

**Highland Township Planning Commission
Record of the 1445th Meeting
Highland Township Auditorium
May 21, 2026**

Roll Call:

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

Also Present:

Elizabeth Corwin, Planning Director

Visitors: 6

Acting Chairman Heyn 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 # 11-22-301-007
Zoning: C-1, Local Commercial Zoning District
Address: 140 W. Highland
File #: SPR 24-01
Request: Site Plan amendment for Jimmy John/Dunkin
Applicant: Steve Kolber, Kolbrook Design
Owner: OM Group

Mr. Heyn introduced the agenda item for a site plan amendment for Jimmy John/Dunkin Donuts at 140 W. Highland. This site plan was previously approved in February, 2026.

Mr. Steve Kolber, Kolbrook Design was present to answer questions. He explained that during final Health Division review, it was discovered that the location they had chosen for the septic system, based on the original septic system, was now within the required isolation distance from an active well on the neighboring parcel. This forced a shift between the location of the septic system and proposed parking within the drive-through loop drive. Although this results in additional cost for paving removal there and new pavement on the west side of the site, the resultant layout works fine for the operations of the site.

Mr. York asked if the new septic location is finally approved. Mr. Kolber said it was conceptually approved and the onsite soils have been inspected. Ms. Corwin noted she had confirmed this with the sanitarian and does not anticipate further problems.

Mr. York also asked if the traffic layout impacts access to the Dunkin side of the store. Mr. Kolber verified that the floor plans have not been modified and the doors to both businesses on the west side of the building. This plan eliminates pedestrian conflicts with drive through traffic.

Mr. Tierney asked if the Road Commission is still requiring right in/right out traffic from the Milford driveway, which Mr. Kolber confirmed.

Mr. Zeolla was dissatisfied with the amount of landscaping on the east side of the building, but it was noted that planting in septic areas is clearly discouraged. The Planning Commission discussed whether there was room to shift the drive loop slightly to allow enough space for a hedge between the sidewalk and drive loop. Mr. Smith noted that it would be unlikely to thrive in such a confined space.

Ms. Ray asked for confirmation of the use of the basement. Mr. Kolber explained it would be mostly dry storage and occasional office “hoteling” for management as they visited stores. It would not be rented for another client.

Mr. Tierney moved to approve the site plan amendment for SPR24-01, Jimmy John/Dunkin’ Donuts at 140 W. Highland, parcel 11-22-301-007 as presented. Mr. Zeolla supported the motion. Roll Call vote: Heyn – yes; Ray – yes; Tierney – yes; York – yes; Zeolla – yes; Smith – yes. Motion carried (6 yes, 0 no votes)

Agenda Item #3:

Parcel#: 11-21-426-011
Zoning: C-2, General Commercial Zoning District
Address: 700 W. Highland Road
File#: PLU26-0004
Request: Temporary Land Use Permit for Outdoor sales
Applicant: Bryan Vasiloff, Granny’s Attic
Owner: Highland Commons Shopping Center, LLC

Mr. Heyn introduced the request to amend the temporary land use permit conditions for outdoor sales by Granny’s Attic at the Highland Commons Shopping Center. The applicant had conducted an event on May 9, 2026. He has tweaked his plan based on his experience of that event.

Mr. Bryan Vasiloff, applicant was present to address the issues. He explained that he had 70 vendors on Saturday, May 9, and it had gone very well, except for the rain. He was able to contain the vendors on the grassy area near the grocery store and had two food trucks set up on the south access drive. He also had one musician play. He did not set out traffic cones and admitted that parking was congested and that the landlord was displeased with the way event shoppers squeezed out parking for grocery store customers.

Mr. Vasiloff requested that the limits be relieved on the number of vendors allowed and that the hours be expanded to end at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. York asked what lessons had been learned from this event for controlling parking. Mr. Zeolla shared his observations that while the traffic flow seemed smooth, there was clearly a need to separate event shoppers and “brick and mortar” business shoppers. He suggested significant signage and traffic cones or barricades. He noted that the aerial clearly shows a color differentiation between the parking nearest the building and the lesser used parking to the east and suggested this would make a good boundary for the event parking.

Mr. Smith asked if there had been feedback from other business owners in the plaza. Mr. Vasiloff expressed his surprise that the landlord had not communicated better with the other businesses regarding the event but thought that the other businesses were not impacted by the parking conflicts. There was a minor issue with the food trucks due to a bread truck delivery during the event. This could be handled better by closing off access to the south driveway at the back of the building, and better scheduling of deliveries.

Mr. York noted that there does not seem to be enough vendor parking identified in the plan. Mr. Vasiloff noted that the vendors parked mingled in with the visitors, but that he has set aside space on the site behind the building to preserve parking for the visitors.

Mr. Zeolla was not in favor of the proposed location of the petting zoo on the pavement and suggested that would be better handled in the lawn, for the sake of the animals and for ease of cleanup. Mr. Vasiloff explained that the petting zoo was Mr. Girgis’s addition, and not likely to be included in the June event.

Mr. Heyn asked if Mr. Vasiloff had further considered the frequency of events. Mr. Vasiloff would still appreciate permission for two events each month through October.

Mr. Smith noted that he had also visited the site on the day of the May sales event and believed the operation was smooth. Mr. Smith noted the applicant had complied with all the conditions imposed by the Planning Commission and that the applicant seems willing to flex plans to address problems as they occur.

Ms. Corwin asked that the Planning Commission provide clear direction to staff as to the conditions under which further permits may be approved administratively and what changes would require resubmittal to the Planning Commission.

