

**Minutes of the regular meeting of the Georgetown Township Planning Commission, held Wednesday, January 7, 2026.**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Josiah Samy at 9:15 p.m.

Present: Josiah Samy (Chairman Samy), Jeannine Bolhouse, Tom Healy, Geoff Brown, Goris Passchier, Gary Veldink

Absent: Jessica Ulberg

Also present: Ryan Schab, Zoning Administrator (ZA)

**#PC260107-01 – Agenda for the [January 7, 2026](#) Planning Commission Meeting**

Moved by Jeannine Bolhouse, seconded by Gary Veldink to approve the agenda of the [January 7, 2026](#) meeting as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**#PC260107-02 – Minutes of the [December 17, 2025](#) Planning Commission Meeting**

Moved by Jeannine Bolhouse, seconded by Gary Veldink, to approve the minutes of the [December 17, 2025](#) meeting as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**#PC260107-03 – Master Plan Review with Tanya DeOliveira – Williams & Works ([Goals and Objectives Worksheet](#))**

Tanya DeOliveira started the meeting introducing the goals and objectives worksheet. She stated the worksheet is a very important part of the process, and since the evening had largely been taken up by the joint meeting with the Township Board, she suggested she was here to take direction from the Commission about how they want to proceed rather than go over the worksheet in depth.

Chairman Samy stated he would like to revisit the worksheet another time to allow for more discussion.

Geoff Brown stated he loved the worksheet, but agreed returning to it at the next meeting would be a good idea.

Gary Veldink asked if the Master Plan was for residents who currently live in Georgetown or is it for people who the township wants to attract to Georgetown.

Chairman Samy stated it was essentially both. He stated it's a plan for those who will be living here in five to twenty years. He stated if a resident will be living here in five to twenty years, then yes, it's for current residents. But it's also for the residents that will be moving here over the next five to twenty years.

Gary Veldink argued that the Master Plan is redone every five years [implying it does not need to look twenty years into the future].

Chairman Samy equated the Master Plan to taking a road trip; every Master Plan is generally headed in the same direction, but along the way there may be a detour or a pit stop.

Geoff Brown stated the Master Plan has to encompass the people who live here now, and it also puts up guardrails for future development and forward vision.

Tanya DeOliveira asked Gary Veldink what he felt the answer to his own question was; who did he feel the Master Plan is written for.

Gary Veldink stated he felt the Master Plan was for those who live in the township currently. He stated he cannot predict who will want to move here. He stated the reason people move to Georgetown is because they moved away from the density of Grandville, Wyoming, or Grand Rapids. He stated he understood people want density, but the Master Plan should reflect the township as it is currently. He felt 50,000 people must be happy with how things are since they didn't respond to the survey.

Jeannine Bolhouse stated the Master Plan is for the residents of the township, yes, but the residents change. She stated people leave the township too. She stated the residents will be different in the future.

Gary Veldink stated he understands that to a point. He stated in regard to high-density, people in Georgetown don't want high density. If they do, there are other municipalities that have that.

Jeannine Bolhouse thinks it's far more complicated than a blanket statement that everyone here does not want high-density. She stated a big draw to living in Georgetown are the school districts and people want high-density residential so they can get their kids into good schools.

Gary Veldink stated 25% of the students at Jenison Public Schools are born out of the district.

Jeannine Bolhouse stated that isn't a totally fair number since a lot of those kids live in Hudsonville Public School District [also in Georgetown] and they send their kids to Jenison Public Schools.

Geoff Brown stated it's a vision for the future, so it is for the future residents, the people who will live here ten years from now.

Tom Healy stated he felt Georgetown was almost maxed out and it is nearly at a point where everything is developed, so at this point high-density would be the only alternative if residential growth is the goal.

Tanya DeOliveira stated in Blendon Township just across from the ice arena [Bauer Road and 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue] there is a potential subdivision there for 350 new homes and there are many parcels in Georgetown in that area that have the same capacity. She stated one way or another developers will be coming to Georgetown Township.

Tom Healy stated he was hoping to get a more concrete answer from the Board about the northwest quadrant during the joint meeting, but they did not give one.

Jeannine Bolhouse stated it would have been nice to know if the Board wanted any development in that area, even if they were large lots and million-dollar homes.

Geoff Brown stated when it comes to larger parcels of land, renewable energy farms or Grand Valley will buy the land if the township does not plan for it accordingly.

Goris Passchier stated there is a tension between low- and high-density housing. He stated that high density housing still comes with an increase in traffic and asked if Georgetown could handle that increase.

