

Geauga County Planning Commission

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<https://bocc.geauga.oh.gov/departments/planning-commission>

GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

August 12, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

12611 Ravenwood Drive

Conference Room A334, 3rd Floor

7:30 A.M.

Revised August 8, 2025

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Minutes:
 - A. July 8, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of Agenda/Addendum:
5. Timmons Variance: Public Hearing, Parcel: 04-046800, Burton Township
6. Financial Report and Approval of Expenses:
7. Other Business: None
8. Major Subdivisions to be reviewed: None
9. Township Zoning Amendments to be Reviewed:
 - A. Auburn Township
Text Amendment ZC-2025-01
Initiated July 10, 2025
By Zoning Commission
 - B. Auburn Township
Text Amendment ZC-2025-02
Initiated July 10, 2025
By Zoning Commission
 - C. Auburn Township
Text Amendment ZC-2025-03
Initiated July 10, 2025
By Zoning Commission
 - D. Troy Township
Text Amendment ZC2025-111
Initiated July 21, 2025
By Zoning Commission

Per Article 4, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Geauga County Planning Commission,
this agenda is subject to modification.

10. Director's Report:

11. Correspondence:

A. Norfolk Railway Abandonment Notice and Decision from the Surface Transportation Board received for Board of County Commissioners Office

12. Old Business:

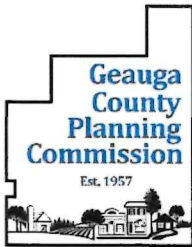
A. Farmland Preservation Plan Update

13. New Business:

A. Model Zoning: Similar Uses

B. By Laws Amendment, Packet Distribution

14. Adjournment



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AUGUST 12, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Nick Gorris called the August 12, 2025 regular meeting of the Geauga County Planning Commission to order at 7:30 a.m. at 12611 Ravenwood Drive, Suite A334, Chardon, Ohio. A quorum was present. Roll call was called by Ms. Crombie, and the following members were present:

2. Roll Call

Members present: Nick Gorris, alternate Dave Fabig for Commissioner Jim Dvorak, alternative Dane Davis for Commissioner Carolyn Brakey, alternate Skip Claypool for Commissioner Ralph Spidaleri, Caterina Cocca-Fulton, Jim McCaskey, Matt Johnson, Enzo Perfetto, Gary Neola, Dennis Bergansky and Phillip Miller

Members absent: None

Staff present: Linda Crombie (Director), Allyson Kobus (Planner II/GIS Coordinator) Staff absent: Pamela Irizarry (Administrative Assistant).

Others present: Oliver Richard (GIS/Planning Intern), Mr. and Mrs. Timmons, Andrew Yoder

Ms. Cocca-Fulton arrived at 7:32 a.m.

Mr. McCaskey left the meeting at 9:39 a.m.

3. Approval of Minutes for the July 8, 2025 Regular Meeting

Motion made by Mr. Davis to approve the July 8, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented, and Mr. McCaskey seconded the motion. Gary Neola abstained, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed 10-1.

4. Approval of Agenda/Addendum Items:

Mr. Claypool requested the Climate Action Plan being worked on by NOACA be added to the agenda. Mr. Neola suggested it be added under New Business. Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the new modified agenda, and Mr. Bergansky seconded, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Timmons Appeal for a Variance 2025-1: Public Hearing, Parcel 04-046800, Burton Township

Chairman Gorris opened the public hearing on variance appeal number 2025-1 to the Geauga County Subdivision Regulations at 7:32am. Chairman Gorris explained the variance is from Section 502(D) of the Geauga County Subdivision Regulations, notice of which was provided in the July 31, 2025 News Herald, for property located at 13976 Hale Road, Burton Ohio, parcel number 04-046800. Chairman Gorris administered the oath to James Timmons, Penny Timmons, Andrew Yoder, and Planning Director Crombie.

