

Geauga County Planning Commission

12611 Ravenwood Dr. • Suite #380 • Chardon, OH 44024

Phone: (440) 279-1740 • Email: Planning@co.geauga.oh.us

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

GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

April 14, 2026 REGULAR MEETING

12611 Ravenwood Drive

Conference Room A334, 3rd Floor

7:30 A.M.

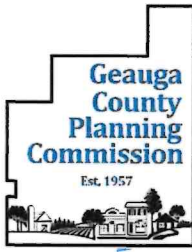
1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Minutes:
 - A. March 10, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - B. March 17, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of Agenda/Addendum:
5. Financial Report and Approval of Expenses:
6. Other Business:
 - A. Ratification of paid time off
7. Major Subdivisions to be reviewed:
 - A. Maple Ridge Subdivision
Replat of Sublots 6 and 7
Auburn Township
Final Plat
8. Township Zoning Amendments to be Reviewed:
 - A. Chester Township
Text Amendment ZC-2026-01
Initiated March 18, 2026
By Zoning Commission
9. Director's Report:
10. Correspondence:
 - A. Court Case Novak v. Geauga County Board of Commissioners, Planning Commission, et al.
11. Old Business:
 - A. Farmland Preservation Plan Update (ODA Grant)
 - B. House Bill 733 Draft letter of support from Planning Commission board members
 - C. 2027 Budget Request
12. New Business: None

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

13. Adjournment

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



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April 14, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Gorris called the April 14, 2026, 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 taken by Ms. Irizarry, and the following members were present:

2. Roll Call

Members present: Nick Gorris, Philip Miller, Dennis Bergansky, Enzo Perfetto, Bob Rogish Jr., Lee Imhof, Matt Johnson, Commissioner Carolyn Brakey, Alternate Dave Fabig for Commissioner Dvorak, and Alternate Walter Claypool for Commissioner Spidalieri.

Members absent: Matthew Mesok.

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

Guests: Chris Alusheff, Chester Township Zoning Inspector and Kathleen McCarthy, Chester Township Zoning Secretary.

Commissioner Carolyn Brakey arrived at 7:35 a.m. and left at 8:23 a.m.
Mr. Walter Claypool arrived at 7:35 a.m.

3. Approval of Minutes:

A. March 10, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Crombie said she received redline edits to the March 10, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes from Commissioner Carolyn Brakey. She presented the edits to the board for their review.

Motion made by Mr. Bergansky to approve the March 10, 2026 regular meeting minutes as modified. Mr. Imhoff seconded the motion and Mr. Rogish abstained. Upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

B. March 17, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes

Ms. Crombie presented redline edits to the March 17, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes from Commissioner Carolyn Brakey. Commissioner Brakey said she was trying to make the tense correct. The board discussed the language from Bainbridge Township and the County Engineer regarding Big Dipper. Ms. Crombie said the language from both agencies can be in quotations so there is no question as to the recommendation.

Motion made by Chairman Gorris to table approving the March 17, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes to the May 12, 2026 Planning Commission meeting to reflect edits and modifications from the board. Commissioner Brakey seconded the motion, and Mr. Claypool abstained, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of Agenda/Addendum Items:

Motion made by Mr. Bergansky to approve the agenda as presented and Mr. Fabig seconded, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Financial Report and Approval of Expenses: (March 2026)

Ms. Irizarry noted for the Summary of Expenses, she has been utilizing funds from the 2025 carryover whenever possible.

Motion made by Mr. Perfetto to approve the financial report and the summary of expenses for March 2026 as submitted and Mr. Bergansky seconded, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Other Business:

A. Ratification of paid time off

Ms. Crombie said at the March 31, 2026 Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting, the BOCC decided to close all the offices at noon and grant all the employees under their hiring authority four hours of paid time off on April 3, 2026. Since Planning Commission does not fall under the hiring authority of the BOCC, a motion is needed from the board to ratify four hours on April 3, 2026 as paid time off for staff.

Motion made by Mr. Rogish to ratify four hours as paid time off for staff on April 3, 2026. Mr. Bergansky seconded the motion, and upon a call for the vote the motion passed unanimously.

7. Major Subdivisions to be reviewed:

A. Maple Ridge Subdivision
Replat of Sublots 6 and 7
Auburn Township
Final Plat

Ms. Crombie said the applicant wants to consolidate sublots 6 and 7 to create subplot 7-R in the Maple Ridge Subdivision. The combined acreage will be 4.0813 acres.