Jeannine Bolhouse stated if the goal is to have affordable housing, the only way that can be accomplished is with high-density housing. If high-density is not the goal, then affordable housing would not be either.

Goris Passchier asked if high-density was even affordable if homes are selling for \$400,000?

Chairman Samy stated the challenge of high-density is how many houses per acre are squished together. He stated with the Eastbrook Homes development, they are currently approved to put in more homes than they would have had with their proposed revisions to their plan, and additionally, they would have been densely constructed anyway as it would have been condos. He explained how Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) allow for more flexibility in what is allowed. He used the Eastbrook Homes development as an example where they wanted to have fewer houses, but they were closer together, and in exchange they provided a dog park, community center, and pool. He stated the Planning Commission looked at what had been approved already and made a call about what had been offered in the revision. PUDs allow for tradeoffs. He stated when it comes to commercial properties, one major challenge is Georgetown's parking ordinance, and another is being able to make a profit on a property. In order to maximize profits, density can play a huge role by building wider or taller. He stated restaurants considering coming to Georgetown have to give up restaurant space due to ordinance requirements for parking.

Tom Healy stated when it comes to high-density housing no one on the Planning Commission is talking about something like Brookmeadow Apartments; they're talking about a mixed-use property.

Chairman Samy agreed, and said that's what the vision is. He stated the Planning Commission needs to look at pocket areas for possible mixed-use developments where they would be comfortable allowing it, and other areas where they restrict mixed-use. They need a strategic plan for mixed-use.

Tom Healy asked if it was appropriate or beneficial to say the township is inclined to look at certain pockets of mixed-use with residential and commercial, and less inclined to look at it in other places.

Tanya DeOliveira stated one thing the commissioners can realize in a Master Plan is the need for more planning and sub-area planning. They can develop a sub-area plan where they can get more detailed about particular areas. She used the northwest quadrant as an example, saying the commissioners could outline in their Master Plan that they want to keep part of that area farming and allow part of it to be residential, acknowledging that individuals have the right to sell their land and have a right to build on it, and the township knows growth is going to happen one way or another.

Tom Healy stated he wanted to focus on low-density housing and sub-area groups for mixed-used, and to remove the conversation from high-density housing because none of the commissioners really see that in the vision for Georgetown.

Jeannine Bolhouse stated she was in favor of that idea. She stated her first thoughts for mixed-use developments were the old K-Mart property, the Jenison commercial core, and the northeast corner of Baldwin Street and 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She would want to designate those areas as places for sub-planning. She hopes by doing sub-planning goals, it will attract more interested business owners.

Geoff Brown stated because they don't have a sub-plan for Chicago Drive, the only thing that gets built there are pole buildings. He felt if they change restrictions over there to be more business-oriented, it would bring more businesses to that area and it would draw more traffic to Chicago Drive.

Tanya DeOliveira stated the vision for the commercial area will better help property owners and business owners know that their businesses will fit in Georgetown. The clearer the goals are for a sub-area plan, the better business owners can know if they will do well in the township.

Tom Healy stated the Board did not give an opinion about mixed-use developments at the joint meeting either.

Chairman Samy stated the Board had given an opinion on the Eastbrook Homes development, and their concern was the alleyways and the safety of getting fire trucks down the alleyways. He asked Superintendent Justin Stadt if there was anything else.

Justin Stadt stated sidewalks and parking availability were also among the Board's concern. He stated the development could have signs up all they want, but people will still park as close to their destination as possible.

Chairman Samy asked if mixed-use has been discussed by the Board at all.

Gary Veldink stated for him he was also struggling with the detached garage since that is part of the ordinance. Everyone else who built a house in that development had to have an attached garage.

Tom Healy asked why attached garages are a requirement.

Gary Veldink stated he did not know.

Tanya DeOliveira stated every municipality required it decades ago.

Gary Veldink stated he felt they required it because when Georgetown started expanding, residents were moving from Wyoming and Grandville where there are detached garages for their homes. Georgetown always had attached garages. He feels it is a step up [in living quality].

Chairman Samy asked how having a garage in front of the house, which may look hideous, is a higher quality of life.

Gary Veldink stated he did not write the ordinance.

Jeannine Bolhouse asked why can't people build a detached garage behind their house if they want one. Giving people more flexibility may be a good idea. She stated maybe fifty or sixty years ago the "step up" was to have an attached garage. She argues that has changed. Having an attached garage is no longer the focal point of a property.

