

FINAL
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING
Thursday, March 26, 2026
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

A. CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairperson Mills called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Clarence Mills, Vice Chairperson
Robert Mistele, Secretary
Rick Sovel
Caitlin Bearer
Sarah Grever, ZBA Alternate Member
Absent: Rusty Rosman, Chairperson (excused)
Also Present: Paula Lankford, Senior Planner
Bethany Miller, Associate Planner

B. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

MOTION by Sovel, supported by Mistele, to approve the Zoning Board of Appeals Regular Meeting Agenda for March 26, 2026, as presented.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Sovel, Mistele, Mills, Grever, Bearer

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rosman

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

C. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION by Mistele, supported by Sovel, to approve the Zoning Board of Appeals Regular Meeting minutes of November 20, 2025, & the minutes of January 22, 2026, as written.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Mistele, Sovel, Grever, Bearer, Mills

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rosman

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

D. PUBLIC DISCUSSION (on matters for which there is no public hearing scheduled)

Vice Chairperson Mills opened to public comments.

None.

Vice Chairperson Mills closed to public comments.

E. UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES IN COMMERCE TOWNSHIP:

Rick Sovel – Township Board

- I will keep it short.
- We are working on pathways to go through the Township. We're bringing a pathway millage to the voters in November of this year.

Caitlin Bearer – Planning Commission

- Just two highlights.
- We approved the 5 & Main Tenant Handbook at the last meeting.
- We also approved the first shoppette that will be part of the overall 5 & Main development. It's the second structure after the Dort Credit Union.

F. OLD BUSINESS:

None.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

ITEM G1. 2026 ELECTION OF ZBA OFFICERS

Sovel – Who are the current officers?

Paula Lankford – You have Rusty for Chair, Clarence for Vice, and Bob for Secretary. If you want to retain who you have, you can do one motion. We provided motion language for that if everybody is willing.

Mistele – It's fine with me.

Mills – It's okay with me if it is with everybody else.

Sovel – As long as you guys say yes.

MOTION by Mistele, seconded by Sovel, to retain Chairperson Rusty Rosman, Vice Chairperson Clarence Mills, and Secretary Bob Mistele as the Officers of the Commerce Township Zoning Board of Appeals for the Year of 2026.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Mistele, Sovel, Bearer, Mills, Grever

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rosman

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM G2. ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS 2026 BYLAWS

Grever – Can I move to approve, or do we have any discussion?

Sovel – Move approval first, then we can hold discussion.

Grever – Okay.

MOTION by Grever, supported by Mistele, to approve the 2026 Commerce Township Zoning Board of Appeals Bylaws as written.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Grever, Mistele, Bearer, Mills, Sovel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rosman

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

H. OTHER MATTERS:

Sovel – I have just one comment. I'm working with our attorney on modifying criteria for the ZBA.

Mills – When you say criteria for the ZBA, what do you mean? Is that dressing up the language?

Sovel – In terms of for approval of variances and the criteria we go through. It is to deal with some of the issues we have had with people purchasing property where a previous owner did something and now they might have to tear their house down. That's on the extreme side.

Mills – Okay.

I. CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

J. PLANNING DEPARTMENT'S REPORT:

Paula Lankford – You all received a copy of our monthly report. I don't really have much to add to that. Our Planning Commission meeting in April will include a public hearing for an outdoor storage yard on Claranton, and looking at the text amendment again for waterfront accessory structures. We don't have that text yet. We will share it with you if you'd like once we have a draft.

Grever – That would be great. That is a lot of what came up in years prior.

Paula Lankford – Yes, and Jay James, Building Official was looking at making some changes to it to have some allowances for it. There was some discussion at a Planning Commission meeting a couple months ago, and they were receptive to it, so we wanted to see some language.

Mills – Going back to what you said about the property or storage on Claranton, what needs to be looked at, addressed or discussed?

Paula Lankford – It's in the industrial district and any outdoor storage yards require Special Land Use approval because it is more of an intense use than just a factory without outdoor storage. Anytime there's outdoor storage, it ends up being a public hearing. We want to look at buffering, fencing, keeping it screened, et cetera.

Mills – Okay.

K. ADJOURNMENT:

NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2026, AT 7:00PM.

MOTION by Grever, seconded by Mistele, to adjourn the meeting at 5:39pm.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Grever, Mistele, Sovel, Bearer, Mills

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rosman

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY