

Minutes of the Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting held February 26th, 2026, at 7 pm

8555 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Caledonia, MI 49316

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rober, Haagsma, Giarmo, Billips, Waayenberg, Wiersema, Thomas

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Dan Wells, Community Development Director

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Giarmo called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

2. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

Items 6.C and 6.D were withdrawn and struck from the agenda.

3. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

Consideration of the January 22nd, 2026, regular Planning Commission meeting minutes.

Motion:	Motion by Haagsma, supported by Rober to approve the minutes of January 22 nd , 2026.
DISCUSSION:	Wiersema suggested a correction in the first paragraph; staff to correct prior to publication of minutes.
AYES:	All
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
DECISION:	Motion Carried (5-0)

4. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A. 6729 Hanna Lake Avenue – Site Plan Review – Dutton Christian School Gymnasium

Applicant Alexander DePoy of Dan Vos Construction Company explained that site plan approval is being requested for an approximately 30,000 square-foot expansion at Dutton Christian School. The addition is proposed to include a gymnasium, music room, and several additional classrooms. Provided site plans include provisions for Phases 5 and 6 of the master plan for Dutton Christian's campus, however, DePoy noted that the intent is to begin construction only on Phase 5 at this time.

Planner Wells explained that this request was reviewed using all applicable standards from Chapter 26 of the Zoning Ordinance, "Site Plan Review". Lighting in residential areas is limited to a color temperature of 2,700K; the proposed lighting indicates a color temperature of 4,000K, therefore staff is recommending a condition in which wall pack lighting fixtures will be required to maintain a color temperature of 2,700K or less to achieve compliance. Staff has also recommended that proposed wall-pack fixtures are mounted no more than 15-feet high to achieve compliance with the Zoning Ordinance, as mounting height was not specified in the application. All proposed fixtures are fully cut-off and down lit, and illumination levels at property lines are compliant with requirements from Chapter 19.

Regarding parking, the applicant is not proposing any additional spaces at this time. Site plan approval granted in December of 2023 for a 12,400-square-foot expansion demonstrated compliance with parking requirements, however, staff made note at the time of approval that calculations for future additions would be reviewed during future site plan review processes. The current request was reviewed using applicable standards from Chapter 20 of the Zoning Ordinance, which call for an increase in parking due to the scale of expansion. Planner Wells noted that the Planning Commission has the authority to approve parking modifications based on information provided by the applicant and the needs of Dutton Christian School.

No changes to circulation on site are being proposed and staff does not anticipate any changes to accessibility on the site. With regard to signage, at the January 22nd Planning Commission meeting, a special use permit was approved to allow for an electronic messaging center to be installed at the 68th Street entrance to the campus. Wells noted that staff is recommending approval of the site plan.

Commissioner Thomas inquired to ensure that ADA requirements are met through the proposed site plans; DePoy responded that six ADA-compliant spaces will be provided in the east lot to the front of the building, and one ADA-compliant space will be provided in the west lot at the rear of the building.

Chair Giarmo sought clarity on exactly which phases are receiving approval through this application; DePoy and Wells clarified that Phase 5 is under consideration, however, details pertaining to Phase 6 were included in this application since the two phases are rather intertwined. Phase 6 will need to receive separate site plan approval.

Commissioner Wiersema sought clarification on required setbacks due to the site having two road frontages.

Motion: Motion by Waayenberg, supported by Haagsma to approve the proposed site plan for Phase 5 of the Dutton Christian School expansion at 6729 Hanna Lake Avenue with the following conditions:

1. Lighting color temperatures and mounting heights must maintain compliance with requirements outlined in Section 19.40 of the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance.
2. The Planning Commission approved parking deviations.
3. All outside agency approvals must be secured, including but not limited to:
 - a. Kent County Road Commission
 - b. Kent County Drain Commission
 - c. Township Engineer
 - d. Township Building Official
 - e. Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
 - f. Byron Gaines Utility Authority

DISCUSSION:

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (5-0)

B. Public Hearing; 6929 Hammond Avenue – Special Use Permit, Oversized Accessory Building

Homeowner and applicant Gary Wheeler explained that he is seeking a special use permit to add 484 square feet to his existing 583 square-foot accessory building, which is in the Suburban Residential zoning district. Wheeler said that he intends to redo the roof on the existing garage to match the roofing on the addition, and that the addition will be constructed at the back of the existing structure.

Chair Giarmo opened and closed the public hearing; no public comments made.

Planner Wells noted that the building will be 1,067 square feet in total after the addition. Section 18.20 of the Zoning Ordinance limits the property to 864 square-feet worth of accessory buildings based on the size of the lot and zoning designation, thus the request for a special use permit. All dimensional and building requirements are satisfied and staff found the request to be consistent with the objectives and intents of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Staff is recommending approval of the special use permit with no conditions.

Motion: Motion by Waayenberg, supported by Billips, to approve the special use permit for an oversized accessory building totaling 1,067 square-feet at 6929 Hammond Avenue SE.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (7-0)

~~C. Public Hearing; 2110 100th Street SE & 10688 Kalamazoo Avenue — Special Use Permit,
Mineral Extraction~~

~~D. Public Hearing; 7285 Eastern — Rezoning from Suburban Residential to Village Residential~~

7. GENERAL DISCUSSION

A. Election of Officers

The Planning Commission must annually elect which commissioners will serve as the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary of the Planning Commission for the upcoming calendar year.

Motion: Motion by Haagsma, supported by Rober, to nominate Commissioner Waayenberg as the Chairperson for the upcoming calendar year.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (7-0)

Motion: Motion by Haagsma, supported by Giarmo, to nominate Vice Chair Rober to remain as the Vice Chairperson for the upcoming calendar year.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (7-0)

Motion: Motion by Giarmo, supported by Rober, to nominate Secretary Thomas to remain as the Planning Commission Secretary for the upcoming calendar year.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (7-0)

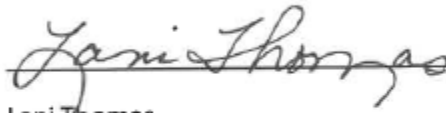
8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM.

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the December 18th, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting of the Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission held at the time and place mentioned above pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lani Thomas", written over a horizontal line.

Lani Thomas,

Secretary

Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission

Date: March 26, 2026