Chairman Gorris said for the record the board members received the Timmons variance items and the exhibits are as follows: Exhibit A is the application "Notice of Appeal Requesting a Variance", Exhibit B is the "Survivorship Warranty Deed", Exhibit C is the "Survey Map", and Exhibit D is an excerpt of the Geauga County Subdivision Regulations regarding "Section 502(D) Rear Lots".

Chairman Gorris called Mr. Timmons as the first witness. Mr. Timmons said there are not many places to build in Burton because the City of Akron owns 1/3 of the Township. There is a housing shortage. We need to conserve farmland. He has some neighbors who've married recently and would like to stay in the Township and want some parcels in the woods to build on. There is a creek/low point in the second parcel from the top. The proposed layout has the least impact to the creek as possible. Mr. Timmons indicated the dark blue line on Exhibit C, the Survey Map, is the creek that runs through the lot. The second parcel where the proposed house is, is elevated and water runs to the creek to the City of Akron.

Mr. Timmons said the problem he understands to be is flag lots, and he is asking to have this waived. Chairman Gorris asked Mr. Timmons if he could clarify which lots he is asking for the variance. Mr. Timmons said he believes it is for the second lot.

Chairman Gorris called Ms. Crombie as the second witness and requested she describe the regulation. Ms. Crombie said the request is for one additional lot as the regulations allow one rear lot behind an existing or proposed lot. This is a request for an additional lot to the rear.

Chairman Gorris asked the Commission members for comments or questions.

Mr. Davis said there are five (5) lots total being proposed; two (2) of these lots, lots A and B on the map do not exist and need the variance for two (2) rear lots. Had this proposal been four (4) lots total, he asked Ms. Crombie would there need to be a variance? Ms. Crombie said no.

Mr. Davis said there are two reasons for the request, the first being the housing shortage mentioned earlier and the second is shortage of agricultural/farmland. Questions 11 and 15 reference a local housing shortage and Mr. Davis asked Mr. Timmons to speak about the local housing shortage and questioned Mr. Timmons that he stated he is selling the land so they can farm. Mr. Timmons said no, it is so the buyers can build homes. There are no places to build in Burton Township and no places to buy a house. There is no available land to build on that is not agricultural. Mr. Timmons continued by saying the buyers want to live on the new parcels as opposed to using up land that is agricultural.

Mr. Davis asked if there was any farmland on the parcel, is it not suitable for agriculture? Mr. Timmons said it is not suitable for crop production and no one else can use it. It is forested.

Chairman Gorris said according to REALink, the parcel is basically completely wooded. Chairman Gorris referenced Exhibit A item G number 2, the question whether the variance is substantial, to which the applicant responded "no". Chairman Gorris said a 60'x180' right of way is referenced and asked Ms. Crombie to present Exhibit C for reference as the dimension is 60'x549'. Chairman Gorris asked for clarification of Mr. Timmons, and Mr. Timmons said the 180' was an error and that he must not have looked at it correctly.

Mr. Claypool said he would like to ask the Planning Director what the nature of the request is and what is our role? Why is the Planning Commission board being asked rather than the Township? Does the suitability for farming factor in at all for our decision-making process? Ms. Crombie said variances happen infrequently from the Subdivision Regulations. There are standards for lot splits and access

management. This is a subtle example of “stacking of flag lots” as it is commonly referenced. She said the Township requirements are separate from the County Subdivision Regulations.

Ms. Cocca-Fulton read from the Subdivision Regulations “there shall be no more than one (1) rear lot to the rear of another existing or proposed lot”. These regulations were created by the Planning Commission, not the Township. The State allows counties to make these rules. This rule exists to control stacking of flag lots. You could have someone make eight (8) or ten (10) flag lots, and this rule is intended to guard against that.

Mr. Claypool asked if we are creating more problems for the future by allowing for the variance? Chairman Gorris said this is what the variance process is for. Ms. Cocca-Fulton, in reviewing Exhibit “C” said she sees housing lots being proposed behind existing housing lots. There are existing lots with homes in front of the fifth parcel. She understands the intent is that there should not be housing behind housing, which would create a very long driveway.