Motion made by Mr. Bergansky to recommend approval of the replat of Sublots 6 and 7 in the Maple Ridge Subdivision, creating Sublot 7-R. Mr. Imhoff seconded, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. Township Zoning Amendments to be Reviewed:

A. Chester Township
Text Amendment 2026-01
Initiated March 18, 2026
By Zoning Commission

Ms. Crombie said Chester Township Zoning Commission submitted zoning amendment 2026-01 that impacts four (4) articles; Article 1: General Provisions, Article 2: Definitions, Article 3: Amendments, and Article 10: Nonconforming Buildings, Structures, and Uses.

Ms. Crombie presented the board with the proposed changes in the amendment, which included minor changes to text, and two recommendations.

In Section 105, Schedule of fees, charges and expenses, Ms. Crombie said in the first sentence, "the board of trustees shall, by *motion* establish a schedule of fees", the word "*vote*" could also be considered.

In Section 302, Submission to Director of Ohio Department of Transportation, Ms. Crombie said the Township is proposing this be removed, but in speaking with the County Prosecutor's Office, and noting that this language was in the 1989 Ohio Model Zoning Code, staff recommends keeping it.

Ms. Crombie said in Section 1008.0, Nonconforming lot of record, the beginning of the paragraph states "in any zoning district, a building, structure, or use shall be allowed on any lot of record" but the language in item (E) "Abutting lots considered one lot", is conflicting. Ms. Crombie said her concern is about single ownership and instances where a husband and wife own abutting lot but one is in the husband and wife's name and the other is only owned by the wife. Staff recommends any proposals to consolidate lots should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and any variances for minimum building setback dwelling size, or any other requirement would be reviewed as they arise. Chairman Gorris expressed concern about who must track ownership of two or more land parcels and how certain lots are grandfathered in. Mr. Rogish said the language does not mention but it should the possibility of an owner petitioning to have side by side lots remain separate.

Ms. Crombie informed the board that late last year, the Township changed the format of the entire zoning resolution, which included margins, font style, font size, font color, revised section and page numbers, tables, cover page etc. This took place through a Secretary's Affidavit without going through the formal amendment process, to which staff advised otherwise. Staff had recommended to include a detailed cover letter describing the amendment is a re-format of the entire zoning resolution and there are no substantive changes proposed to the regulation, reference this as Exhibit "A". Also, include the entire existing zoning resolution as Exhibit "B", and lastly, include the entire proposed zoning resolution as Exhibit "C". Ms. Crombie explained this would allow for comparison between the two documents.

Mr. Claypool asked if the board denies this, do we deny the whole thing or parts of it. Chairman Gorris said in this case the whole thing because the previous revisions should have gone through the Planning Commission and the entire amendment process. Mr. Claypool asked if Section 302 related to access management is removed, is it required of the Township to notify the Ohio Department of Transportation and its citizens it is being taken out. Mr. Claypool said we do not duplicate the law and having to state everything in zoning is too cumbersome. Commissioner Brakey disagreed and said regulations often must cite other regulations.

Ms. Crombie said the staff's recommendation is for denial. Chairman Gorris said we need to set a precedence with this that all changes, no matter how minor, must go through the amendment process. Ms. McCarthy asked Ms. Crombie if she is resubmitting the amendment with just formatting changes, to which Chairman Gorris responded to include the Secretary's Affidavit and resubmit. Commissioner

Brakey said it can be two clean copies of the resolution, one existing, one proposed. Chairman Gorris requested staff submit a follow-up email with recommendations to the Township.

Motion made by Chairman Gorris to recommend denial of the Chester Township Text Amendment ZC-2026-01, and seconded by Mr. Rogish, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Director's Report:

Ms. Crombie announced to the board that Oliver Richard accepted the position of GIS/Planning Intern. He will start sometime around May 18, 2026, subject to the hiring requirements.

Ms. Crombie said four new building lot proposals were submitted in March.

Ms. Crombie said staff finished and submitted Thompson Township's Land Use Plan draft for their review. In streamlining staff time involvement for Thompson Township's Land Use Plan as compared to Claridon Township's Land Use Plan, Thompson Township totaled 194.6 hours compared to Claridon Township, which totaled 376 hours.

Ms. Crombie said there was an article in the Maple Leaf indicating Planning Commission would be involved in a development project with the Village of Burton, this is not correct.

Ms. Crombie said the Ohio Township Association (OTA) released a publication titled, "The Economic Contribution of Ohio Townships", which she provided in the shared folder for the board to review.

