

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

Danbury Township Zoning Commission

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Held

February 4, 20 2026

The Danbury Township Zoning Commission was called to order at 6:30p.m. at the Danbury Township Meeting Room by Chair, Susan Dress. The pledge of allegiance was recited. The roll call showed the following present: Chair, Ms. Susan Dress, Vice-Chair, Ms. Jodi Kopanski, Member, Ms. Barbara Singer, Member, Mr. William Tuttamore, Alternate Doug Huber and Alternate Ms. Cynthia Mahl. Secretary, Vito Kaminskis was excused. Ms. Kathryn Dale, Zoning and Planning Administrator, and Dawn Connor, Zoning Assistant, were also present.

Approval of January 7, 2026, Minutes

The Chair asked if all the Commission Members had had an opportunity to review the minutes from the last meeting. All indicated they had. Ms. Dress asked if there were any corrections or modifications. Mr. Tuttamore made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 7, 2025, meeting. Ms. Kopanski seconded the motion. All Ayes. The motion carried.

Ms. Dress asked Ms. Dale to introduce the first case of the evening.

Public Hearing

ZC-2026-002

7522 & 7596 E. Harbor Rd.

Moonracer Farms, LLC.

Marion Kovach, David Roush & Brian Hickey, Owners/Applicants

Map Amendment

Request for Map Amendment from "A" Agricultural to "R-1" Rural Residential for Section 2, Lot 17, PIN# 0141866425002000, PIN# 0141866425003000 and PIN# 0141173515699000 consisting of 55.03ac. to be rezoned.

The Chair asked if there was any member who would have a conflict and wished to abstain. There were none. The Chair asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Ms. Kopanski made the motion to open the public hearing; Ms. Singer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried. The Chair asked Ms. Dale to give the Commission an overview of this application.

Ms. Dale stated the applicant is proposing to rezone three parcels totaling 55.03ac. from "A" Agricultural to "R-1" Rural Residential. The owners also have a 21.14ac. parcel (4th parcel) that they intend to have remain "A" Agricultural. The property was formerly known as the Wadsworth Farm. At the time the property owners purchased the property in October 2024, or shortly thereafter, they carved out two parcels that contained existing homes and accessory buildings. The one parcel that was carved out contained 1.88ac. and is the actual Wadsworth farm and buildings. The second parcel carved out was for a house east of the former farmstead which contains 1.14ac. and has remained in the Wadsworth family.

Nearly 20ac. of the southern portion of the property was used from roughly 2012 – 2023 by the State of Ohio for dredging spoils & ponds while East Harbor was being dredged. The Township was and is not privileged to the agreement that may have been reached between the Wadsworth family and the State. Based on aerial photography, it appears that the land has been fully reclaimed and put back into its natural state, but presumably there could be some limitations on how long that area may have to remain undisturbed.

Ms. Dale reviewed the surrounding zoning districts and uses. The Danbury Township Land Use Plan was adopted in 2017 and is due for an update this year. The Land Use Plan calls for the whole property to be "Neighborhood 3: Low Density Residential". The boundaries to these classifications should not be viewed as a hard line stopping or starting point, but more as a generality that can cross property lines or extend further than depicted if it makes good planning sense.

"Neighborhood 3: Low Density Residential" areas typically consist of newer developments within the Township. Lot sizes are large, not as consistent or in a traditional grid pattern and may contain irregular lots. There is usually no connectivity to other neighborhoods, reliance is on vehicular use and typically there is one way in and out. Uses typically are only single-family & two-family units.

Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission (OCRPC) was forwarded the proposed amendments on December 23, 2025, and held a hearing on January 20, 2026. OCRPC recommended **Approval as Presented.**

Ms. Dale reviewed the Decision Criteria the Commission would be considering for this request. The Chair asked if any members had any questions for Ms. Dale. There were none.

The Chair asked the applicant to come forward and provide their presentation.

David Roush, 145 N. Channel Grove, Marblehead, came forward and stated that Ms. Dale had covered pretty much everything and he would be happy to answer any questions. Ms. Dress asked him to just give a general rehash of what led to this application. Mr. Roush said he feels that there is a need for affordable building lots in Danbury Township. He said they bought the property as an investment and also to protect what goes on in their neighborhood. He said they live right across the road from part of it. He said they are very proud of Channel Grove. He said they have had several offers

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on the property and all of the offers have been contingent upon changing the zoning to "R-1". He said he is not a big believer in a lot of contingencies, so he and his fellow owners thought it was in their best interest to follow through and get it changed "R-1" to make it more marketable to people that would do the right thing with the property to develop it into nice residential housing. He said he has been studying the Township's Zoning Resolution plan for years and it seems to fit in and seems like the right thing to do for Danbury Township and for everyone involved. Ms. Dress said she just wanted to clarify that Mr. Roush was not going to develop it himself and that they were planning to sell the property. Mr. Roush said that was correct. They plan to sell the property to someone who knows what they are doing. He said the project was too big for him and his partners to bite off, but they are keeping one parcel that they may want to do something with in the future. They want to let somebody else do the experiment first and see how it goes. Mr. Roush repeated that he feels there is a strong demand for affordable lots in the area, especially when you look at the real estate pages and see how much it costs to buy a quarter or or half acre lot. He said he hopes it helps with supply and demand with less expensive lots available to everybody.