Gary Veldink gave an example of a home he built thirty years ago. He had to special order the brightest yellow siding for that house. He said the neighbor across the street commented to him that it was awfully bright and he would rather live in that house than have to look at it. He stated the neighbor across the street had an attached garage because an ordinance stated he had to have one.

Geoff Brown stated housing aesthetics change all the time. Georgetown used to allow you to have a two-car attached garage and another two-car garage behind the home, but that is no longer allowed [unless you count the detached garage as your one accessory structure].

Gary Veldink stated the ordinance hasn't changed, and that was his point.

Jeannine Bolhouse stated that they need to discuss whether or not to recommend a change though.

Geoff Brown stated the Eastbrook Homes development proposal was a perfect opportunity to have over 40 less units in that development.

Tom Healy stated he understood the Board's concern with emergency response though.

Geoff Brown stated he understood that too, but as Tom Healy had pointed out during the joint meeting, the fire department approved the plan. He stated yes, the alleyways seemed narrow, but the Planning Commission and the Board are not the authorities on that.

Jeannine Bolhouse said she did not disagree with the argument about parking, but also felt that people have to deal with that issue now anyway. If someone is parked in front of a person's house and they cannot get to their garage, they have to tell them to move.

Geoff Brown stated the Eastbrook Homes property in Byron Center has the exact same model of housing and alleyways, and the HOA gives parking violators fines and people learn not to park where they should not be parking. The HOA controls that aspect of the development.

Chairman Samy stated he thinks there is a consensus that sub-area planning is something they would like to accomplish. He stated there was also a consensus that high-density throughout the township was not a goal, and instead wanted to localize it to pockets. He asked if the pocket planning or sub-area planning is something Williams and Works can provide the township on their current planning contract.

Tanya DeOliveira stated they could add that on if the township wanted.

Jeannine Bolhouse stated they could also simply state in the Master Plan areas that would be great for higher density/mixed-use, without necessarily going in depth about it. She stated they did that with PUDs in the past.

Tanya DeOliveira stated yes, they could identify areas that would be good candidates for sub-area planning and simply say in the implementation chapter, "We want to do sub-area planning here."

Tom Healy stated one thing he heard Supervisor Jim Wierenga say at the joint meeting was one way to control traffic issues and congestion is to stop building, essentially.

Tanya DeOliveira gave an example of Olive Township, being very rural and agriculturally oriented, wanting to curb growth due to concerns about ground water in their area. She stated that move could be perceived as going against property rights, but they are saying they don't want to grow haphazardly or too fast to conserve groundwater and resources. She stated the idea of containing growth is not new. She stated one way to limit growth is by growing up instead of out, but that's where density comes to play. Residential growth with single-family large lots sprawling out, however, will cause the township to run out of money to maintain its public utilities. There's no getting around that cause and effect. That's why mixing in commercial or light industrial business uses is important for the township's tax base.

Tom Healy asked if one of their goals is to limit massive single-family home growth, could they change the ordinance to require larger lot sizes, for example five acres instead of one.

Gary Veldink suggested requiring public water and sewer to build a home, and since those utilities are not available in the northwest quadrant, it would prevent building in that quadrant. He further suggested if the parcel was ten acres or larger, a house could be built using well and septic. He stated this would eliminate the problem of a gas station going in on the corner of 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Fillmore Street. Utilities are one thing that can inhibit growth. He stated a conversation the township will have to have with developers who are looking to build in rural areas is how are they going to upgrade lift stations and sewer lines to accommodate new developments.

Tom Healy stated they could essentially leave the northwest quadrant Agricultural and Rural Residential zoning and then mandate if a developer wants to rezone to LDR, they have to install utilities.

Tanya DeOliveira stated the township could allow for developers to put in private utilities if they want to build.

Gary Veldink stated that is very expensive.

Tanya DeOliveira stated if a developer wants it bad enough, they may pay for it, though she said yes, it's rare.

Chairman Samy stated he believes the ordinance currently does allow for a developer to bring utilities to a property so they can build there. If they bring it, they can build it.

Jeannine Bolhouse asked if allowing a developer to install utilities would be enough to offset the strain on the utility system.

Gary Veldink stated for the new Cedar Valley development, the Public Works Department added flow meters to help determine how many more units can be supported by the infrastructure that is currently there.

**#PC260107-04 – Communications, Letters, and Reports**

**#PC260107-05 – Public Comments**

Members of the public were present. No public comments were made.

**#PC260107-06 – Other Business**

The ZA discussed upcoming meetings and when the next Master Plan meeting would be.

**#PC260107-07 – Adjournment**

Moved by Chairman Samy, seconded by Gary Veldink to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.