Mr. Claypool asked if the southern lots create more problems. Ms. Crombie said the fifth lot is one rear lot to the rear of another, the fourth lot is not. Chairman Gorris said those are side lot lines, technically by zoning descriptions it is not a rear lot. Ms. Crombie said it is the nature of the northernmost lots and motioned to the lots on Exhibit “C”, as there are two (2) behind the front lot. Mr. Davis said for clarification that it is the lots labeled as “A” and “B”.

Mr. Bergansky said he agreed it is a subtle example of stacking. He said in his experience, he would like to emphasize that he has seen the goal of putting a stop to stacking lots.

Chairman Gorris agreed this is a subtle example of one flag lot being behind another. The intent of the regulation is to also prevent shared use driveways, such as to 8-9 houses. Everything should have access to the main route, efficient access for residents and emergency services.

Mr. Davis said this is still a variance though. Is the logic in the request compelling enough for us to determine a variance. He did not think it was compelling enough. It is argued that there is no agricultural use, but he thinks theoretically there could be. A housing shortage is also referenced. He feels there is no need for a variance for four (4) lots as opposed to five (5) lots, he will vote no.

Mr. Perfetto asked if another variance was needed regarding the septic. Ms. Crombie said for lots of this size it is not required, and each buyer must verify septic approval prior to purchasing. Chairman Gorris said it meets Burton Township’s zoning regulations.

Mr. Perfetto said it is a good use of property as houses, and more tax revenue is generated.

Mr. Claypool asked what the decision criteria are as he did not see any and are we setting a precedent. Mr. McCaskey said we are not setting a precedent; each case is different. Mr. Claypool said yes we are, what would cause us to override the rule? Ms. Crombie said the questions in the application are the decision criteria. The board reviews the questions and responses to determine whether you agree. Chairman Gorris said we are reviewing the questions listed in the variance request and whether this adversely affects the administering of governmental services.

Ms. Timmons asked to speak, and Chairman Gorris called her as the third witness. Ms. Timmons said we are farmers and there are many farms changing over to residences. This is wet, wooded land, we want

to use that type of property for homes rather than valuable cropland. We would want to have this developed so farmland is not being developed. We want to eliminate something that is not useful to us as cropland that we are still paying taxes on. We want to keep the farmland farmable. Mr. Claypool said the applicant answered "no" to the question about the variance adversely affect delivery of governmental services. Mr. Claypool asked, "Are they experts?". We need emergency services people here to decide if 60 ft driveways are a problem for emergency services. Mr. Perfetto said the access is sixty feet wide, the driveway will more likely be twelve feet.

Mr. Davis said in question #8, can the appellant's predicament be obviated through some method other than a variance? Mr. Davis asked why do you need five lots and not four. Mr. Timmons responded, "So we can help five people instead of four".

Mr. McCaskey asked if the board could hear from Mr. Yoder, the Timmons' neighbor. Chairman Gorris called Mr. Yoder as the fourth witness.

Mr. Yoder said he agreed with the Timmons' regarding why five lots instead of four. He has been there since he was six years old. Our young Amish families are trying to buy a place to live. If the Timmons' make 12-acre lots rather than 6-acre lots, it is harder to buy for young families. So smaller lots make it easier for young couples to buy a lot. He sees why the board is asking whether this is agricultural or not. He knows this property like the back of his hand, and it has knolls. The rest is low and wet, and it is not farmland. There is a steep slope, and it would be hard to till. There is no value as tillable land. In response to Mr. Timmons' request, Ms. Crombie displayed Exhibit "C", which contains the contour lines. Mr. Davis said he appreciated his feedback and understands better now. Mr. Yoder said he lives in front and has no problems with stacking lots. He said we cannot make more property; we have a choice where development goes: tillable land, swampland, or the woods.