Ms. Singer asked about the dredging that had been done on the property. Mr. Roush said they were not privy to any more information about it than the Township. He said it was between the State and the previous owner's (the Wadsworth Family). He said they have talked to the engineer, civil service, and the people at ODNR who were involved in the project and they all said it was signed off on a few years ago. He stated it has been planted with crops the last few years, so it was basically reclaimed. As far as what can be done with that area, if you can build on housing on it or not, he does not know and would not know until a developer went forward with engineering. It would be a whole other step to find out what they could do with the foundation back there. He said the land is very solid; he has traveled a lot on it, and they did a good job of leveling it out and raised it up. It was probably swamp land at one time but is now the highest area now because Verizon wanted to put a tower there, which they declined.

The Chair asked if there were any questions for the applicant. Ms. Singer asked if they had any buyers interested in keeping it agricultural. Mr. Roush said not really. He said he is a third-generation farmer from Richland County, and the farmland is not that good or productive. He said it is hard to make money on it. He stated the rent on it is not high, so it would be hard to justify even what his partners and he paid for it to leave it farmland as an investment. He said if someone came along that wanted to purchase and preserve it, it does not have to be developed. He said they would love to sell to somebody who would make it a park or whatever, but with supply and demand, most likely someone is going to build housing on it. Mr. Roush said he feels that it is the highest and best use. It is going to be better being close to the water and around residential. He said there is so much room on the inside and there are so many people that want to live here. He said as a farmer, he would love to see it stay farmland, but they cannot afford to keep it all as farm either.

Mr. Tuttamore asked if they were going to parcel it off if the zoning was changed. Mr. Roush said there are two parcels for sale now. The original parcels as they were laid out there. There is a 33-acre parcel and a 25-acre parcel next to it. He said they have found that developers want to be able to have two entrance/exits and this would allow them to have that with both parcels, so they are offering them together if they want it that way. He said they are not going to break it up. They are going to sell to someone that wants to come in and do all the engineering, put the streets and sewers in, and put in housing. He said that project is beyond him and he does not want to look across the street and see a half-done project. He wants someone in there that knows what they are doing and will do it right. He said he cares about this community too. He said he plans to live here the rest of his life because he loves it here.

Tony Sedlak, 384 Englebeck, Marblehead, came forward and said he is south of the property being considered for rezoning and wanted to know how big the lots would be if somebody developed it. Ms. Dale said the current Agricultural zoning district would require one acre lots. If the property gets rezoned, which is ultimately decided by the Trustees, to the "R-1" zoning district, they are required to have 20,000 square foot lots, so just under a half-acre. If they wanted to do two-family lots, those would have to be 25,000 square foot lots. She said with the "A" zoning and 55 acres, you are looking at roughly 55 units. With the rezoning, you would be looking at around 110 units. In reality, you usually have to take about 20% off that number for infrastructure, streets, things like that. Realistically they would probably have around 88-90 units that would be able to fit on that property. It may even be less depending on soil types, grading, and that sort of thing.

Larry Shafer, 287 Springcrest, Marblehead, came forward and stated his only concern was traffic. He said right now on the weekends, they cannot get out of their development. Turning left is impossible and you have to turn right and go around the block. The traffic is non-stop all the time and where does it end? Will they have to put more lanes in on Rte. 163 or traffic lights? He said something was going to have to be done someday and that was all he wanted to say.

Lloyd Helmuth, 271 Springcrest, Marblehead, came forward and said in his backyard there is an open ditch with a tunnel going through it. He asked if the development came clear to that ditch or

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if they would extend the tile and if there was a map of what they were going to do. Ms. Dale said they do not have a map of what they are going to do because it is not a requirement of rezoning, but there is a strip of land that is owned by Mr. Sedlak that runs along there that would be preserved. She stated she did not know how wide the strip was and was not part of this request. Mr. Sedlak said it was sixteen feet. She said anytime there is a new subdivision that creates more than five lots, they have to go through an entire review process through the County Engineer and Regional Planning. They would probably be required to put in retention/detention ponds with additional drainage, swales, and things like that. Mr. Roush stated that one of the reasons they wanted to do this rezoning is to see it developed properly without a bunch of lots with septic tanks and wells. They want it done properly with proper engineering so there are no water issues. They want it with sewer and water they have been told they have enough infrastructure to do that.

