to the public was opened at 7:03 pm with no response.

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Special Land Use for 4060 Grand River Avenue for an indoor dog park, coffee shop and bakery, as the Planning Commission finds that the requirements of Section 19.03 and Section 7.02.02(w) have been met. **The motion carried with Commissioner McCreary voting no.**

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment dated January 20, 2026 for an indoor dog park, coffee shop and bakery. **The motion carried with Commissioner McCreary voting no.**

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Site Plan dated January 20, 2026 for an indoor dog park, coffee shop and bakery, conditioned upon the following:

- The fence material is added to the plans and provided to township staff for approval
- The applicant shall receive all outside agency approvals and provide copies to the township.

The motion carried with Commissioner McCreary voting no.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING #4 ...Consideration of a special use, site plan and environmental impact assessment for a proposed expansion of outdoor storage for the existing Truck and Trailer. The property is located on the west side of Grand Oaks Drive, south of Grand River Avenue. The request is petitioned by Truck and Trailer Specialties.

- A. Recommendation of Special Use Application
- B. Recommendation of Environmental Impact Assessment
- C. Recommendation of Site Plan

Mr. Jesse Parkinson of The Umlor Group, the applicant's engineer, stated they are requesting to expand their existing storage area in the back of the building. They will be using asphalt millings.

Mr. Borden reviewed his letter dated February 4, 2026.

1. Special Land Use (Section 19.03)
 - a. In order to make favorable findings on the compatibility and impact criteria, the use conditions for outdoor storage must be met to the Commission's satisfaction.
 - b. The Commission should consider any comments provided by the Township Engineer and Brighton Area Fire Department with respect to this standard.
2. Use Conditions (Section 8.02.02(b))
 - a. Pending input from the Township Engineer, the Commission may allow the use of asphalt millings as the surfacing for the outdoor storage area.
 - b. The Commission may allow screen fencing and existing vegetation in lieu of new buffer zone requirements. The applicant is requesting to use screen fencing and there is existing vegetation in the required buffer area.
3. Site Plan Review
 - a. If any of the landscaping from the 2018 approval has died or is in poor condition, the Township should require replacement as part of this project.
 - b. The lighting plan must be revised to eliminate the on-site readings above the 10-footcandle limit.
 - c. The applicant must address any site plan comments provided by the Township Engineer and/or Brighton Area Fire Authority.

Ms. Byrne reviewed her letter dated February 3, 2026.

Genoa Township requires parking lots be hard surface. The proposed storage area addition is using asphalt millings, rather than pavement. Since this area will be used for storage and matches the existing storage area that is also surfaced with asphalt millings, she has no engineering related concern with the proposed addition not being hard surface.

The Brighton Area Fire Authority Fire Marshal's letter dated January 26, 2026 states he has no objection to the proposed storage area expansion. The area is already provided with emergency gate access and a fire hydrant accessible from the lot.

Ms. Ruthig stated she received a letter from the neighbor next door to the site right before the start of tonight's meeting, so it was not included in the packet. She provided it to the Commissioners and to the applicant.

Mr. Bouwman was asked what work was done as noted in the letter from the neighbor. Mr. Bouwman stated they tried bringing some free dirt in from an existing project in the township. After he was notified he was not able to do that, he stopped the work and then complied with the Drain Commissioner's requirements. He did not know he needed a permit. The plan submitted for this proposal includes the dirt that was brought onto the site.

Mr. Parkinson reviewed the plans, noting they meet all of the ordinance requirements, including additional elements to ensure the safety of the site. They had a future approval for 7 ½ acres of property so that is why Mr. Bouwman did not think he needed to receive additional approvals for the storage area expansion.

Commissioner Rauch stated that Items #1, 4, and 5 of the letter received will be addressed with what is being proposed. Regarding the additional traffic on Grand Oaks Drive, this is an industrial roadway and has been designed for this type of traffic. With regard to the air quality, this business has been approved operationally. He appreciates the feedback and input from the adjacent property owner, but the plan tonight addresses the items that the township can have control over.

Commissioner Reiber wanted assurance that they are meeting the requirements for stormwater management. Mr. Parkinson stated they have worked with the township engineer and drain commissioner for the last five months and they have approved what they are proposing.

Commissioner Reiber asked what happens to a business that does work without permits and what typically occurs. Ms. Ruthig stated in this case, when they were notified, they stopped the work and then complied with the drain commissioner to bring it into compliance. Mr. Bouwman stated he received a fine from the Drain Commissioner and did what work was needed to bring that into compliance.

Commissioner Rauch stated they are approving something that has already been started. He reminded the applicant that in the future, before any work is started, all permits and approvals must be obtained.

Commissioner Reiber would like to see additional landscaping to allow a six foot screen wall and fence instead of a full Buffer Zone B. The applicant is proposing the fence rather than the buffer zone. Mr. Bouwman stated due to the elevation of their property, the plantings would not be seen.

The call to the public was opened at 7:33 pm.

Ms. Deb Beattie of 3109 Pineview Trail is concerned with the number and types of trees that are being removed. She would like the applicant to keep some of them. She would also like more night sky and bird friendly lighting in the Township. She reminded everyone that oak trees should not be removed from November 1 to March 31 and should not be trimmed between April 15 and July 15.

The call to the public was closed at 7:35 pm.

Commissioner Reiber reiterated that he would prefer trees instead of fencing. Commissioner Chouinard stated the fence is needed for safety and security. Commissioner Rauch suggested allowing the chain link fence with the addition of conifer trees. There is 25 feet of area between the proposed expansion and where the slope begins. If a tree is planted every 30 feet on center, 11 trees can be planted. The applicant agreed.

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Special Land Use for the expansion of outdoor storage for the existing Truck and Trailer located on the west side of Grand Oaks Drive, south of Grand River Avenue as the Planning Commission finds that the conditions of Section 19.03 and Section 8.02.02(b) have generally been met to their satisfaction. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Reiber, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment dated January 20, 2026 for the expansion of outdoor storage for the existing Truck and Trailer located on the west side of Grand Oaks Drive, south of Grand River Avenue **The motion carried unanimously.**

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Reiber, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Site Plan for the expansion of outdoor storage for the existing Truck and Trailer located on the west side of Grand Oaks Drive, south of Grand River Avenue., with the following conditions:

- The petitioner will add 11 coniferous trees at 6 foot height at the time located at the bottom of the new proposed slope between the disturbance area on the west side.
- Township staff will review the existing landscaping against the approved landscaping plan of seven years ago and if necessary, will be brought back into compliance during an applicable season in 2026.
- The lighting photometrics and plan shall be updated and reviewed by township staff to meet township standards.
- The chain link fence matching the existing chain link fence is acceptable.
- The asphalt millings are acceptable material in this industrial zone.

The motion carried unanimously.

The Planning Commission took a break from 7:45 to 7:55 pm.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING #5...Consideration of an ordinance amendment to Article 13 entitled “Environmental Protection Regulation” related to “Hazardous Materials and Fuel Storage and Wetland Protection Standards”

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

Ms. Ruthig showed the proposed rendering for the wetland demarcation signs. All Commissioners are in favor of the sign design.

The planning commission and Ms. Ruthig discussed the proposed changes made since last month’s meeting.

The call to the public was opened at 8:16 pm.

Mr. Jim Carpenter of 4715 Stillmeadow Drive stated the developer should pay more than what the township pays for the sign. He does not think the township should worry about the old buffer requirements when setting the new standards.

Ms. Deb Beattie of 3109 Pineview Trail spoke about the setback requirements discussed this evening. The main priority should be to protect the wetlands, water and trees.

The call to the public was closed at 8:22 pm.

Commissioner Rauch appreciates the comments from the public. He stated the township does very well with wetland protection.

Commissioner Reiber wants to ensure that the township is preserving its natural environment instead of helping developers build homes. He wants to start considering larger setback requirements.

Commissioner Rauch stated the township should focus on responsible development as well as preservation and these requirements achieve that. He noted that attainable housing is also a goal of the township and Commissioner McCreary agreed.

Commissioner Chouinard noted that there are property owners who had plans to build a certain home or building, but if the ordinance changes significantly, they will be losing buildable area. Ms. Ruthig agreed it is a very difficult balance to achieve.

Moved by Commissioner Rauch, supported by Commissioner Rassel, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Zoning Ordinance Amendments to Article 13 entitled “Environmental Protection Regulations”, conditioned upon the following:

- Review and approval from the township attorney.

- Fuel storage tanks will be 150 feet from residential zoned districts and within the building envelope when next to parcels of the same zoning district.

The motion carried with Commissioner Reiber voting “no”.

Chairman Grajek allowed a call to the public at 8:40 pm.

Ms. Deb Beattie stated it is up to the builders to decide what price homes they want to build. The Commission says they want more housing, but the master plan calls for changing zoning so commercial can be built instead of residential.

Mr. Jim Carpenter stated the township does not need to make attainable housing available. He recommends that a second call to the public be put on the agenda for this and the Board of Trustees meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

Staff Report

Ms. Ruthig stated the joint meeting between the Planning Commission and Township Board will be held on Monday, February 23. She does not have any items for the March Planning Commission meeting,

Approval of the January 12, 2026 Planning Commission meeting minutes

Needed changes were noted.

Moved by Commissioner McCreary, seconded by Commissioner Rassel, to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Member Discussion

The board agrees that a second call to the public should be added to the end of the meeting.

Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Rassel, seconded by Commissioner Chouinard, to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas, Recording Secretary