Ms. Cocca-Fulton said the testimony was helpful. In America, we have individual rights and the Timmons' own this property. The question is not how many parcels; it is because we have a planning regulation that states you cannot have flag lots stacked. I think we need to consider there are unique physical conditions particular to this property that make it not useful for farming. It could be used residentially instead. Or should it be left as-is, which is no benefit to property owners. They have tried to work with the land to make the lot line where the watercourse is. Is there no possibility of developing this property further? It cannot easily be used agriculturally; it can be used residentially; it's not fair to say it should stay swampland. The immediate neighbor has no objection. This is not detrimental to public welfare, it does not impair the delivery of emergency services and does not differ from the surrounding areas. Ms. Cocca-Fulton concluded by saying this is the minimum variance that affords relief to the owners.

Mr. McCaskey said he walked the property, and he thinks they are proposing a good use. He feels the emergency services will be able to find this. The surrounding area has many flag lots, so this is not changing the area. He feels they are being good stewards to the land.

Mr. Davis said this is tough, and he found Mr. Yoder's testimony to be compelling.

Chairman Gorris said he did his own research and there are many flag lots in the area. The proposal is not a traditional example of multiple lots being stacked behind one another, sharing a driveway. Mr. Claypool said he looked at the lots to the west, there are 15 flag lots, and that is unbelievable.

Chairman Gorris said Realink shows a well; it is still there? Mr. Timmons said it was capped.

Mr. Claypool said he is concerned that this rule does not hold if we pass the variance request. Maybe a new rule regarding flag lots is needed here, because we historically grant variances. We need to revisit this rule.

Chairman Gorris said he appreciates Mr. Claypool's comments and asked if there were any other comments or questions? Hearing none, Chairman Gorris closed the public hearing at 8:11 am.

After discussion, Chairman Gorris provided the following findings of fact into the record:

Findings of Fact Relating to Appeal for Variance No. 2025-1

1. James and Penny Timmons, appellant, are seeking a variance from Article V, Section 502, Paragraph K, of the Geauga County Subdivision Regulations.
2. The real property is located at permanent parcel number 04-046800 in Burton Township, Geauga County, Ohio.
3. The public hearing on this matter was held by the Planning Commission on August 12, 2025.
4. Appellant claims entitlement to a variance because: see attached notice of appeal form dated May 22, 2025 submitted by James and Penny Timmons. The following is a summary as reviewed by Planning Commission: agricultural use is not compelling; the variance is not substantial (borderline variance); the essential character of the neighborhood is not substantially altered; paying taxes that they cannot use for agricultural production; owners are being good stewards of the land; and owners were not aware of the stacking flag lot requirement.
5. The following facts are relevant to the matter before Planning Commission:
 - a. A formal request for variance application was received on May 22, 2025, from James and Penny Timmons from Article V, Section 502, Paragraph K, of the Geauga County Subdivision Regulations.
 - b. The subject request represents a variance to the regulation that there shall be no more than one rear lot to the rear of another existing or proposed lot.
 - c. Based upon the applicable provisions of the County Subdivision Regulations noted in the record, the testimony of the witnesses and conditions set forth in the appellant's application for appeal for a variance on May 22, 2025 by James and Penny Timmons, it has been determined that in regard to topography, there are unique physical attributes of the land; Section 502(D) intent is similar use to surrounding lands; the proposed lots meet Burton Township zoning; the essential character of the neighborhood would not be affected; and the neighbor of the front lot does not object to the variance. See below.
 - The property in question will yield a reasonable return and a beneficial use of premises may be made based upon applicable Burton Township Zoning regulations and the County Subdivision Regulations.
 - The variance is not substantial, representing a subtle example of stacking of rear lots.
 - The essential character of the neighborhood would not be substantially altered and no substantial detriment to adjoining properties would occur.
 - Exceptional topographic and physical conditions exist, which are peculiar to the parcel of land. Parcel B contains a creek.

