Columbia Charter Township Planning Commission

Columbia Charter Township Hall

8500 Jefferson Road, Brooklyn, MI 49230

December 4, 2025, 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: Chairperson Wanty called the roll: Present: Chairperson Todd Wanty, Vice Chair Bob Jenson, Krissie Barnes, Secretary
Britt Phenicie, Hollis Jefferys, Rick DeLand, and Mike McKay.

Recognized Guests: Brittany Stein, John Collins (Applicant), and Michael Rudisill (Applicant),

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Jensen, supported by McKay, to approve the agenda for the December 4, 2025, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 11, 2025

Members were given time to review the minutes of the September 11, 2025, meeting.
Motion by McKay, supported by Deland, to approve the minutes as presented.
Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT – FIRST SESSION

Chairman Wanty opened the first public comment session.
No comments were offered.
Public comment was closed at 7:04 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Opening of Public Hearing

The regular Planning Commission meeting was closed, and the Public Hearing was opened at 7:05 p.m. for the two scheduled agenda items.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEM #1: Zoning Map Amendment Request

Applicant/Owner:
John Collins, Ocean Beach Properties, Ltd.

Location:
3505 Ocean Beach Road, Clark Lake, MI
(Several Parcel ID numbers associated; not read into the record.)

Request:
A Zoning Map Amendment to rezone four existing parcels totaling 19.5 acres from:

- Local Commercial (C-1)
- Residential Suburban (RS)
- Residential Lakefront Suburban (RLS)
- Agricultural (AG)

to:
Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Proposed PUD Uses Include:

- Existing restaurant/bar
- Existing retail space
- Existing apartment
- Existing single-family home
- Eight (8) rental cottages
- Several new single-family or duplex units
- Expanded commercial parking

- Open space and recreational areas
  (All subject to final site plan approval.)

Applicant Presentation – Mike McKay on behalf of owner John Collins

Mr. McKay provided an overview of the project and history of the property:

- A pre-preliminary review was held approximately one month prior, and the Planning Commission recommended moving forward unanimously.
- Recent surveying corrected longstanding boundary discrepancies between Ocean Beach and the adjacent trailer park. Property swaps were completed to correct split structures and secure accurate legal descriptions for rezoning.
- Rezoning to PUD would correct nonconforming conditions, including a commercial-use gear garage currently zoned residential.
- The PUD would allow development flexibility for the proposed cottages and recreational areas at the rear of the site.
- The property owner intends to manage rentals onsite, reducing absentee-owner concerns.
- Significant engineering and permitting—including drainage reviews—will follow only after zoning approval.
- Applicant estimates final site plan preparation may be completed by February, depending on timelines of the County and Township Board.
- Applicant acknowledged sewer capacity concerns raised in nearby Leoni Township but stated the project's low-impact use (small units with single bathrooms) is substantially different from large subdivisions.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions regarding utilities, site timing, and property descriptions.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT – Presented by Brittany Stein

Zoning Administrator Brittany Stein presented her staff report and summarized key findings for the Planning Commission.

Ms. Stein began by reviewing the property description and current zoning:

- The site consists of approximately 19.5 acres located along Ocean Beach Road, with the private parkway to the west and surrounding developed residential parcels.
- The property includes the existing Beach Bar, a gear garage, a single-family home, a marina area, parking areas, and significant portions of wooded and wetland areas.
- Four existing buildings currently cross parcel boundaries, and the four parcels are zoned Local Commercial (C-1), Residential Suburban (RS), Residential Lakefront Suburban (RLS), and Agricultural (AG).
- The applicant intends to keep all existing uses and expand the parking lot to meet ordinance requirements, add several detached or duplex single-family homes, and construct approximately eight small rental cottages at the back of the property.

Ms. Stein then reviewed relevant Master Plan information:

- She noted that she included excerpts from the Future Land Use Plan in the staff report. Although the map is not fully clear, the area has long been identified for mixed-use and commercial activity.
- The Master Plan repeatedly identifies the Ocean Beach Road corridor as a longstanding commercial area and supports mixed-use flexibility and PUD tools to accommodate unique sites.

Review of Zoning Ordinance & PUD Criteria (Article 4)

Ms. Stein reviewed the intent of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) district as defined in the zoning ordinance:

- The PUD district allows flexibility in land development, mixed uses, efficient use of land and utilities, protection of open space, and a variety of housing and commercial opportunities.
- Columbia Township handles the PUD as its own zoning district; therefore, a rezoning is required prior to final site plan review.

Ms. Stein then reviewed the six PUD eligibility criteria:

Recognizable and Substantial Benefit

- The PUD will create more conforming uses and allow reasonable use of the land for mixed commercial, residential, and small-scale rental cottages—benefits unlikely under current zoning.

