

MINUTES
CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, March 2, 2026
6:00 pm
2870 JACKSMITH AVE SE

- ARTICLE 1.** Vice Chair Kraemer called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.
Members Present: Korstange, Kraemer, Cribbs, Madiol, Kaiser
Members Absent: Rowland (excused), Lauer (excused)

Others Present: Community Planning and Development Director (Director) Andrea Hendrick, Township Engineer Aric Thorne, Legal Counsel Leslie Abdoo of Foster Swift, Planning Administrative Assistant Nick Govan and others listed on the sign-in sheet.
- ARTICLE 2.** **Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**
- ARTICLE 3.** **Approve the current Agenda**

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to amend the current Agenda to add “Article 9. Closed Session”.
Supported by Commissioner Madiol.
Motion carried unanimously.
- ARTICLE 4.** **Disclose any Conflict of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest disclosed.
- ARTICLE 5.** **Approve the Minutes of the February 2, 2026, meeting.**

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2026, meeting.
Supported by Commissioner Cribbs.
Motion carried unanimously.
- ARTICLE 6.** **Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.**

There was no one wishing to speak.
- ARTICLE 7.** **Case #25-3909 – Public Hearing**
Applicant: Finko, LLC
Property Address: 6530, 6535, 6538, 6543, 6554, 6562, and 6574 Round Hill Ct.
Parcel Number: 41-19-16-120-016, 41-19-16-120-001, 41-19-16-120-015, 41-19-16-120-002, 41-19-16-120-013, 41-19-16-120-012, and 41-19-16-120-011. Also, the common elements associated with Sentinel Pointe PUD Ordinance #1 of 1980 as amended.
Requested Action: Request for a PUD amendment to Ordinance #1 of 1980 Sentinel Pointe PUD to make minor amendments to the previously approved Site Plan for the Round Hill development.

Director Hendrick presented the application for a planned unit development amendment to the Sentinel Pointe PUD to amend the approved site plan for the Round Hill development. She described the Round Hill development and the surrounding land use. She noted there is a

significant grade change, with higher elevations on the north side sloping downward to the south.

Director Hendrick provided historical context, noting that the Round Hill development was approved as part of an amendment to the Sentinel Pointe PUD in 2015, at which time the area was vacant and wooded. Following approval, the site was substantially cleared of vegetation. In the six years following, only two units were constructed. The clear-cutting combined with significant slopes caused major erosion issues that negatively impacted property owners to the south. She explained that the project was brought back for further amendments after the builder failed to develop the site in accordance with the approved plans. In the spring of 2025, the Planning, Building, and Engineering Department responded to neighbor complaints regarding the construction of a deck and found that some elements of the site had not been constructed in accordance with the approved plan. The Township worked with the Round Hill Condo Association, and the applicant to ensure all site violations were remedied.

Director Hendrick outlined four proposed site plan changes: reconfiguration of the sidewalk and shared parking area on the northeast side of Round Hill; providing accurate depictions of the buildings as built on units one through four and units eight through ten; adding a fence on top of the retaining wall located to the south of units seven and eight; and removing the required building footprints from units five, six, and seven.

She presented recent drone footage showing the newly constructed retaining wall and fence along Thornapple River Drive, noting the wall is quite large and visible from the road. She explained that as part of remediation for the erosion issues caused by clear-cutting without adequate soil control, the developer agreed to construct the retaining wall, and it was determined to be in the best interest of the public and residents to install a fence adjacent to it.

Director Hendrick stated the key consideration for the Planning Commission is whether the amended site plan meets the requirements of Section 16.03 of the Zoning Ordinance. She stated that Staff found these standards met and recommended approval, noting the motion should be to recommend approval to the Township Board and to amend the current PUD document to change references to the previously approved site plan to reference the site plan before the Planning Commission. She noted that Raleigh Finkelstein, one of the owners of Finko, LLC, was present to answer any questions.