- The delivery of governmental services would not be adversely affected.
- The subdivision regulation was in effect at the time of acquisition of the property by the appellant. The appellant was aware flag lots were allowed but not of the regulation restricting the number of flag lots.
- Although it is feasible to have four lots, the additional lot would not have a negative impact on the environment. A dwelling is illustrated as far from the creek as possible.
- The variance, based upon the County Subdivision Regulations and the testimony provided in the record is not contrary to the public interest. Fire protection services will be accommodated.
- An unnecessary hardship may be imposed if the variance is not granted.
- The spirit of the County Subdivision Regulations to prevent stacking of flag lots will be upheld if the variance is granted.
- Substantial justice will be done if the variance is granted.
- The Planning Commission has applied the regulation, which is subject of the variance request, in an equitable fashion.

6. The appellant has demonstrated justification for the requested variance pursuant to Article VI, Section 605 of the Geauga County Subdivision Regulations.

At a public meeting held by the Geauga County Planning Commission on August 12, 2025, Ms. Cocca-Fulton moved, and Mr. McCaskey seconded the motion to adopt the foregoing findings of fact regarding variance appeal number 2025-1. Upon a call for the roll the vote of the Geauga County Planning Commission was as follows:

Caterina Cocca-Fulton	Aye
Gary Neola	Aye
James McCaskey	Aye
Enzo Perfetto	Aye
Nicholas Gorris	Aye
Phillip Miller	Aye
Dennis Bergansky	Aye
Matthew Johnson	Aye
Dane Davis (alternate)	Aye
Dave Fabig (alternate)	Aye
Walter "Skip" Claypool (alternate)	Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

At a public meeting held by the Geauga County Planning Commission on August 12, 2025, Mr. Neola moved, and Mr. Bergansky seconded the motion to grant the appeal for variance appeal number 2025-1 for real property identified as 04-046800 in Burton Township, filed by James and Penny Timmons, appellant, attached hereto. Upon a call for the roll the vote of the Geauga County Planning Commission was as follows:

Caterina Cocca-Fulton	Aye
Gary Neola	Aye
James McCaskey	Aye
Enzo Perfetto	Aye

Nicholas Gorris	Aye
Phillip Miller	Aye
Dennis Bergansky	Aye
Matthew Johnson	Aye
Dane Davis (alternate)	Aye
Dave Fabig (alternate)	Aye
Walter "Skip" Claypool (alternate)	Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Gorris said the motion passed and the variance has been granted, however, it is not official until the meeting minutes are approved at the next meeting. He thanked the Timmons for attending and Mr. Timmons said thank you for the due diligence. Mr. and Ms. Timmons and Mr. Yoder left the meeting.

6. Financial Report and Approval of Expenses: (July)

Ms. Crombie displayed the total expenditures to date, revenues and expenses in July. Mr. McCaskey made a motion to approve the financial reports, and the summary of expenses for July 2025. Mr. Bergansky seconded, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Other Business: None

8. Major Subdivisions to be reviewed: None

9. Township Zoning Amendments to be Reviewed:

A. Auburn Township

Text Amendment ZC-2025-01

Initiated July 10, 2025

By Zoning Commission

Ms. Crombie said Article 3, Section 3.05 is related to storm water management and sediment control. The overall comment is that the staff and the Commission review this section at some point for anything that can be removed as a zoning inspector's duty is to review and enforce zoning matters, not detailed storm water plans. She advised that Geauga Soil and Water reviewed this and felt the reference to the permit in 3.05(c)(4) should be more general and state only "the most recent version of the Ohio EPA Construction General Permit". Ms. Cocco-Fulton asked if Ms. Crombie wanted to talk next month and put this together and Ms. Crombie said yes. Ms. Crombie said the staff recommendation is approval with modifications.

Motion by Mr. Davis to approve with modifications the Auburn Township Text Amendment ZC 2025-01 as noted by the Planning Director and Mr. Fabig seconded. Mr. Bergansky abstained, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

B. Auburn Township

Text Amendment ZC-2025-02

Initiated July 10, 2025

By Zoning Commission

Ms. Crombie said this text amendment affects various sections to include outdoor dining. A definition of "Brewery" is being added, and it only references the sale of malt beverages. The recommendation is for the Township to investigate the possibility of a brewery also having a license to sell wine and liquor.

