

**Highland Township Planning Commission
Record of the 1443rd Meeting
Highland Township Auditorium
April 16, 2026**

Roll Call:

Kevin Curtis, Chairman
Grant Charlick
Chris Heyn
Mary Ray
Roscoe Smith
Scott Temple (absent)
Russ Tierney (absent)
Guy York
Michael Zeolla

Also Present:

Elizabeth Corwin, Planning Director

Visitors: 4

Chairman Curtis called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Agenda Item #1: Call to the Public: Opportunity for anyone to bring forward issues of interest or concern for Planning Commission consideration. Each participant limited to 3 minutes.

No public comment offered.

Work Session:

Agenda Item #2:

Parcel #	11-21-426-011
Zoning:	C-2. General Commercial Zoning District
Address:	700 Highland Road
File #:	PLU 26-0004
Request:	Temporary Land Use Permit for outdoor sales
Applicant:	Bryan Vasiloff, Granny's Attic
Owner:	Highland Commons Shopping Center, LLC

Chairman Curtis introduced the request for a temporary land use permit to conduct periodic outdoor "flea market" event with vendors at the Highland Commons Shopping Center, LLC.

Mr. Bryan Vasiloff and Ms. Laura Blewett of Granny's Attic were present to answer questions. Mr. Vasiloff explained his proposal would bring in up to 150 vendors once per month on the second Saturday for an outdoor sales event. They hope to add the 4th Saturday if all goes well. The vendors would include antique dealers, artisans, and other businesses similar to those who lease a booth in Granny's Attic. They would also bring in live music and food trucks.

Mr. York asked what factor would lead them to decide to add the fourth Saturday to which Mr. responded it will depend on how well it is received by the community and vendors. He explained that Granny's Attic is a new store in the area and has been successful, but he is still evaluating the market potential.

Mr. Curtis asked if the canopies will be left up overnight or dismantled. Mr. Vasiloff explained it is only a one-day event, with vendors arriving early, maybe 7:00 a.m. and tearing down their displays in the afternoon, around 3:00 p.m. Mr. Zeolla commented that it is unfortunate that the hours coincide with the Farmers Market sponsored by the Highland Downtown Development Authority.

Mr. Charlick asked if there would be conflicts with the schedule for the annual circus that has been erected on that site in the past. He mentioned that the parking often gets out of control for that event, with patrons parking in the median and on the parking lots serving the neighboring businesses. He also disclosed his business interests in the area and noted that it may be necessary to develop parking agreements in advance of the event.

Ms. Corwin noted that two of the areas identified on the site house the septic system and retention basin. Mr. Vasiloff agreed that the septic system would be roped off so that no one could inadvertently park on it.

Mr. Charlick asked about signage and commented that permits would be required. Ms. Corwin noted that the sign limits could be addressed in the temporary land use permits. Ms. Blewett noted that they understood there would be no signage on M59. Temporary signage would be limited to the vendor tables and whatever might be printed on their popup canopies. She also explained that Granny's Attic will vet the vendors, and any that do not comply with the ground rules will not be invited back.

Mr. Charlick asked if there would be any generators. Mr. Vasiloff noted that there may be generators for food trucks but generators are not needed for the vendors. Ms. Corwin noted that the food trucks will not need their own permits; but must be licensed and inspected.

Mr. York voiced dissatisfaction with the plot map, which is not drawn to scale and is difficult to read. The plan does not exhibit a clear traffic circulation plan or identify parking areas for vendors or customers. It does not show spaces reserved for the use of customers of the other businesses in the mall. The plan should also show where the musicians will be staged and where the food trucks would be parked. It is not clear how many food trucks are expected. There is also no discussion of how many portable toilets will be provided and whether that number is appropriate for the expected crowd.

Mr. Vasilof expressed his opinion that the businesses in the center will appreciate the additional traffic that will be drawn here. Mr. Charlick noted that temporary sales events can be touchy because of the other impacts on the permanent businesses. He thought it was important to set appropriate guardrails to contain the negative impacts that might be anticipated. He suggested that the canopies might be best placed just behind the curb of the south driveway, parallel to M-59.

Mr. Smith expressed a concern about the slope at that location. Ms. Blewett explained that there is a 30-foot landing behind the curb and that the landscaping will obscure some of the visual impact of the canopies. They had measured out the site and determined that the canopies will fit as shown. The plan is to set the majority of the vendors in the outlot just south of the grocery store.