Ms. Crombie said there were two significant commercial construction permits issued in March 2026: one in Middlefield Village, on Harrington Way, which is an addition and alteration for Walmart Real Estate, and the other in Claridon Township on Taylor Wells Road, which is an amphitheater, for the Jewish Community Center of Cleveland.

Ms. Crombie informed the board of the New Residential Housing Starts and Commercial Construction Starts for the 1st quarter of 2026. Chairman Gorris asked Ms. Kobus if there was a way to get historical information year by year for the past ten years of any housing starts. Ms. Kobus said yes. Chairman Gorris asked if she could compile this information and share with the board.

Regarding the work summary, Ms. Crombie said from January-March the workload has been typical for this time of year. She added that Ms. Kobus prepared an updated zoning map for Chardon Township for roads, parcels, and new trustee names. She also emailed all the communities within Geauga County about the Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) changes. Ms. Kobus said the Census Bureau used to mail the updates to the townships, now everything is sent by email.

Ms. Crombie said moving forward with the Legislative Updates, staff will provide the reference of what the bill is and the link directly to it. Chairman Gorris said if the board needs something more let the staff know, but the links are the easiest way to get any updates.

10. Correspondence:

A. Court Case Novak v. Geauga County Board of Commissioners, Planning Commission, et al:

Ms. Crombie said she is making the board aware she received notice of lawsuit involving several county agencies within Geauga County, including Planning Commission.

11. Old Business:

A. Farmland Preservation Plan Update (ODA Grant):

Ms. Crombie said the Ohio Department of Agriculture's (ODA) grant was approved and staff received the full Land Use Planning grant award of \$25,000.00. As part of the grant requirements, the Planning Commission must hold a public forum in Middlefield Township as it has no zoning. The location of the public forum is to be determined, but the cost of facility rental would be covered by the grant money received. A second forum can be held at the Geauga County Office Building. The forums could be held in June sometime from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Crombie created and presented a draft layout of how to conduct the public forum for the Farmland Preservation Plan Update. It provided a timeframe breakdown of the public forum, which starts with an introduction and explanation session. Next, various stations will be set up for viewing information include the existing plan, County level agricultural soils map, county level zoning and land use maps, a prime agricultural map with parcels and CAUV/Agricultural District and forestry parcels for each township, platted subdivision maps, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, and Ice Breaker Survey results from the Farmland Preservation Task Force members. A question-and-answer session will occur, and lastly the Planning Director will let the attendees know the next steps in the process to meet the May 2027 deadline.

Ms. Crombie asked the board if the Chairman and the Secretary/Treasurer could be in attendance for the public forums primarily because they are on the Task Force. She advised limiting the number of Planning Commission board members to five only, due to quorum requirements, after speaking with the County Prosecutor's Office. Mr. Bergansky said the quorum requirements only apply if the board is speaking about the Farmland Plan. Ms. Crombie said since it is about the Farmland Plan, that is the concern. The public forum is not a regular meeting nor a special meeting. Commissioner Brakey said there should not be a problem, but it is more about the optics of it.

Ms. Crombie said staff will create and bring back to the board the press release information notifying the public of the date, time, location and purpose of the public forum for the May 12, 2026 Planning Commission meeting. Chairman Gorris advised staff to reach out to the County Sheriff's Office to make sure whether an officer needs to be present at the forum, recording the opening and closing of the forum to be put on the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) site, and to reach out to the Media Specialist in the BOCC for assistance with the press release.

Ms. Crombie said she will reach out to everyone who offered letters of support for the Farmland Preservation Plan update and others regarding the public forum. Chairman Gorris asked Ms. Crombie to include the Farm Bureau and to make sure staff is tracking all this on their timesheets.

B. House Bill 733 Draft Letter of Support from Planning Commission Board Members:

Ms. Crombie said at last month's meeting she discussed with the board writing a letter of support to State Representatives Sarah Fowler Arthur and David Thomas regarding HB 733, which would add maple syrup and maple products as an agricultural use in the Ohio Revised Code. She drafted a basic letter of support and reviewed it with the board.

Chairman Gorris said a lot of leg work went into this from the Farm Bureau's side. He commended Planning Commission board member Bob Rogish and Mandy Orahod of the Geauga County Farm Bureau, for their efforts. He asked staff to send the letter out again to the members for their review and comment and to finalize the letter and present it at the May 12, 2026 board meeting for everyone to approve and sign.