Ms. Crombie said the accessory use section has quite a few regulations they are proposing, some of which do not fall under zoning regulations including always ensuring exits and aisles unimpeded, fire-retardant umbrellas, and free from litter and kept sanitary. She noted that the standards indicate outdoor dining must be on a patio or deck. Understanding that there may be fire and safety regulations, but the Township could consider allowing such uses within lawn areas. Ms. Crombie noted that the standards do not allow outdoor cooking. She recommends the Township review the language as to whether the Township would allow outdoor fireplaces or firepits as that is not specified. Ms. Crombie said the Township does not have architectural standards to enforce such a prohibition.

Mr. Claypool said he had a significant issue with all of these. Looking at the Ohio Revised Code, some of these regulations are the city ordinances and not Township zoning, we cannot approve this. They have exceeded the limits according to what they are allowed to do. Zoning in the Township is not for this level of detail. Bainbridge tried to do this; he sees this as a trend.

Mr. Davis said he agrees with Mr. Claypool's fundamental point; they are doing too much. Can we include a general comment? Mr. Claypool said he moves that the board does not approve this amendment. Ms. Cocca-Fulton said she has no problem with the motion to deny this amendment.

Motion by Mr. Claypool to deny the Auburn Township Text Amendment ZC 2025-02 and Mr. Neola seconded. Mr. Bergansky abstained, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

C. Auburn Township Text Amendment ZC-2025-03 Initiated July 10, 2025 By Zoning Commission

Ms. Crombie said this Amendment pertains to storage containers. "Storage container" is already defined; they are adding additional language that it may include shipping containers. Ms. Crombie said the Prosecutor's Office has an overall concern as anything can be reused and repurposed. Any type of metal unit can be repurposed. Chairman Gorris noted that it does not necessarily have to be metal, as written. Ms. Crombie said over the years shipping containers are proposed to be used as storage but being a trendy, cheaper alternative is not justification for allowing something.

Mr. Davis asked if there was any knowledge as to the reasoning behind these changes. Ms. Crombie said she did not speak with the Township but would imagine business owners have been asking for them. Chairman Gorris said people are using them as storage. Ms. Crombie noted that agricultural use is still exempt. Mr. Davis said Auburn Township does not strike him as an industrial use, shipping area.

Ms. Crombie said these uses are proposed to be allowed in all districts except one of the commercial areas. She noted that the Commission discussed at some point that a shipping container can be used as a building material. Ms. Crombie said that one shipping container on its own is designed for the transportation of goods and should not be permitted. Ms. Crombie's overall concern is treating similar

uses similarly. Mr. Claypool said a mobile home is similar. He feels the level of detail here, especially pertaining to keeping the container in good condition is too much. Is the Township going to add the same regulations for homes? They are being unduly strict here and there are inconsistencies.

Mr. Claypool asked what the Prosecutor's Office overall recommendation was and Ms. Crombie said denial. Mr. Claypool asked why, and Ms. Crombie said due to the scope of the language.

Ms. Crombie said one (1) storage container per acre is proposed to be allowed. If they add this rule, they will need to add a maximum. This is for industrial and all commercial districts other than B2. She noted item "b" is not necessary because of item "c". She pointed out the size specifications and made a planning comment that allowing shipping containers can have a negative impact on local businesses and contractors who can supply or build accessory buildings. The regulations for maintenance, even though the intent is good, townships cannot adopt property maintenance regulations. She recommends the regulations against signs be removed as that is a potential freedom of speech issue. Item "J" lists only trailers and railroad box cars, which is not an exhaustive list so that is a concern as well. Ms. Crombie noted that prohibiting electricity will likely be ignored as electricity would otherwise be allowed in a traditional storage building. Last, in Item "I", the last sentence is unnecessary.

Chairman Gorris asked what is the recommendation? Ms. Crombie said denial.