The Chair asked if there were any further questions. There were none.

The Chair asked for a motion to close the public comment section of this hearing. Ms. Kopanski made the motion; Ms. Singer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried. The Chair stated the Commission will now deliberate the decision standards for a Map Amendment. Ms. Dress read the decision standards and asked for the Commission's thoughts and comments.

Mr. Huber said he believed decision criteria "b" fit this situation, which is "*The proposed amendment will make the map conform more closely with the Land Use Plan.*" Ms. Dress stated decision criteria "d" also fits which is "*There is a legitimate need for additional land area in the zoning district that will be expanded.*" She said there is a legitimate need for more affordable housing. Ms. Kopanski stated that b, c, and d could all be applicable to this with the changes in conditions and population.

The Chair asked if anyone from the Commission had anything further to add. There was none. The Chair asked if anyone would like to make a motion.

Ms. Kopanski made a motion to approve case ZC-2026-002, as presented herein, finding that decision criteria "b" and "d" of Section 7.7.3.E. ii. of the Danbury Zoning Resolution as being satisfied. Mr. Huber seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was as follows: Mr. Huber – Yes; Ms. Singer – Yes; Mr. Tuttamore– Yes; Ms. Kopanski - Yes; Ms. Dress – Yes; The motion passed 5-0. The Chair stated the Application has been recommended for **Approval** and Ms. Dale would be in touch with the applicant for the date of the final hearing before the Trustees.

Unfinished Business

There was none.

New Business

There was none.

Other Business

There was none.

Reports and Communications

Ms. Dale said that she had distributed two new pages to replace in the zoning codes they received last month. There were a couple of rezoning requests that were not completed at that time, and the map had been updated. They would need to replace their cover page and the map.

The other item is new language regarding road widths in certain types of development. The Fire Chief had requested that the Zoning Commission look into this. She said obviously they could not do anything about traditional subdivisions, since the County Engineer determines the roadway widths for public and private streets, but they can control the width of streets in condominiums, campgrounds, resorts, and cluster housing communities. The Fire Department is having a real problem, especially in the campgrounds and resorts. Campgrounds and resorts are Conditional Uses that go to the Board of Zoning Appeals. The language says twenty foot minimum. They need that width to get through, but what is happening is that people are parking along the side of the roadways, sticking out into them or parking trailers, boats, and jet skis there. It is more of a problem in the summer, obviously. The Chief asked if they could increase the street width. Ms. Dale said she was not looking for the Zoning Commission to initiate anything tonight, but wanted them to consider introducing it in March. She said the Township has never had a definition for 'right-of-way', so she was proposing a definition for that and expanding the definition of what a 'street' is. Ms. Dale asked them to read over the handout from the Zoning Resolution showing suggestions for new language regarding street requirements. The new language included saying the road width shall be a minimum of twenty feet wide, but if they want to provide on street parking or parallel parking, then the street would need to be thirty feet wide and then on the opposite side of the street that is not used for parking, there would have to be signage that says 'No parking' is allowed. If they want to allow parking on both sides of the street, then the width would have to be forty feet wide. If they are going to have angled or perpendicular parking it would have to meet the parking requirements, which is ten feet by twenty feet, so it would be a total of forty feet. Ms. Dale said she had shared this information with the Fire Chief and also Mark Messa from Regional Planning just to make sure it doesn't create any type of conflict with any control they might have, and Mr. Messa was okay with it. She said she also made a few tweaks to some other areas of the

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Zoning Resolution. One of those was regarding the storage regulations which were just changed and ratified. She said when they talked about minimum side yard setbacks, it was ten feet or the same as the underlying zoning district when adjoining another commercially zoned property or structure, *'whichever is greater'*. There are some that require a fifteen foot side yard setback, so she does not want any confusion and wants a point of clarification that it is *'whatever the greater'* number is. There have not been any problems with it yet. In industrial zoning districts they require a twenty foot side yard setback, so it is just a point of clarification.

Ms. Dale stated she had also highlighted some language to take out for fencing that was minor. She said the original language was put in because of Lakeside saying there could not be a gap at the bottom of more than four inches. She said it is not something she measures when she is doing inspections. The intent was to have it raised a little bit so you could still maintain the grass under it, but at the same time, the grade of the property sometimes impacts the resident who wants the fence to be uniform at the top. She said she was not concerned even if it ended up being six inches above grade. This does not affect just Lakeside; it is applicable to the whole Township. It was also to control that somebody did not put a fence up higher, but there is a maximum fence height in the code which caps the height, usually 5' and 7'. Fences only come in four-foot heights or six-foot heights, so the extra foot is to adjust the panel as they need to on the posts. Many people leave the posts a little bit higher and add hanging baskets or hang patio lights off of them. She said the bottom gap is not something she has been enforcing, but it is a regulation and she does not want somebody to come in and complain that there is too large of a bottom gap. She said she is more concerned about the height of a fence, not the gap on the bottom and is proposing to eliminate that gap language from the Zoning Resolution. Ms. Dress commented that it was a little *'micromanaging'* the way it is now.