C. 2027 Budget Request:

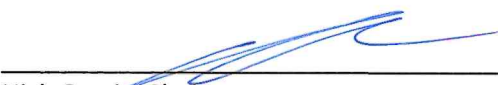
Ms. Crombie said the Planning Commission board approved the 2027 Budget request at the March 10, 2026 meeting. Due to a memo received from the BOCC on March 18 requesting departments hold the line or reduce expenditures, she is bringing this back to the board for review since the budget request is due to the BOCC by April 17, 2026. She would like to discuss the idea again of bringing on a full-time Planner II/Farmland Coordinator, but she is hesitant in submitting the request due to the BOCC letter about budgeting and would like the board's input.

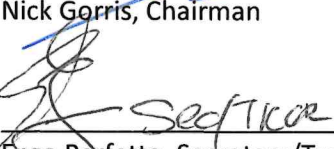
Chairman Gorris said since the budget was already approved at last month's board meeting, stay on course with submitting it to the BOCC because budgets can change, it is worth leaving the full-time staff position on the request. Mr. Claypool said the Planning Commission Board is a separate entity under the Ohio Revised Code. We can seek funding elsewhere and can even levy a tax. He said this position has merit, and the board could reach out to the agricultural community for additional funding possibilities. Chairman Gorris agreed there are other avenues to self-sustain additional funds like changing the application fees. The board agreed to submit the budget request as previously approved.

12. New Business: None

13. Adjournment:

Motion by Mr. Rogish to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Bergansky and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.



Nick Gorris, Chairman

Enzo Perfetto, Secretary/Treasurer

EXHIBIT "A"

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

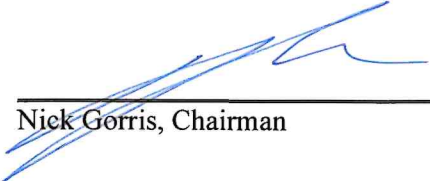
Mr. Peretto MOVED THE ADOPTION OF THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION,
WHICH MOTION WAS SECONDED BY Mr. Begashy.

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 APRIL 14, 2026 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	3/3	DEX IMAGING • Copier Usage ○ 1/22/26 to 2/21/26 ▪ 2025 Carryover Account	\$27.97
1166	TRAVEL	3/17	GEAUGA TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION • Quarterly Dinner, Russell Township ○ Linda Crombie and Allyson Kobus ▪ 2025 Carryover Account	\$70.00
1162	SUPPLIES	3/24	STAPLES • Office Supplies ○ 2025 Carryover Account ▪ Split payment	\$37.34
0368	SUPPLIES	3/24	STAPLES • Office Supplies ○ 2026 Account ○ Split Payment	\$112.07
TOTAL				<u>\$247.38</u>



Nick Gorris, Chairman

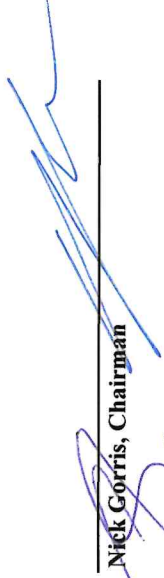


Enzo Peretto, Secretary/Treasurer

<u>Planning Commission Revenues</u>	<u>Year to Date Balance:</u>
January	\$432.55
February	\$1,300.00
March	\$650.00
	Yearly Total: \$2,382.55

GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY: Month of March 2026
BUDGET - PREPARED **7-Apr-26**

<u>Account</u>	<u>Annual Appropriation</u>	<u>Monthly Expenditure</u>	<u>Year to Date Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Salaries	\$187,375.00	-\$13,443.24	\$39,929.16	\$147,445.84
Supplies	\$1,500.00	\$112.07	\$112.07	\$1,387.93
Hospitalization	\$48,089.00	-\$4,007.28	\$12,021.84	\$36,067.16
Medicare	\$2,750.00	-\$189.12	\$561.57	\$2,188.43
OPERS	\$26,280.00	-\$1,854.02	\$6,489.07	\$19,790.93
Worker's Comp.	\$90.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$90.00
Other Expenses	\$2,700.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,700.00
Equipment	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contracted Services	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Covid -19 Expenses	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Copier Usage Services	\$600.00	0.00	\$0.00	\$600.00
Travel	\$3,860.00	0.00	\$0.00	\$3,860.00
Advertising	\$325.00	0.00	\$0.00	\$325.00
Training	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
Member, Dues, Lic. Sub	\$4,100.00	\$0.00	\$623.06	\$3,476.94
Total	\$278,069.00	-\$19,381.59	\$59,736.77	\$218,332.23


 Nick Gorris, Chairman

 Enzo Perfetto, Secretary/Treasurer