Availability and Capacity of Public Services

- The project does not place an unreasonable burden on public services.
- A private road exists and may need to be extended during site plan review.
- Additional wells and sewer connections would be required.
- Existing commercial uses will remain, and the residential additions (8–10 units plus 3–5 single-family or duplex homes) are low impact.

Compatibility with the Master Plan

- The Master Plan supports mixed-use areas, flexible zoning, quality housing, open space protection, and development strategies that respond to unique land characteristics.
- A PUD is specifically identified in the Master Plan as an appropriate tool for mixed-use areas such as Ocean Beach Road.

Compatibility with the Intent of the PUD District

- The proposal meets the intent of Section 4.1 by allowing a mix of uses, design flexibility, efficient use of land and infrastructure, and preservation of open space.

Economic Impact

- The proposal will not impede surrounding property use.
- Surrounding residential and agricultural uses are compatible with the proposed PUD.
- No negative impact on public services is anticipated.

Unified Control

All 19.5 acres are under single ownership, meeting the requirement for unified control.

PUBLIC COMMENT – ZMA Public Hearing

Chairman Wanty opened the floor at 7:33 P.M. for public comment regarding the Ocean Beach PUD request.

(James?), 353 Ocean Beach

The speaker stated he lives at 353 Ocean Beach and expressed support for the project. He noted that the applicant has a history of improving properties, building quality structures, maintaining them well, and using local businesses and contractors. He added that the

project would increase tax revenue for the Township. He stated that he lives close to the site and has not experienced negative impacts, and therefore he is in favor of the proposal.

Colleen Pastula, 6460 Riverside Road
Ms. Pastula stated she is concerned about impacts to the back side of her property, particularly related to wetland and creek areas. She said that although it has been stated the project will not affect the creek, she reviewed wetland maps and believes there is an additional creek on the opposite side of Goose Lake that needs further consideration.

She noted she is supportive of construction and improvements that benefit the community; however, she raised concerns about traffic and safety. She explained that the area is already busy in the summer and described it as "party central," with vehicles speeding down Riverside Road to reach the Beach Bar. She is concerned about increased traffic, especially with children in the area, and questioned whether expanded parking will be included. She also asked whether the applicant would be permitted to use septic instead of connecting to sewer, stating she had previously requested to leave the sewer system but was not permitted to do so.

William Jay Bendele, Jr., neighboring property owner
Mr. Bendele stated that he owns property surrounding the Beach Bar and does not believe the proposed PUD will negatively affect adjoining properties. He noted that historically, there were 30 to 40 trailers and campsites on the property, meaning the area once had a much higher density of use. He added that the existing sewer system was originally designed to support the former campground and therefore should be able to accommodate the proposed development.

Mr. Bendele further stated that the applicant's property is approximately 500 feet from the sewer line, making septic a possible option if allowed, and that soil conditions on the property could support a septic system if required. He did not see any issues with the proposal.

Chairman Wanty asked if there were any additional public comments.
Hearing none, public comment closed at 7:40 p.m.

Wanty made a motion to recommend approval of the PUD Zoning Map Amendment for the four parcels listed, rezoning them from their current classifications of RS, RLS, C-1, AG, and R-LC to PUD.
The recommendation includes approval of the requested waivers from the following ordinance sections:

- Article 4, Section 1 (pages 3–12): Waiver related to possible lot square footage and PUD flexibility.
- Article 13: Standards for private roads and driveways.
- Article 20, Section 20.6: Reduction of minimum livable square footage from 750 sq. ft. to a range of 400–800 sq. ft.
- Article 6: Nonconforming setbacks for existing structures.
- Article 13 (Table 3.4): Cul-de-sac size requirements and minimum lot width of 80 feet.
- Recognition of the existing apartment above the office, a legally established use dating back to the 1950s.

Support by DeLand.

A roll-call vote was taken.
Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention (McKay).

The motion carried, and the request will be recommended for approval to the County Planning Commission.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEM #2: Home Occupation: Special Land Use Permit and Site Plan Review

Applicant: Michael Rudisill

Location: 9802 Case Rd. Brooklyn, MI 49230 Parcel ID: 000-20-19-200-001-03

Request: Special Land Use Permit and Site Plan Review applications for the establishment of a Class 2 Home Occupation for the purpose of using the detached accessory building for a business involving woodworking, cerakote, engineering, and 3-D printing. The parcel is 1.3 acres and zoned Agricultural. Not changing anything, just to use existing buildings.

Staff Report – Presented by Zoning Administrator Brittany Stein

Ms. Stein provided a detailed report summarizing the property, its zoning, and the requested approval.

