

**Columbia Charter Township  
Planning Commission  
Township Hall  
8500 Jefferson Road, Brooklyn, MI 49230  
January 8, 2026,  
at 7:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Columbia Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Todd Wanty. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken by Secretary Krissie Barnes: Present: Chairperson Todd Wanty, Vice Chair Bob Jenson, Secretary Krissie Barnes, Britt Phenicie, Hollis Jeffreys, Rick DeLand, and Mike McKay.

**Guests:** Brittany Stein (Building, Planning, Zoning Manager), Elizabeth Lewis and Jason Cielen (Applicants), and Chris Zuzelski (Applicant),

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion by Jenson, supported by McKay, to approve the agenda for the January 8, 2025, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 4, 2025**

Members were given time to review the minutes of the December 4, 2025, meeting. Motion by McKay, supported by Jenson, to approve the minutes with a minor spelling correction to a name. Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT – FIRST SESSION**

Chairman Wanty opened the first public comment session at 7:04 p.m.

Pat Collins stated that limiting the use of the property at 3035 Ocean Beach would place a burden on the owners' ability to operate a successful and sustainable business within the community. Supported changing the zoning on their vacant lot to C-1.

Tim Mockenstrum inquired about the proposed plans for the property (3035 Ocean Beach) and asked whether consideration had been given to the existing 10-foot sewer easement adjacent to the parcel.

Carol Koch spoke about what the request is for and what the proposal is, regarding the rezoning request.

*The public comment session was closed at 7:11 p.m.*

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## NEW BUSINESS

### Opening of Public Hearing

The regular Planning Commission meeting was closed, and the Public Hearing was opened at 7:11 p.m. for the scheduled agenda items.

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**PUBLIC HEARING ITEM:** Zoning Map Amendment from Residential Suburban to Local Commercial. Lakeside Market and Spirits on Riverside Rd. Brooklyn, Michigan 49230 A public hearing was held regarding a request for a zoning map amendment submitted by the property owner, Lakeside Market and Spirits, represented by Elizabeth Lewis. The subject property is a vacant parcel located on Riverside Road, Parcel ID 000-19-15-376-022-00, consisting of approximately 17,600 square feet. The request is to rezone the parcel from Residential Suburban (RS) to Local Commercial (C-1).

Ms. Lewis stated that the purpose of the rezoning request is to bring the property into compliance with township parking requirements and to support safe site circulation for the adjacent Lakeside Market. The parcel would be used solely for off-street parking in support of the existing market. No additional structures or buildings are proposed for the parcel, and all setback and easement requirements would be met. The applicant confirmed that resident street parking would not be impacted.

Ms. Lewis explained that Lakeside Market is intended to serve residents and visitors with groceries, local goods, gifts, convenience items, and essential products. A future plan includes a small market café with limited food and beverage service, intended to complement the market and operate in a family-friendly manner. The proposed food service would not function as a bar or full-scale restaurant and would not include late-night operations. Seating would be modest, with both dine-in and carry-out options.

The applicant noted that existing commercial kitchen equipment on the property had been previously approved under prior ownership; however, a specialized permit would now be required to utilize the kitchen. The rezoning of the adjacent parcel is necessary to meet parking requirements for the existing and potential future permitted uses.

Proposed operating hours were stated as:

Summer: 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Fall: 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Winter/Spring: 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

The applicant addressed concerns regarding property values, stating that market data indicates residential property values are not negatively impacted by nearby neighborhood-scale commercial uses and that values in the area have continued to rise.

Brittany Stein presented an analysis of the request, noting that the parcel fronts Riverside Road and is currently zoned RS. The rezoning to C-1 would allow the parcel to be combined with the existing commercial property to provide compliant off-street parking. Brittany reviewed the request against the criteria in Article 17, Section 17.3 of the Zoning Ordinance and found the following:

- The rezoning is justified due to changed conditions related to ownership and site compliance.
- No buildings are proposed; the impact on public services is minimal.
- The change is unlikely to adversely affect surrounding property values.
- No significant environmental features are present.

- The parcel can meet all dimensional and setback requirements of the C-1 district.
- The request is generally consistent with the intent of the Master Plan.
- Due to the unique nature of the property, approval would not set a broad precedent.

Brittany recommended approval of the zoning map amendment, with conditions that rezoning does not guarantee site plan approval and that the parcel be combined with the adjacent commercial property to function as a single zoning lot.

### **Opening of Public Comment portion of Hearing**

The public comment portion of the hearing was opened at 7:34 p.m.