Vice Chair Kraemer asked Director Hendrick to clarify the reconfiguration of the sidewalk and shared parking area on the northeast side of the development. Director Hendrick explained that the approved plan had shown a striped parking lot with a sidewalk running directly behind it to the north, then curving in front of units one and two. During a previous site visit, staff found the pathway had been constructed incorrectly. The applicant subsequently connected the constructed sidewalk to the parking locations to ensure accessibility for individuals exiting their vehicles.

Vice Chair Kraemer asked whether the building envelopes for units five, six, and seven remained subject to other setback requirements, observing that the envelope appeared to extend close to the road. Director Hendrick confirmed that the PUD identifies the front setback for these units as zero, meaning units can be built right up to the property line, consistent with the existing adjacent units.

Treasurer Korstange sought clarification that the change from a building footprint to a building envelope meant that any decks or other accessory elements of the home would also need to fall within the envelope area. Director Hendrick confirmed this was correct, noting the PUD document states those elements must be included within the footprint.

Treasurer Korstange then directed questions about the retaining wall to Township Engineer, Aric Thorne. She asked whether backfill had been properly compressed material during construction. Thorne explained that while a paper trail exists showing a materials testing company had been on site during construction, the documentation does not conclusively confirm that construction was performed per plan. He noted the wall was designed conservatively, likely using on-site soils that are a lean clay with high silt content, and that a geogrid system was incorporated to carry tension and stabilize the embankment given the less-than-ideal soil conditions. He stated the design called for backfilling with MDOT Class II sand, and that if the specified sand was used the wall would perform significantly better, but that even without it the wall is still technically functioning as designed. He indicated the expected lifespan of the wall, based on the development engineer's own analysis using conservative soil conditions, is between 10 and 60 years. Thorne noted that to be fully confident in what was constructed, on-site testing would be necessary.

Regarding the placement of future homes within the building envelopes, Thorne stated that the envelopes are located approximately 20 feet from the wall, which is outside the zone of influence of the retaining wall, and that anything beyond 15 feet from the wall would not be placing a surcharge on it. He concluded that constructing homes within the approved envelopes would not impact the wall and that he had no concerns about building on those lots, though he recommended future builders investigate and address the soil conditions beneath any new homes given the potential soil quality issues on the site.

Treasurer Korstange asked if there was anything else the Township could or should do before approving the houses on these sites? Thorne stated he was confident that a home could be built on the site within the building envelope.

Commissioner Kaiser asked about groundwater drainage in relation to the wall, noting visible water running near the road at that location. Thorne confirmed that water should be captured by a subdrain behind the wall or flowing beneath it. Treasurer Korstange noted she had heard from the property owner that there is a natural spring near the wall that predates the development and is separate from the wall's drainage system. Thorne

acknowledged that the presence of groundwater during construction was documented but what happened next in the construction process was unclear from the available records.

Commissioner Kaiser asked about the height and materials of the fence installed on top of the retaining wall. Thorne indicated the fence appeared to be approximately 42 inches in height and that the materials and height looked appropriate. Director Hendrick confirmed the fence had been reviewed and met applicable requirements.

Treasurer Korstange asked whether the Township had received comments of support from the Round Hill Condo Association. Director Hendrick confirmed a letter of support was included in the packet and introduced Jack Pennington, owner of Unit One and HOA President, who was present in the audience seated next to the applicant.

Treasurer Korstange noted her understanding that the majority of the problems associated with the Round Hill development were attributable to the previous builder rather than the developer or community itself, and that the outstanding issues related to the approved plan had since been corrected. She stated the primary remaining change before the Commission was the conversion from building footprints to building envelopes, and observed that since it is a gated community the sidewalk modification did not present a significant public concern.

Commissioner Cribbs asked whether the setbacks for decks and other elements would need to meet the Township's new zoning ordinance standards of 25 feet. Director Hendrick clarified that because this is a planned unit development, the property is bound by the PUD agreement between the Township and the property owner, which is filed with the county. She noted that any changes made to the general Zoning Ordinance would not impact the existing PUD agreement, and that the zero front yard setback established in the PUD document remains in effect for this development. Treasurer Korstange confirmed her understanding that the zero front setback currently applies to this property.