Ms. Ray suggested that the applicants explore the potential to block off vehicle traffic from the southernmost drive in order to provide a safe place for the customers to shop.

Ms. Corwin asked if there were planned rain dates. She also suggested the Planning Commission provide clear guidance as to whether the 2nd Saturday per month is permissible. The permit will run 90 days, but can be renewed administratively if the Planning Commission allows that.

Mr. York noted that he is not prepared to approve the plan as presented. He might be willing to allow an event with 75 vendors for May 9, and allow the applicants an opportunity to present a better plan to the Planning Commission before subsequent events would be allowed.

Mr. Smith noted that he also wants to see a clear plan showing where trucks and trailers might park. He felt there was not room on the site for many. Mr. York said it appeared only 60 parking spaces had been reserved for the vendors, and that would not include trucks. He asked if there would be parking attendants to turn away excess customers if the site was overwhelmed.

Mr. Charlick offered a motion to approve a temporary land use permit for Granny's Attic for the second Saturday of each month for 90 days, to run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with setup and takedown the day of the event, limited to 75 vendors each occupying a 10 by 10 space. Staff may approve subsequent events for 2026 provided no changes are made to the plan. It is understood the applicants may bring a new site plan to the Planning Commission for consideration of relaxing these limits. Mr. Heyn supported the motion. Roll call vote: Charlick - yes; Curtis – yes; Heyn – yes; Ray – yes; Smith – yes; York – yes; Zeolla – yes. Motion carries (7 yes votes, 0 no votes.)

Agenda Item #3:

Parcel #	11-22-176-010
Zoning:	C-1, Local Commercial Zoning District
Address:	1340 S. Milford
File #:	PLU26-0008
Request:	Temporary Land Use for Food Truck
Applicant:	Malcolm Jones, Hog Heaven BBQ and Catering
Owner:	Mark Sawa, Highland Plaza, LLC

Chairman Curtis opened the agenda item for discussion among the Planning Commissioners.

Mr. Malcolm Jones and his uncle Dave Jones were present to explain the proposal and answer questions. Mr. Malcom Jones explained that the plan is to park the truck at the north end of the Highland Plaza with customers served on the grassy side of the truck. The truck is modern, and licensed by the State, inspected by Fire Departments. He is "ServSafe" certified.

Mr. M. Jones stated his intention is to setup from Thursday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. for as long as is allowed. He does do other events. He takes the truck home with him each night.

Mr. Curtis asked if they have entered a long-term lease. Mr. Jones stated they would like to try the site and were open to a long-term lease if that was possible.

Mr. Charlick explained his position is that food trucks should serve at events (such as just discussed with Granny's Attic,) and not be a daily presence. Food trucks violate all standards for signage, setbacks, etc. that brick and mortar businesses are required to meet.

Mr. York asked a clarifying question. Would the food truck be set up tomorrow through every weekend until October?

Mr. Dave Jones explained his relationship to Malcolm and that he had taught Malcolm the business. They understand safety and courtesy and have been present in the community before for the Red, White and Blues

festival. He assured the Planning Commission that Malcolm Jones will run the business in a professional manner and enhance the community, not detract from the business environment.

Mr. York asked why they chose this site. Mr. D. Jones noted that Scott Saylor of the flooring store had reached out to them. Big Beard BBQ had been approved for this site in the past. Mr. York asked what his experience had been setting up shop in someone's parking lot. Mr. D. Jones explained that he has been running food trucks since 2012 and had a long-term relationship with Corrigan's gas station in Brighton until the site was purchased by the State of Michigan to construct a round-about. He has more recently been set up in Mount Morris for about a year, as well as Howell.

Mr. Zeolla thought it was more appropriate to limit the truck to events, and work through the Highland Downtown Development Authority.

Mr. York noted that the issue with food trucks in the past has been related to the suitability of the site plan. He suggested that this site seems to work for this circumstance. The Board has not moved on the ordinance recommendation that would prohibit daily sales from a food truck.

Mr. Charlick thought the issue comes down to what constitutes temporary use. He understands Christmas tree sales, which have no potential for dragging beyond the November/December timeline. But every weekend for months at a time is not temporary and not the intent of the ordinance.