Property Overview

- Parcel is approximately 1.3 acres, zoned Agricultural.
- Developed with a single-family home and a detached pole barn, which is the structure proposed for the home occupation.
- The pole barn complies with required setbacks; a previously approved variance allows a 38-foot rear setback where 50 feet would normally be required.
- Surrounding uses include agricultural and single-family residential, with the golf course to the west.

Master Plan Review

- The 2009 Master Plan designates this area as Low-Density Residential (1–2 dwelling units/acre).
- Existing AG zoning is consistent with the Future Land Use Map.
- The parcel is explicitly noted in planning records as not eligible for further land division, which is not being requested.

Use Description

- All activities—including woodworking, Cerakote applications, engineering design, and 3-D printing—will occur entirely inside the existing barn.
- Materials will be stored indoors; no outdoor storage is proposed.
- No changes to the site, structures, or utilities are proposed.

Special Land Use Standards Review (Article 20 – Class 2 Home Occupation)

Ms. Stein reviewed the standards and noted the following:

1. **Compatibility & Harmony**
    - Use is compatible with the size and character of the parcel.
    - Activities are entirely indoors with minimal external impact.
    - No noise, odor, smoke, dust, or vibration impacts are anticipated.
2. **Site Design & District Purpose**
    - The AG district permits Class 2 Home Occupations by special land use.
    - The proposed use does not alter the rural residential character.

3. **Impact on Surrounding Properties**
    - No exterior changes, signage, or outdoor work areas are proposed.
    - Existing driveway accommodates approximately five vehicles; no street parking expected.
4. **Natural Features**
    - No grading, construction, or environmental disturbance is proposed.
    - No wetlands or watercourses will be affected.
5. **Stormwater Management**
    - Stormwater is currently managed appropriately for residential use.
    - No changes to impervious area are proposed.
6. **Traffic and Access**
    - Property is located on a private dead-end drive off Case Road.
    - Traffic impacts are expected to be minimal and similar to normal residential activity.
7. **Utilities**
    - Existing well and septic are adequate for the intended use.
    - No utility upgrades are required.
8. **Compliance with Floor Area Limitations**
    - Class 2 Home Occupations may occupy up to 50% of the dwelling's ground-floor area, or an equivalent amount within an accessory structure.
    - The home is approximately 3,600 sq. ft.; allowable limit is 1,800 sq. ft.
    - The barn is 2,064 sq. ft., slightly over the allowed square footage.
    - Condition recommended: No more than 1,800 sq. ft. of the barn may be used for the home occupation unless additional approval is sought.

Planning Commission Questions

Commissioners asked questions regarding:

- Electrical capacity for CNC equipment.
    - Applicant confirmed a 200-amp single-phase service is installed and sufficient.
- Whether any metalworking is proposed.
    - Applicant stated metal design is done off-site; no metal machining will occur at this location.
- Clarification on what areas count toward the allowable floor area (bathroom and small office areas are **not** included in the work area calculation).

All questions were answered to the Commission's satisfaction.

Public Comment

Public comment was opened at **7:57 p.m.**
No public comments were offered.
Public comment was closed at **7:58 p.m.**

Motion

Motion by McKay, supported by Jensen, to recommend approval of the Special Land Use Permit and Site Plan for a Class 2 Home Occupation at 9802 Case Road, with the condition that no more than 1,800 sq. ft. of the barn be used for the home occupation unless otherwise approved.

Vote:

- **Ayes:** Unanimous
- **Nays:** None
- **Motion carries.**

Master Plan Update

The next item on the agenda was the Master Plan Update. Copies of the updated Master Plan were distributed to the Commission prior to the meeting. Several members expressed appreciation for the extensive work completed so far.

Commissioners thanked Brittany for her outstanding work on the update, noting that the document was well-organized, thorough, and easy to follow. Members commented that the revisions were clear, detailed, and a significant improvement from prior drafts, and expressed appreciation for the substantial effort that went into bringing the plan up to date.

During discussion, members noted that some earlier survey materials and land plan recommendations had never been shared with the current Commission. These documents had originally been addressed to former township officials and were only recently located. Commissioners remarked that the newly reviewed survey results showed far more responses than previously believed, and expressed appreciation that the information was now being incorporated into the updated Master Plan.

Brittany also clarified that certain notices were re-sent because previous records lacked proper affidavits or documentation verifying that the original notices had been mailed. The Commission agreed that resending them was appropriate to ensure accuracy and compliance.

Members Comments: Chairman noted the next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 7:00pm.

Adjournment

At 8:13 p.m., Wanty made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Support by McKay.
Motion carried.