Vice Chair Kraemer invited the applicant to come forward.

Raleigh Finkelstein, co-owner of Finko, LLC (801 Broadway NW, Apt. 448, Grand Rapids, Michigan), stated that anything required to be done would be done and that he had nothing further to add to the staff report.

Treasurer Korstange asked if the total original number of units to be built was 10. Director Hendrick responded that the total number of units previously approved was 10.

**Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to open public hearing.
Supported by Commissioner Cribbs.
Motion carried unanimously.**

Josh Jordan (5479 Whispering Timbers Drive SE), addressed the Commission as a concerned citizen, noting he did not have a personal stake in the matter. He stated he recently moved to the township and that this was his first Planning Commission hearing. He expressed concern that while the recent Zoning Ordinance discussions have centered on reducing regulatory burdens on developers, the shortcuts evident in this project illustrated why stronger standards are necessary.

**Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to close public hearing.
Supported by Commissioner Cribbs.
Motion carried unanimously.**

Treasurer Korstange noted that she was present when the previous builder appeared before the Commission and had not been forthcoming. She expressed that the existing homeowners who purchased in the development are expecting three additional neighbors to complete the ten-unit community, and that if the prior issues have been corrected and no concerns had been raised by surrounding residents, the Commission should move forward. She observed that no public commenters raised unresolved concerns during the hearing. She asked whether a minimum house size was established for the development, and Director Hendrick confirmed that minimum size requirements and architectural standards are set within the PUD document and are also subject to review by the HOA's architectural committee, which Jack Pennington, HOA President, confirmed.

Treasurer Korstange further noted that the shift from required building footprints to building envelopes addresses a recurring problem where homeowners seeking to add decks or other features were found to be outside the bounds of the approved PUD plan. She stated the envelope approach resolves that issue going forward.

Commissioner Kaiser shared that he had been familiar with the development since its earliest stages and agreed the homes are well-designed and that the area is attractive. He asked about a structure visible near the entrance to the development and Pennington confirmed it is a utility electrical station.

Pennington noted the HOA has been involved in lawsuits against the previous builder and expressed that the residents of the development have been significantly impacted by the prior builder's actions.

Vice Chair Kraemer noted that while the history of the site has been challenging, the application as presented appears to straightforwardly meet the requirements of the Master Plan and Section 16.03 of the Zoning Ordinance, and that allowing the remaining three units to be built is a sensible outcome.

Motion by Commissioner Madiol to RECOMMEND APPROVAL of proposed amendments to Ordinance #1 of 1980, the Sentinel Pointe PUD as presented in the attached “Ordinance to Amend the Sentinel Pointe PUD”.

Supported by Vice Chair Kraemer.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 8. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

Kenneth Carey (2929 and 2923 Thornapple River Drive SE) addressed the Commission regarding an ongoing drainage and erosion problem affecting his properties at 2929 and 2923 Thornapple River Drive SE. He described that the former Planning Director directed a homebuilder to route drainage from a newly constructed home in The Summit subdivision down the hill into his backyard rather than into the existing drainage system, resulting in years of ongoing property damage. He detailed continuing damage, including the recent loss of a large tree causing damage, with additional trees falling during removal. He stated the erosion problem continues and indicated he anticipated revisiting the matter, inviting any Commissioners who wished to inspect the site to visit his property.

ARTICLE 9. Closed Session

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to enter closed session pursuant to the Michigan Open Meetings Act, specifically MCL 15.268(1)(h), to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute, namely a written legal opinion from the Township’s attorney, which is protected by the attorney–client privilege at 6:58 pm.

Supported by Commissioner Cribbs.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea: Korstange, Cribbs, Kaiser, Kraemer, Madiol

Nay: None

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to go back into open session at 7:25 pm.

Supported by Commissioner Cribbs.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea: Korstange, Cribbs, Kaiser, Kraemer, Madiol

Nay: None

ARTICLE 10. Other Business

There was no other business.

ARTICLE 11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner David Madiol, Planning Commission Secretary