

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
APPROVED MINUTES
March 4, 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
Michael Borg, Vice Chair
Anthony Raimondo, Secretary
Michael Zeolla, P.C. Liaison
Peter Eichinger
Robert Hoffman
Gary Childs
Chuck Benke, Alternate - **absent**
Jacob Probe, Alternate

Kariline P. Littlebear, Zoning Administrator
Samantha George, Assistant Zoning Administrator

Visitors: 7

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.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. CASE NUMBER: 26-02
ENFORCEMENT: **EE25-0312**
ZONING: R3 – Residential District
PARCEL #: 11-10-200-041
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 4755 Harvey Lake Rd
APPLICANT: Keith Engling
OWNER: Keith Engling
VARIANCE REQUESTED: A 15-foot variance from the calculated 50-foot rear yard setback to 35-feet provided; and
A 25-foot variance from the calculated 40-foot north side yard setback to 15-feet provided.
(Sec. 4.15 Table 4.1)
This request is for a reduction of the rear yard and the north side yard setback for the construction of a garage addition.

Chair Gerathy introduced the case and asked if the applicant was present and, if so, to please step up to the podium. Mr. Probe stated that he needs to recuse himself because he is a neighbor and a friend to the applicant.

Motion:

Mr. Raimondo made a motion to recuse Mr. Probe from the Board for this case. Mr. Borg supported the motion, and it carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Gerathy then asked the Zoning Administrator if there was anything new to add. Mrs. Littlebear stated that there has not been any additional public comment sent to the Planning Department regarding this case other than what was already provided to the Board.

Discussion from the Applicant:

Mr. Engling explained he just wanted to cover his trailer so it would not get ruined. He built a lean-to and did not like the look of it, so he enclosed it.

Discussion from the Public:

Jacob Probe, 5035 Harvey Lake Rd, stated the changes do not affect his property, they have a large tree barrier.

Mrs. Littlebear read into record a letter of support from Joseph Snook, 4785 Harvey Lake Rd.

Discussion from the Board:

Mr. Hoffman said he has no problem with this request because it does not negatively impact anyone since there is a full tree line and greenery shielding the structure from view.

Mr. Raimondo asked the applicant how many accessory structures were on the property. The applicant stated that there are two accessory structures on the property. Mr. Raimondo noted that this parcel is substandard in size and width because it's zoned R3 which is a three-acre minimum but this parcel is only 1.12 acres and not as wide as R3 would require. He stated that this request is the minimum necessary, will not be harmful to the neighborhood, and will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Motion:

Mr. Childs made a motion in Case #26-02, parcel # 11-10-200-041, commonly known as 4755 Harvey Lake Rd, to approve a 15-foot variance from the calculated 50-foot rear yard setback to 35-feet provided and a 25-foot variance from the calculated 40-foot north side yard setback to 15-feet provided for the construction of a garage addition per the facts and findings provided during discussion. Mr. Hoffman supported the motion.

Facts and Findings:

The parcel is substandard in size and width.

This request is the minimum necessary.

This request is consistent with the surrounding parcels.

This request will not be detrimental to nor alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gerathy-yes, Mr. Borg-no, Mr. Raimondo-yes, Mr. Zeolla-no, Mr. Hoffman-yes, Mr. Childs-yes, Mr. Eichinger-yes, (5 yes votes, 2 no votes). The motion passed and the variance requests were approved.

2. CASE NUMBER: 26-03
ENFORCEMENT: EE25-0330
ZONING: ARR – Agricultural & Rural Residential
PARCEL #: 11-16-100-004

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1405 Middle Rd
APPLICANT: Nicholas Mermuys
OWNER: Nicholas Mermuys
VARIANCE REQUESTED: A 9-foot 10-inch variance from the calculated 75-foot front yard setback to 65-feet 2-Inches provided; and
A 3-foot 3-inch variance from the calculated 40-foot east side yard setback to 36-feet 9-inches provided.
(Sec. 4.15 Table 4.1)
This request is for a reduction of the front yard and the east side yard setback for the construction of an uncovered deck.

Chair Gerathy introduced the case and asked if the applicant was present and, if so, to please step up to the podium. He then asked the Zoning Administrator if there was anything new to add. Mrs. Littlebear stated that there has not been any new public comment sent to the Planning Department regarding this case.

Discussion from the Applicant:

Mr. Mermuys explained that the previous deck was unsafe and needed to be replaced. He also stated his parcel is very small for the zoning district.

Discussion from the Public:

Mr. Gerathy read into record a letter of support from Robert Jarois, 1388 Middle Rd. John Dron, 1462 Middle Rd, stated he was a neighbor of Mr. Mermuys and supports his case.

Discussion from the Board:

Mr. Hoffman stated that the existing house and the garage are non-conforming. Mr. Hoffman then asked Mrs. Littlebear about patios at grade and needing permits. Mrs. Littlebear explained that patios must also meet setbacks and require permits.

Mr. Eichinger agreed with Mr. Hoffman and stated the front door and garage door do not face the road.

Mr. Raimondo asked when the parcel was created. Mrs. Littlebear stated it was created before 1997. Mr. Raimondo had no issues with the case because the parcel is substandard in size and area being only 0.55 acres in a 5-acre minimum district, the request is the minimum necessary, and the difficulty was created when the zoning ordinance was changed.

Motion:

Mr. Eichinger made a motion in Case #26-03, parcel # 11-16-100-004, commonly known as 1405 Middle Rd, to approve 9-foot 10-inch variance from the calculated 75-foot front yard setback to 65-foot 2-inches provided and a 3-foot 3-inch variance from the calculated 40-foot east side yard setback to 36-foot 9-inches provided for the construction of an uncovered deck per the facts and findings provided during discussion. Mr. Childs supported the motion.

Facts and Findings:

The parcel is substandard in size and area.

This request is the minimum necessary.

The existing structures are non-conforming.

The practical difficulty was not self-created.

This request will not be detrimental to nor alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gerathy-yes, Mr. Borg-yes, Mr. Raimondo-yes, Mr. Zeolla-yes, Mr. Hoffman-yes, Mr. Childs-yes, Mr. Eichinger-yes, (7 yes votes). The motion passed and the variance requests were approved.

MINUTES:

Mr. Zeolla made a motion to approve the minutes of February 4, 2026, as presented. Mr. Borg supported the motion, and it was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Zeolla made a motion to approve the minutes of February 11, 2026, as presented. Mr. Eichinger supported the motion, and it was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Borg asked what was coming up for the next meeting on March 18, 2026. Mrs. Littlebear stated that there are no cases for the next meeting so it would be to review the minutes only.

ADJOURN:

At 7:57 p.m., Mr. Raimondo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Zeolla supported the motion, and it carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Raimondo, Secretary
AR/kpl