Members of the public were invited to provide comments regarding the proposed zoning map amendment.

Several residents spoke in support of Lakeside Market, expressing appreciation for the revitalization of the existing party store and the convenience it will provide for the community.

Mark & Jenna Chmielewski, Brad Cooper, Nick Downs, Dustin Nealey, and Pat Felgner, spoke in support of Lakeside Market, expressing appreciation for the revitalization of the existing party store and the convenience it provides for the community. Supporters noted that adequate off-street parking is necessary for the market's success and stated that a thriving, well-maintained business is preferable to a vacant or deteriorating property. Some speakers indicated that insufficient parking had previously resulted in congestion and on-street parking issues along Riverside Road.

Other residents, Paul Weier, Dana Mockenstrum, Rick Toth, and Charlie Partello expressed concerns related to the rezoning request, particularly the precedent of rezoning residential property to commercial use. Concerns included: Potential future expansion of commercial zoning into surrounding residential areas. Possible impacts to property values. Increased traffic and pedestrian safety, especially due to nearby public lake access and children crossing the roadway. Noise, lighting, drainage, and environmental impacts. The possibility of future uses beyond parking if the property remains commercially zoned. Several speakers emphasized that while they support the market itself, they are concerned about long-term implications if ownership or use changes in the future.

Property owners adjacent to or near the parcel stated concerns about parking proximity to residences, traffic flow, and access points. Questions were raised regarding driveway access, stormwater management, and whether the rezoning could allow additional structures or uses beyond parking.

Jack Shelby, site designer for the Lakeside Market mentioned that with the stringent regulations that the Township Ordinance requires for parking, if the owners removed the existing accessory structure, that does not allow enough parking on the existing site for a restaurant use, or potentially the market.

Jason Cielen of Lakeside Market addressed the public, stating their intent to be good neighbors and to operate the business in a responsible, family-oriented manner. They emphasized that the request is solely to allow compliant off-street parking for the existing business, with no intent to add structures or create a bar

or late-night venue. The applicant reiterated a commitment to property maintenance, safety, and responsiveness to community concerns.

Additional residents, Jerry & Carol Koch spoke both in support of the market and in opposition to the rezoning, citing concerns related to property values, future land use, traffic safety, and neighborhood character. Several speakers noted that any future expansion or change in use would require additional township approvals. After interested parties had the opportunity to speak, the public comment portion of the hearing was closed at 8:02 p.m.

**Member Comments:** Chairman Wanty stated that the Planning Commission had received several pieces of correspondence both in favor of and opposed to the rezoning request, consistent with the comments heard during the public hearing. He asked if any Commissioners wished to comment.

Commissioner Deland acknowledged the concerns raised regarding property values and traffic safety but stated that he did not believe this single business would have a significant negative impact. He noted that based on his 15 years of experience patrolling the township, traffic issues in the area were most often caused by local residents rather than visitors. He explained that familiarity with the area often leads to inattentive driving and speeding by those who live nearby, which he observed in the majority of traffic enforcement situations.

Chairman Wanty asked Brittany for clarification regarding the application timeline and process. Brittany explained that the rezoning application was received on November 20. She noted that while the applicant ultimately intends to pursue approval for on-site food and beverage service, the applicant chose to proceed with the zoning request first.

Brittany explained the rezoning process, noting that the Planning Commission serves as a recommending body. Any recommendation for approval or denial would proceed to the Jackson County Planning Commission, which meets monthly, followed by review by the Township Board. As required under Charter Township law, the Township Board will review the request at two separate meetings before taking final action.

Brittany further clarified that site plan approvals run with the property, not the owner, and that approval of this rezoning request does not guarantee approval of future commercial rezonings in the area.

Any future rezoning or site plan changes would require separate applications and approvals by the Planning Commission, Township Board, and County.

With no further questions, a motion was made to recommend approval of the zoning map amendment to the Township Board.

Motion: Commissioner Wanty

Support: Commissioner Barnes

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Deland – Yes

Jenson – No

Wanty – Yes

Barnes – Yes

McKay – No  
Phenicie – Yes  
Jeffreys – No

The motion carried, 4–3, and the Planning Commission recommended approval of the zoning map amendment to the Township Board.

Chairman Wanty thanked those in attendance and noted that the Commission would proceed to the next agenda item.

**SITE PLAN REVIEW (AMENDMENT) - 4069 Jefferson Rd. Clarklake, Michigan 49234.** Chris Zuzelski part owner is requesting a revised site plan to the existing plan for outdoor storage.

