

GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
July 14, 2026 - 6:30 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order: Chairperson McCreary called the regular meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals to order at 6:30 pm. The members and staff of the Zoning Board of Appeals were present as follows: Craig Fons, Michele Kreutzberg, Matt Hurley, Rick Soucy, and Carrie Aulette, Zoning Official.

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Introductions: The members of the board and staff introduced themselves.

Conflict of Interest: None

Approval of the Agenda:

Moved by Board Member Soucy, supported by Board Member Kreutzberg, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Call to the Public:

The call to the public was opened at 6:32 pm with no response.

Chairperson McCreary reviewed the criteria necessary for a variance to be approved.

Old Business

1. 26-10...A request by Bradley Giordano, 4510 Filbert Dr., for a wetland variance and any other variances deemed necessary by the Zoning Board of Appeals, to construct a driveway and a new single-family home.

Mr. Giordano has submitted a new survey and redesigned house plans. The new home no longer requires a variance. He is here asking for a variance for the driveway to encroach into the 25' wetland buffer.

Chairperson McCreary thanked Mr. Giordano eliminating the other variance requests.

Mr. Giordano noted the most recent email from the Drain Commission and the signed Flooding Easement agreement that has been recorded with the County.

Board Member Soucy asked if he has obtained approvals from the Oak Pointe Hills Association. Mr. Giordano stated he has been going back and forth with the Management Company since February 2026. They have been discussing architectural approvals.

The Board has some discussion regarding demarcation signage to be installed to protect the wetlands.

Mr. Soucy appreciates Mr. Giordano's attention to detail in making these changes, Board Member Fons agrees.

Mr. Giordano explains to the Board the construction of the home will be a slab construction with all upland grading. Board Member Kreutzberg asked if there will be any retaining walls. Mr. Giordano states there will be one small wall in front of the home that is 12" tall, it's a single boulder wall.

Chairperson McCreary would like to recommend that prior to any digging, Township staff inspect the site to ensure that Mr. Giordano is not encroaching into any setbacks. Mr. Giordano states there will not be any digging, it is all upland grading but that Livingston Engineering will be onsite to ensure all setbacks are met.

Chairperson McCreary would also like to have the Township attorney review the Flooding Easement Agreement.

The call to public was made at 6:50 with no response.

Moved by Kreutzberg, supported by Soucy to approve case 26-10 for Brad Giordano. To approve a wetland buffer variance of 12'9" for a total of 12'1" from the required 25'. To install a driveway and construct a new home, based on the following findings of fact:

- Strict compliance of the ordinance would unreasonably restrict the intended use of the property, it would provide substantial justice and is the least amount necessary and would make the property consistent with other properties in keeping with the architectural consistency of the neighborhood. It has the least impact on the wetland drainage patterns and meets all criteria of 13.02.05
- Variance is necessary due to the extreme condition of the lot, its topography, and limited building envelope due to surrounding designated wetlands, and a sloping yard. The hardship is not self-created, yet due to the natural characteristics of the property. Granting variance will allow upland site grading and limit the effects on the wetlands, buffer zone, and drainage pattern.

- Granting these variances will not impair adequate light or air to adjacent properties, would not increase congestion, or increase danger of fire or threaten the public health, safety or welfare.
- Proposed variance would have little or no impact on appropriate development, continued use or value of adjacent properties and surround neighborhood.

This approval is conditioned upon the following:

1. Structure must be guttered with downspouts.
2. Any retaining walls will require additional approvals.
3. Wetland shall be permanently demarcated at the edge of undisturbed natural areas, remaining in perpetuity with no further encroachment.
4. The entire remaining setback buffer area shall remain in a natural and undisturbed state and is not eligible for trail or recreational area exemptions.
5. Prior to construction, staff will confirm and identify buffer perimeter prior to initial grading or site excavation with required signage.
6. Silt fence to remain installed until final grade.
7. Attorney approval of easement agreement prior to initiating project.

The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

8. 26-11...A request by Ed and Karen Loniewski, vacant Clifford Road 4711-27-100-047, for a waterfront variance and any other variances deemed necessary by the Zoning Board of Appeals, to construct a new single-family home.

Mr. & Mrs. Loniewski stated they are requesting a waterfront setback variance due to the irregular shoreline. They had designed a home within the building envelope only to find out their driveway did not meet the site distance requirements of the Livingston County Road Commission. Additionally, the driveway would cover a sewer lead for a neighboring property. The only approved location per the Livingston County Road Commission is where the existing driveway currently sits. Due to this, they had to flip the orientation of the home causing a small portion of the back of the home to encroach into the waterfront setback.

Chairperson McCreary asked if the driveway that is existing is where the Road Commission is suggesting they place it. She noted in the application the Loniewski's stated there are concerns regarding the varying distances for the waterfront setback. Mr. Loniewski spoke about the average being skewed due to the two homes to the west that sit back so far from the road, while others to the east are much closer to the shoreline. They will not be obstructing anyone's view of the water.

Chairperson McCreary asked if a wetland survey had been done. Mr. Loniewski stated one has been done and silt fence has been installed to protect the areas. Chairperson McCreary stated they may also need wetland signage.

Mr. Fons observed the site and thinks this fits the criteria for least amount necessary, he thinks it is a good use of the lot. He agreed there are challenges to the driveway. Mr. Soucy agrees.

Mr. Hurley asked if they had thought about redesigning, the Loniewski's stated they have run through many design options.

The call to the public was made at 7:04 with no response.

Chairperson McCreary stated the Township is working on wetland signage, they should be aware that their may need to be some demarcation.