Motion by Mr. McCaskey to deny the Auburn Township Text Amendment ZC 2025-03 and Mr. Claypool seconded. Ms. Crombie asked if she should include the reasons for the denial. Chairman Gorris said to provide explanation for the denial. Mr. Bergansky abstained, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**D. Troy Township
Text Amendment ZC2025-11I
Initiated July 21, 2025
By Zoning Commission**

Ms. Crombie said the Prosecutor's Office objected to the struck-out language related to "junk vehicles". The definition is being changed to something more subjective. The definition currently is straight out of the ORC and should remain. The staff recommendation is approval with modifications.

Mr. Claypool said if the Township approves this contrary to ORC, it will not hold up. Mr. Neola asked why one of the criteria in the ORC is the vehicle is three (3) years old. Ms. Cocca-Fulton said it is arbitrary.

Motion by Mr. Claypool to approve with modifications the Troy Township Text Amendment ZC2025-11I, and seconded by Mr. Bergansky, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Director's Report:

Ms. Crombie said there were three new building lots submitted in July. One (1) each in Bainbridge, Troy and Parkman Townships.

Ms. Crombie said Ms. Kobus attended the ESRI GIS User Conference in July. Ms. Kobus said 20,000 people attended and she thanked the board for the opportunity to attend. She said it was well organized. Mr. Davis asked about AI solutions to agriculture and vegetation. Ms. Kobus said AI models can be trained to see short or tall vegetation. Using AI was the overarching theme of the conference. Chairman Gorris said it was well worth it for Ms. Kobus to attend the conference.

Ms. Crombie said the County Auditor's Office hosted another county GIS User Group meeting in July as well. It primarily was to review the information from the ESRI GIS User conference, change over to an enterprise GIS, which allows the county to have more control over the GIS, and to mention how REALink will be updated at some point in the future.

Ms. Crombie updated the Commission on the buildings by Type and Census Data Book projects performed by the intern. The draft of the data book was presented.

Ms. Crombie briefly reviewed the Commercial Construction Activity for July 2025.

Ms. Crombie advised that she spoke to the Geauga Growth Partnership intern about housing and transportation. She pointed out that rural character in the county is a key takeaway in the County's General Plan. There is no pursuit of expansion of sanitary services in the Townships and that will limit development. Mr. Claypool asked if there is a consistent definition of affordable housing. Ms. Crombie said no. Mr. Perfetto said it has roots in what was expected of developers to provide. The phrase is thrown around as if there is a consistent definition but there is not.

Ms. Crombie discussed the possibility of staff representing a booth at the Geauga County Fair for 2025. She said Planning Commission could have one, but there are not enough staff available to tend the booth all the time. Mr. McCaskey said he thought the booths would be more informational and one person from the County would be present for all the booths. Chairman Gorris said the Directors were told that each department had to tend their own booth.

Ms. Crombie said the 2026 Approved Budget was sent to the board members in the Dropbox link. Mr. Davis asked if the monthly budget report could have an extra column for the monthly expenditures. Ms. Crombie said that can be done.

Ms. Crombie highlighted State Senate Bills and House Bills.

11. Correspondence:

A. Norfolk Railway Abandonment Letter from Surface Transportation Board received for Board of County Commissioners Office

Ms. Crombie briefly reviewed the letter she received from the clerk at the BOCC. Mr. Perfetto asked who will own the trail once it is put in. Ms. Crombie said one of the municipalities. Chairman Gorris said this is not like a roadway; it will not revert back to adjoining parcels.

12. Old Business:

A. Farmland Preservation Plan Update:

Ms. Crombie said they are finalizing the agenda for the meeting next week with the task force. Mr. Claypool said he would like to go to the meeting because Commissioner Spidalieri needs to be informed. Ms. Crombie said as Mr. Claypool is an alternate, if the Commission appointed him, they would be appointing Commissioner Spidalieri without his knowledge. Chairman Gorris said since a board member is still needed to sit on the Task Force, he would be willing to volunteer given his family's background in agriculture. Mr. McCaskey said we cannot go wrong with either one.