Mr. York moved to amend the temporary land use permit for outdoor events for Granny’s Attic at 700 W Highland, parcel 11-21-426-011 based on the revised plan, conditioned upon a) improved traffic control including signage separating parking areas for vendors/event visitors/retail shoppers; b) better coordination with existing retail business operators; c) expansion of the hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. d) one event per month.

Mr. Zeolla noted he was not comfortable with expanding the frequency of events exceeding 70 vendors until the Planning Commission could review the experience of a larger event. Mr. York

offered an amendment to his motion to include a requirement to present the findings of a larger event to the Planning Commission for review prior to increasing the frequency of events.

The revised motion reads: to amend the temporary land use permit for outdoor events for Granny's Attic at 700 W Highland, parcel 11-21-426-011 based on the revised plan, conditioned upon a) improved traffic control including signage separating parking areas for vendors/event visitors/retail shoppers; b) better coordination with existing retail business operators; c) expansion of the hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Planning Commission may consider expanding the frequency of events at such time as the applicant presents the experience and findings of a larger event for their review. Staff may approve one event per month through October. Mr. Heyn supported the motion.

Roll Call vote: Heyn – yes; Ray – yes; Tierney – yes; York – yes; Zeolla – yes; Smith – yes. Motion carried (6 yes, 0 no votes)

Agenda Item #4:

Parcel#: 11-29-100-002
Zoning: C-2, General Commercial Zoning District
Address: 3255 W. Highland Road
File#: PLU26-0015
Request: Temporary Land Use Permit for Outdoor retail sales
Applicant: Robert Horvath, Yellow Box Fireworks, LLC
Owner: Hickory Ridge Property, LLC

Mr. Heyn introduced the request for temporary land use for outdoor retail sales of fireworks for Yellow Box Fireworks at the Hickory Ridge Market, 3255 W. Highland Road. Yellow Box Fireworks has operated at this site for some years, although the yellow box was located within the required greenbelt. This proposal would modify the location to better conform with setbacks and preserve sight distances at the driveways.

Mr. Robert Horvath, applicant was present to brief the planning commission members on his proposal. He described his extensive experience with the trucking industry, and how he had come to design and patent the container used for the outdoor sales.

In his application, Mr. Horvath illustrated a compliant location that would meet building setbacks of 85 feet from Highland Road. This necessitates a significant temporary foundation due to the topography of the site. He has contracted with VanGordon landscaping as they have extensive crane experience and would be equipped to place the container.

Mr. Horvath went on to explain that his preference would be to swing the Yellow Box parallel with the Highland Road right-of-way on the very south edge of the pavement. In order to address the building setback of 20 feet required by the State of Michigan, he would need to move the dumpsters for Hickory Ridge Market. The container would straddle the boundary between this and the adjacent parcel, which is under the same ownership.

Mr. Tierney asked if the Fire Marshal had reviewed the site and was satisfied with the placement. Ms. Corwin explained that although the process has changed from year to year, the current permitting and inspection is handled by the State of Michigan and not by the local fire department.

For clarity sake, Ms. Corwin invited the applicant to indicate the exact alternate location on an aerial photograph of the site.

Mr. Horvath noted that there has been considerable discussion with the property owner about the future of the site. He has plans to demolish the existing market and gas station and build a new facility setback further from the road. He explained that the new site will include a compliant location for the container. Mr. Horvath said it was important for him to maintain his presence at this site since he has built a loyal customer base and works with the same staff at this location each year.

Mr. York asked for clarification of the proposed permit limits. The container is to be delivered on June 15, 2026 with sales from June 19th through July 5th or 6th. It is usually removed from the site within a week. Mr. Horvath operates similar sales at 25 locations throughout the region.

Mr. Horvath went on to explain that the advantage of the container is that if there is an incident, the doors would be closed on the container, which could contain the minor explosions that might result. Fireworks would not penetrate the container wall.

Mr. York moved to approve the temporary land use for the Yellow Box Fireworks outdoor sales at 3255 W. Highland, parcel 11-29-100-002, with the understanding that the container will be placed parallel to Highland Road and extend onto parcel 11-29-100-008 which is under the same ownership, given the understanding the property owner has approved this modification. Approval is further conditioned upon hours of operation from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days per week from June 19 through July 6, 2026 and that the container will be installed onsite from June 15 through July 15, 2026. The Planning Commission authorizes staff to approve temporary use permits in subsequent years provided there are no changes to the site or to the property ownership. Mr. Tierney supported the motion.

Roll Call vote: Heyn – yes; Ray – yes; Tierney – yes; York – yes; Zeolla – yes; Smith – yes. Motion carried (6 yes, 0 no votes)

The Planning Commission discussed the difficulty of temporary use permits. While it would be ideal if a professionally prepared site plan accompany each such application, it is acknowledged that the cost would be prohibitive in most cases for a 30-day pop-up business. The important thing is that the drawings clearly and unambiguously show placements and address safety concerns such as sight distance and setbacks.

Agenda Item #5: General Discussion, Ordinance Amendments: Definitions (various), Fences, Animals, Commercial and Recreational Vehicle Parking in Residential Districts, Data Centers

Ms. Corwin suggested that this item remain tabled as there were only six members present. The discussion will be added to a future agenda.

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 May 21, 2026

Mr. York offered a motion to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2026, Planning Commission meeting as corrected. Mr. Tierney supported the motion which was approved by voice vote (all ayes, no nays)

Adjournment:

Mr. Zeolla moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Mr. Heyn supported the motion, which was unanimously approved by voice vote. (all ayes, no nays)

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