Ms. Dale then pointed out language in the parking section that she would like to add that would be applicable primarily to new commercial development as opposed to a residential house. She gave the example of the new pickleball courts and said they had to come in to get a variance to eliminate a couple of their parking spots. The Fire Chief also met with them because you could not get all the way around the building, because they have a long lane that has angled parking along the side and by the back entrance. He wanted them to have a striped off *'No Parking Fire Lane'* in order to be able to access the back of the property in case somebody was to get hurt and they did not want to have to go through the whole building. They also wanted signs down the side and shortly after they opened, they still did not have their signs up and people were parking all along that lane. He stopped into the business and said they had to get their signs up because we cannot have people parking this way. The new proposed language would state that *"parking lots for non-residential use must be coordinated and approved by the Fire Chief prior to the release of a zoning permit"*. This way he gets what he needs for emergency access. The other area she is proposing a change is in the parking requirements for shared off-street/on-site parking lots such as the plaza where Puckett's Pups and the Shuffleboard Club are located. Puckett's Pup's is not normally open late at night when Erie Social is, and it would give them the availability to share parking. They would obviously have to have an agreement in place so there is no conflict. The zoning code will still require them to have a set number of required spots for each use, but there is no reason that they cannot share some of the space if somebody requires extra spaces. She said it is something that is in other zoning codes and she would like to have it added to the Township's. One more change to the parking sections would be the requirements for hotels, motels, and cottages. Instead of one parking spot *"per unit"*, she wanted to clarify *"per guest room"*. You could have more rooms than a unit and she wanted to make sure they have enough parking spaces, not too little. Ms. Singer asked if this would apply to Lakeside Rentals. Ms. Dale said Lakeside has their own set of parking requirements and it is based on being a residence in Lakeside, so it is a bit different. She said this is more geared towards commercial such as Little Ted's Cottages and that sort of thing. She felt it was another clarifying point to correct and did not want to be in a position to have a problem with it if it came up in the future. Ms. Kopanski said this could apply to the applications that arise with short-term rentals. Ms. Dale said they are not sure what is going to happen with the short-term rental legislation that was presented last year. She said it is probably language that is going to be reintroduced this year but did not see it going anywhere being that it was a midterm election year. It may be a big determining factor in 2027 though.

Ms. Dale said she would like to get these language changes on the agenda for the next meeting and initiate it if the Zoning Commission was agreeable, to get it started for the public hearing process. Ms. Singer stated these changes sound like a great idea when you are considering safety with parking issues and making sure emergency vehicles can get places. Ms. Kopanski agreed, citing the narrow streets in Camp Runinmuck and places like that, in the event of an emergency. Ms. Dale said it would not be retroactive, and those places would be grandfathered, but newer campgrounds or these other Conditional Uses would have to follow it. Ms. Dale gave an example of Keith Brown's campground that was recently approved and if they had these rules in place, they could have required him to have wider drives. She then added that he had gone a little wider after speaking to the Fire Chief, but that is not binding because it's not a written requirement.

Ms. Dale pointed out an additional change in the Recreational Camps section too. She said there has been some trouble with the current requirements because it states there must be an eight-foot perimeter boundary for each individual site. The Health District does not require that nor does the State of Ohio. The State of Ohio requires from bump out to bump out, side to side that there is at least fifteen feet separation. She said she would like to get away from the perimeter boundary because sometimes they decide they want to put all the campers to one side or the other of the individual camp site to give a place to park. She said she would prefer to just refer to the Health District's requirements and not be in conflict. The Health District is the one who goes out and ultimately issues the licenses. They do the regulating and have a lot more control over the campgrounds and she does not want the Township to be in conflict with what they are already doing. She said the language will basically replicate what they already have in place for that.

Ms. Dale requested the Zoning Commission Members read over the language changes and bring any suggestions to the next meeting and hopefully this could be initiated.

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Adjournment

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Tuttamore moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Singer seconded the motion. All Ayes. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Kathryn A Dale
RECORDING SECRETARY

Susan Dress
Susan Dress

Jodi Kopanski
Jodi Kopanski

Barbara Singer
Barbara Singer

William Tuttamore
William Tuttamore

Cynthia Mahl
ZONING COMMISSION

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