Mr. Jones suggested two weeks a month. Mr. Charlick stated he could tolerate a few days here and there, but our ordinances have gone up and down in the time frame, and the Board of Trustees has not come to an agreement on the ordinance yet. Mr. Curtis agreed that the issue comes when there is extension after extension and the food truck becomes a permanent fixture.

Mr. D. Jones explained that as a restauranter, a food truck offers an opportunity for him to learn about the community before deciding to invest. This is a gamble on both sides. The business owner wants to get their toes wet without getting burnt as a poor match. It also allows him to spread the news about his catering business and build a following.

Mr. Charlick believes only once a month is OK. He understands wanting to feel the market out. Mr. D. Jones asked if the Planning Commission would grant a consistent week of the month so the community could know when to expect them.

Mr. Charlick explained that he has been approached by brick-and-mortar businesses complaining that the zoning rules are not applied equally to food trucks. Mr. D. Jones countered that he tests his water and his hood is tested and certified twice per year. There is a huge investment in the truck and its licensing.

Mr. York moved to deny the application for a food truck at the Highland Plaza for three days per week based on the definition of temporary, given that three days a week for six months is not temporary. Mr. Charlick supported the motion. Roll Call vote: York -yes; Zeolla -no; Charlick -yes; Curtis -yes; Heyn -yes; Smith -yes; Ray -yes. Motion carries (6 yes, 1 no)

Agenda Item #4:

Parcel #	11-02-436-002
Zoning:	ARR, Agricultural and Rural Residential Zoning District
Address:	2115 White Lake Rd
File #:	URSA 26-01

Request: Use requiring Special Approval for small scale institutional use for BARN 45
Applicant: James A Lee, IV
Owner: Lee Family Foundation

Chairman Curtis introduced the agenda item for Use Requiring Special Approval for Barn 45 at 2115 White Lake Road. The discussion was tabled following a public hearing on February 19, 2026 and a work session on March 19, 2026.

Mr. York explained that a subcommittee had met on two occasions to discuss possible terms of a permit. This included a site visit. Ms. Corwin has synthesized the findings of the committee into a draft permit. Mr. York read the first recital, which he believed summed up the events to date, and set the tone for cooperation in moving forward to allow use of the site in a way that is safe for the public and minimizes disruption and nuisance for the neighbors. He thought it was not unusual for a property owner to react to challenges as they arose without understanding when he should seek permits. But he commended Mr. Lee for acknowledging his errors and working to sort it out. Mr. York also noted that he finds the project compelling and believes it will be an asset to the community.

Ms. Ray agreed that the site is impressive. Her main concern is safety. The tour of the facility revealed that there are structural issues to address such as outward swinging doors, the access to the bathrooms, and the use of the loft for assembly.

Mr. Smith added that the goal should be to bring the site into compliance with ordinance wherever possible, especially when it comes to safety issues. He agreed that the Barn 45 team had been very accommodating and that Barn 45 is a positive addition to the Highland community.

Mr. Zeolla thinks the project is still growing larger than the site capacity. Although there have been many changes to improve safety, he still believes the site is too small to accommodate the use.

Mr. York noted that some of the ambitious future planning is the result of his pressing the applicant to show the ultimate buildout of the site. He noted that the applicant has continually stated that they are happy with where they are today as far as numbers and are not pressing for the additions. They are committed to making the site work.

The plan shows current use with an option for a future building addition, but this is not what the Planning Commission should be basing the permit on today. The expectation should be for the 70 to 90 persons participating on a Monday evening and up to 120 young adults on the Sundays of the summer season. Separate use permits will be required for large scale events such as the annual Praise and Worship concert.

Mr. York is confident that the applicant now understands that he must seek the proper permissions before future expansions.

Mr. Curtis was pleased with the progress and plans to bring the site into compliance. He also noted that the it speaks volumes that there was no significant opposition from the neighbors other than minimal issues that have already been addressed.

Mr. Charlick like the draft permit format, which calls for an annual report and discussion of how things are operating. This provides an opportunity to tweak things to address any issues that might arise.

Ms. Corwin directed the discussion to several issues that should be discussed. The north parking lot can be easily moved to at least ten feet from the north property line. It is currently surfaced with asphalt millings. The draft permit suggests paving, although millings could be appropriate and are less impactful on the drainage. Barrier free spaces are provided on hard surfaced parking areas south of the Barn.

Ms. Ray thought the permit should be tightened as far as the timeline for compliance. She thought the site could be fully improved as discussed within a couple seasons. The Planning Commission members agreed that millings are appropriate, and Mr. Lee agreed that the parking lot could be moved away from the property line by July 31, 2027.