Motion by Mr. McCaskey to appoint Chairman Gorris to sit on the Farmland Preservation Task Force, and seconded by Mr. Claypool, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

13. New Business:

A. Model Zoning: Similar Uses:

Ms. Crombie said the Model Zoning has never included language for similar uses. She summarized the language prepared by Ms. Cocca-Fulton and also noted coincidentally similar language is contained in the 1989 Ohio Model Zoning Code.

Ms. Cocca-Fulton said in her deep dive, there was a case in Painesville and there ended up being a procedure issue. The proposed language is straight forward. We're not reinventing anything. Mr. Claypool said his one comment is that he still feels the language that states any use not listed is not permitted is unconstitutional. Ms. Crombie said the new language allows the zoning inspector professional discretion and gave examples of the "not limited to" and "and the like" language that is already used in township zoning that essentially allows similar uses already.

B. By Laws Amendment, Packet Distribution:

Ms. Crombie highlighted the minor change to the Planning Commission By Laws related to distribution of the meeting packets, as discussed at the last meeting.

Motion by Ms. Cocca-Fulton and seconded by Mr. Claypool to approve the amendment to the Bylaws and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

C. Climate Action Plan worked on by NOACA:

Mr. Claypool said NOACA is developing a plan regarding carbon capture and sequestration. It would impact the county, and the Commission needs to be aware of their efforts. He stressed that the Commission members and residents should contact our legislators.

P.T. 14. **13. Adjournment:**

Motion by Ms. Cocca-Fulton to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Bergansky and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:42 a.m.



Nicholas Gorris, Chairman

Gary Neola, Secretary/Treasurer

**SUMMARY RESOLUTION FOR EXPENSES
GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Mr. McDokey MOVED THE ADOPTION OF THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION,
WHICH MOTION WAS SECONDED BY Mr. Bergquist.

WHEREAS, THE EXPENSES LISTED HEREIN HAVE BEEN INCURRED BY THE GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION IN ORDER FOR THE COMMISSION TO PERFORM ITS DUTIES; AND

WHEREAS, THESE EXPENSES HAVE BEEN REVIEWED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION AT ITS AUGUST 12, 2025 MEETING.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HEREBY AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF THE FOLLOWING BILLS OR CLAIMS:

<u>P.O.</u>	<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>VENDOR</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1159	COPIER USAGE	7/8	DEX IMAGING	\$47.47
			• <i>Copier Usage</i>	
			○ <i>5/22/25 TO 6/21/25</i>	
1165	OTHER	7/1	UH OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH	\$55.00
			• <i>New Employee Pre Hire Drug Screen</i>	
			○ <i>Oliver Richard</i>	
			TOTAL	<u>\$102.47</u>



Nick Gorris, Chairman



Gary Neola, Secretary/Treasurer

COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION FINANCIAL REPORT
Summary

Budget – Prepared August 5, 2025



<u>Account</u>	<u>Annual Appropriation</u>	<u>Year to Date Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Salaries	\$177,354.00	\$103,394.94	\$73,959.06
Supplies	\$2,000.00	\$266.58	\$1,733.42
Hosp.	\$28,550.00	\$18,012.26	\$10,537.74
Medicare	\$2,480.00	\$1,473.84	\$1,006.16
OPERS	\$23,670.00	\$14,028.89	\$9,641.11
Worker's Comp.	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Other Expenses	\$4,700.00	\$246.80	4,453.20
Equipment	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Contracted Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Covid -19 Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Copier Usage Services	\$800.00	\$200.00	\$600.00
Travel	\$5,000.00	\$1,039.09	\$3,960.91
Advertising	\$325.00	\$0.00	\$325.00
Training	\$700.00	\$20.00	\$680.00
Member, Dues, Lic. Sub	\$3,200.00	\$3,043.00	\$157.00
Total	\$251,379.00	\$141,725.40	\$109,653.60

<u>Planning Commission Revenues</u>	<u>Year to Date Balance:</u>
January	\$317.40
February	\$1,392.50
March	\$150.00
April	\$1,100.00
May	\$684.83
June	\$4,267.42
July	\$450.00
	Yearly Total: \$8,362.15