Moved by Kreutzberg, supported by Soucy to approve case 26-11 parcel 47-11-27-100-047 for Ed & Karen Loniewski for a waterfront setback variance of 12' for a total setback of 120' from the required 132' to construct a new home.

- Strict compliance to setback would greatly reduce building envelope. The irregular development of homes along the adjacent shoreline created unique conditions on this parcel. This variance will provide substantial justice and is the least amount necessary and will make the property consistent with other homes in the area.
- Because of the existing wetlands & unusual setback calculation the need for this variance is not self-created.
- Granting these variances will not impair adequate light or air to adjacent properties, would not increase congestion, or increase danger of fire or threaten the public health, safety or welfare.
- Proposed variance would have little or no impact on appropriate development, continued use or value of adjacent properties and surround neighborhood.

This approval is conditioned upon the following:

1. Structure must be guttered with downspouts.
2. Any retaining walls will require separate permits.
3. Silt fencing must be maintained throughout construction until final grade.
4. 35' wetland buffer must be adhered to and permanently demarcated.

The motion carried unanimously.

1. 26-12... A request by Visionary Builders, 249 S. Hughes Road, for a side yard variance and any other variances deemed necessary by the Zoning Board of Appeals, to build a detached accessory building.

Chairperson McCreary says the board had difficulty identifying the property. There was no signage or staking for the proposed building. They were also fearful of getting out of their vehicles due to the signage on the home with notices of "armed guards" or "dogs". She stated the Board may not be able to make a decision but the applicant may explain what their intent is.

Connor Adams from Visionary Builders is here with the property owner, Vilus Dundzila. They are proposing to build a 30' x 32' pole barn with a reduced side yard setback of 15'. He would like to know what they can do to get the Board to look at their site.

Chairperson McCreary says they will need to stake the site and coordinate with Township staff to make sure the Board is not fearful of doing the inspections. Applicant shall contact Township staff to coordinate inspection times.

Mr. Hurley is questioning the hardship here-could the barn be moved to the backyard?

Mr. Adams stated that 90% of the backyard is covered by the septic field. Mr. Fons thinks that may be incorrect. There is also mention of the field being covered by tarps. Mr. Dundzila stated he is trying to kill the grass to plant wildflowers there. Chairperson McCreary & Board Member Fons encouraged the owner to reach out to the Health Department to determine the location and size of the field.

Moved by Fons, supported by Kreutzberg to table case 26-12 to the August 18 meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. 26-13...A request by Tim Chouinard and Bill and Kelly Albert, 4358 Skusa Dr., for a front yard variance and any other variances deemed necessary by the Zoning Board of Appeals, to construct a new single-family home.

Tim Chouinard stated the property is wide but does not have the depth so he is requesting a front yard setback variance to construct a new home. The proposed home is not as close to the road as its neighboring properties.

Chairperson McCreary asked if they thought about constructing a two-story home. She recalls a previous Variance for this parcel. Ms. Aulette stated a front yard variance was approved in 2017. The current owner is asking for less than what was previously approved.

Tim Chouinard stated he would like to modify his request, they are going to be bricking the front of the home so instead of asking for 5'11" he would now like to request 6'7". Board Member Soucy stated this is still less than what was previously approved.

Board Member Kreutzberg asked if the entire front of the garage needs a variance, Mr. Chouinard stated that is correct and that the garage is parallel to the road.

The call to the public was made at 7:22 pm

Bruce Bradstreet of 4340 Skusa Drive stated he likes what Mr. Albert is requesting. He is not encroaching further into the front than the other homes, he is in favor.

Ted Thuis of 4350 Skusa stated he built his house and is less than 5' from the property line. He said he is concerned about the lack of green space in between but is in favor of this variance being approved. He wants to make sure the setbacks are honored.

The call to the public was closed at 7:27 pm.

Mr. Chouinard explained the process of staking the property. The surveyors come out multiple times to verify locations and pin the footings.

Board Member Fons stated its up to the petitioner to build to what was submitted.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Hurley to approve case 26-13 for 4358 Skusa for Tim Chouinard, Bill & Kelly Albert. Requesting relief from a 35' front yard setback to allow a 28'5" front yard setback resulting in a variance of 6'11". The approval is based on the following findings of fact.

- Strict application of the ordinance would prevent the applicant from reasonably constructing the proposed home on the property. Granting the variance provides substantial justice, as the proposed setback is generally consistent with neighboring properties, and the applicant has worked with Township staff to minimize the amount of relief requested.
- The property's limited lot depth creates a unique constraint that significantly reduces the available buildable area while maintaining compliance with the required front and rear setbacks. These conditions are inherent to the property and are not self-created.
- The requested variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, as the proposed home is not expected to adversely impact Township residents or public infrastructure.
- The proposed home is expected to have a positive impact on the surrounding neighborhood and is compatible with the existing character of the area.

The approval is conditioned upon the following:

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Unapproved Minutes

1. The structure shall be guttered with downspouts.
2. A silt fence shall be installed prior to construction and maintained throughout the construction phase.

The motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Business:

1. Approval of minutes for the June 16, 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

Moved by Board Member Soucy, supported by Hurley, to approve the minutes of the 16, 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting with corrections. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Correspondence

Ms. Aulette stated there will be 2 cases on next month's agenda.

3. Member Discussion

Chairperson McCreary stated it was a great meeting and she appreciates everyone participating in the discussions.

Board Member Fons stated the Township should have requirements about installing wetland barriers prior to construction. Board Member Soucy said they have done that previously with a new Pulte subdivision.

4. Adjournment

Moved by Board Member Soucy, supported by Board Member Fons, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Carrie Aulette, Zoning Official