There was some discussion about the occupancy limit of the Barn. The Fire Marshal and Building Official had proposed two different numbers which were widely disparate. The occupancy number must be re-evaluated, including a conversation regarding under what conditions the loft could be occupied. At the date that the subcommittee had visited the site, there were 93 chairs on the ground level and about 16 chairs on the loft viewing the speaker over a rail. There must be some engineering analysis of the loft and the development of a secondary exit in order to consider the use of the loft other than an office.

Mr. Lee explained his plans to add a drive that could complete a loop around the site, providing one-way traffic from and to the entrance gate. He will clear a scrubby area to improve parking opportunities and to provide better clearance for fire trucks making the sharp turn at the north end of the site. He noted that he has added signage requested by the Fire Marshal for the "hose drop" location, 1000 feet from the structures. The existing drives are about 12-foot wide asphalt, the width of the asphalt screed. Mr. Lee used geotextile fabric the entire width of the drive and placed gravel over it to a width exceeding the travel path. Ms. Corwin noted that the International Fire Code will require that there is at least 14 foot clear, so gravel shoulders should be provided on any new drive construction. Any two-way traffic portions of the drive should have a nominal width of 24 feet.

Mr. York was confident that staff could work out the exact cross-section of the new drive with the Township engineering consultant and the applicants.

Ms. Corwin also pointed out the deficiencies at the road approach at White Lake Road. Although the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) did not require improvements, it is not wide enough for two way traffic, and is likely to cause premature failure of the edges. Mr. York noted that when a motorist leaves the site, the headlights will shine directly into a residence on the south side of the road. Mr. Charlick noted it will also improve safety since vehicles entering the site need not come to a complete stop to make the turn.

The discussion turned to low-level lighting along the drive, particularly along the curves. The applicants suggested some small solar lights on posts, like those along the concrete walking path south of the Barn. These are for delineation, not illumination. The applicant was advised to present something to the Planning Commission for approval prior to installing the lights. Low lumen lighting is provided on the concrete path but will not be required on the mowed paths which are not used at night.

It was agreed that a dumpster is not necessary. The garbage will be hauled from the site each night, or stored in the machine barn for a short while. If a dumpster is added in the future, it must be screened.

Mr. York offered a motion to recommend approval of the Special Use Permit for a small scale institutional use for Barn 45 for parcel 11-02-426-002, 2115 White Lake Road with the modifications to the site plan and draft permit discussed this evening including improvements to the parking lot and drive to create a one-way loop through the site, modifications to the building to address safety concerns raised by staff and the Planning Commission and minor lighting considerations. Mr. Charlick supported the motion.

Mr. Heyn thanked the subcommittee for their work in bringing forward a draft permit, and acknowledging that this project seems to work for this site, but would not be appropriate on just any agriculturally zoned property.

Roll call vote: Zeolla – no; Charlick-yes; Curtis-yes; Heyn – yes; Ray – yes; Smith-yes; York – yes; Motion carries (6 yes votes, 1 no votes)

Agenda Item #5: General Discussion, Capital Improvement Plan

Ms. Corwin noted that a leadership committee has developed a draft capital improvement plan. The plan covers the budget years of 2026 through 2032. This is a guide for establishing priorities for spending and investing. The Planning Commission will review the plan at the meeting of May 7, 2026 and the public hearing will be advertised for May 21, 2026. The Planning Commission offers a recommendation to the Board of Trustees, who adopts the plan. The goal is to ensure investment is consistent with the Master Plan goals and objectives.

The next meeting will include discussion of zoning ordinance issues such as commercial and recreational vehicles in residential zones, data centers,

Agenda Item #6: Committee Updates

- Zoning Board of Appeals:
- Township Board:
- Highland Downtown Development Authority:
- Planning Director's Update

Committee liaisons reported on the activities of their respective organizations.

Agenda Item #7: Minutes March 19, 2026

Mr. Charlick offered a motion to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2026, Planning Commission meeting as presented. Mr. Curtis supported the motion which was approved by voice vote (all ayes, no nays)

Adjournment:

Mr. Charlick moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 p.m. Mr. Curtis supported the motion, which was unanimously approved by voice vote. (all ayes, no nays)

Respectfully submitted,
A. Roscoe Smith, Secretary
ARS/ejc