Mr. Zuzelski explained that the original site plan included multiple buildings, six of which have been completed to date. Construction has been intentionally phased based on demand to avoid overbuilding beyond what the community needs. Currently, the facility is approximately 50% occupied, with utilization expected to increase in the spring. Mr. Zuzelski stated there is demand within the community for outdoor storage, specifically for watercraft, and requested approval of a revised site plan to allow outdoor boat and trailer storage, which is permitted use within the C-2 zoning district.

Chairman Wanty invited the Zoning Administrator, Brittany Stein, to present the staff report.

Brittany reported the property consists of approximately 17 acres with frontage on Jefferson Road. Adjacent properties include farmland to the east and south. The site is currently developed for mini-storage and includes provisions for watercraft and watercraft trailer storage. Watercraft and trailer storage are permitted by right in the C-2 and C-3 zoning districts and permitted by special use in the I-1 district.

Brittany reviewed the required and proposed setbacks, noting that the original site plan approved in October 2023 did not include outdoor storage. Brittany also summarized the applicable site plan review standards from Article 14 of the Zoning Ordinance and provided the following analysis:

- The proposed use is compliant with the C-2 General Commercial zoning district.
- Existing structures were constructed in compliance with the approved site plan and zoning ordinance.
- The proposed outdoor storage use is low intensity and will not negatively impact surrounding properties.
- No additional buildings, signage, or site improvements are proposed.
- No removal of existing vegetation is proposed, and there will be no impact to designated wetlands on site.
- Stormwater management remains unchanged and was previously approved.
- No impacts to traffic, parking, or access are anticipated.
- No changes to utilities are proposed.
- No phasing is proposed currently.

Brittany recommended approval of the revised site plan with the following

conditions:

1. Outdoor storage shall be limited to boats and boat trailers only; recreational vehicle storage is not permitted.
2. Outdoor storage shall remain outside the required 50-foot setbacks.
3. No storage shall be permitted within designated wetland areas.
4. The remaining approved storage buildings must obtain permits or begin construction within one year of approval, or the applicant must request an extension from the Township Board in accordance with Section 14.7 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Commission members discussed whether the request constituted retroactive approval, noting that outdoor storage had already occurred on site. Mr. Zuzelski stated the change was driven by market demand and emphasized that the long-term intent remains to construct the remaining approved buildings. He acknowledged the requirement to request extensions if construction timelines change.

Additional discussion addressed stormwater runoff, wetland protections, and potential environmental impacts. Mr. Zuzelski explained that gravel surfaces allow for adequate percolation and that existing drainage features were designed to meet county requirements. Fuel and oil concerns were discussed, with Mr. Zuzelski noting that boats would otherwise be stored throughout the community and that safeguards are already in place.

Chairman Wanty asked if there were any further questions or public comments. Hearing none, a motion was made to recommend approval of the revised site plan with the conditions outlined by the Zoning Administrator.

Motion: Commissioner Jeffrey

Support: Commissioner McKay

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Deland – Yes

Jenson – No

Wanty – Yes

Barnes – Yes

McKay – Yes

Phenicie – Yes

Jeffreys – Yes

The motion **carried, 6–1**, The Planning Commission will forward a recommendation of approval to the Township Board.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Opened at 8:27 p.m. and closed at 8:27 p.m.

#### **Commissioner Comments:**

Chairman Wanty suggested that the Township consider the possibility of implementing a moratorium related to data centers. He noted that similar moratoriums have been used effectively in other communities, including a data center project near Saline, to pause development for up to one year while impacts and regulations are evaluated.

Chairman Wanty shared observations regarding the Saline project, noting that although site plan approvals had not yet been finalized, significant site activity was occurring, including heavy gravel truck traffic through downtown Saline. He indicated the project is expected to be one of the largest in the state and raised concerns about process and infrastructure impacts.

Discussion followed regarding recent actions by the Jackson County Planning Commission, including ordinance updates related to setbacks and development requirements for data centers. Commissioners discussed whether copies of those ordinances had been distributed to surrounding townships for review and potential guidance. Staff indicated they would look into obtaining and sharing the information.

Chairman Wanty also referenced recent regional meetings and discussions among townships regarding the need for greater local control over data center development and associated impacts.

### **Announcements**

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for January 29. It was noted that this date may conflict with the Citizen Planner program for some members. The Chair indicated the meeting date may be adjusted and that members would be notified if changes are made, potentially moving the meeting to February or a different day of the week.

### **Adjournment**

Motion by Wanty, supported by McKay, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.  
Motion carried unanimously.