

MEETING MINUTES
GRAND HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
JANUARY 27, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Grand Haven Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Slater.

II. ROLL CALL

Board of Appeals members present: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, and Slater

Board of Appeals members absent: Bray

Also present: Senior Planner Chaphalkar and Community Development Director Sherwood

Without objection, Chaphalkar was instructed to record the minutes for the meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Without objection, the minutes from December 9, 2025, ZBA Meeting were approved.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – NONE

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. ZBA Variance Application No. 26- 01 – Bunek Dimensional Variance

Applicant:	Zach VandenBerg – Peterson and VandenBerg Environmental
Property Owner	Julius & Sahiba Bunek
Address:	18209 Shore Acres Dr
Parcel Number:	70-03-32-335-007
Lot Size:	.27 acres
Zoning:	R-1 – Single Family Residential

The applicant is seeking dimensional variances as described below:

1. A dimensional variance from Section 10.01.C.4. to construct a ~268 sqft deck addition with a setback of one-foot from the southern side lot line.
2. Dimensional variances from Sections 14.13.C and 14.13.C.3.to construct a retaining wall with a maximum height of 10.5’ and zero-foot setback from the southern side lot line.

Chaphalkar provided an overview through a memorandum dated January 22nd.

The applicant, Zach Vandenberg of Peterson and Vandenberg Environmental, was present to provide the following information for requests #26-01 and #26-02:

- Described existing conditions of the subject property.
- Explained expected benefit from the retaining wall to both the Bunek property and the Turek property.
 - The retaining wall would provide a wider drive aisle and parking area for the Bunek home
 - The retaining wall would help stabilize the dune, which would benefit the Turek property.
- The deck extension, exempt from EGLE regulation due to the construction method, is proposed to provide access to an existing door.
- Described excavation process and revegetation required per the EGLE permit.

Board Members had the following points of discussion:

- Asked staff about precedence of approval for one-foot setbacks for decks.
 - Chaphalkar noted it was not a common request, but the proposed addition was intended to serve as a walkway, rather than a gathering space due to the narrow width.
- Inquired regarding required handrails for retaining walls.
 - Chaphalkar referred to Michigan Building Code to determine those requirements.
- Questioned the need for the height of the proposed 14-foot tall retaining wall.

Bunek Dimensional Variance #1 – Deck Addition

Standard No. 1 – Exceptional or extraordinary circumstances:

- The property is entirely encumbered by the Critical Dune Area and High Risk Erosion Area, both which are regulated by EGLE. The property is legally non-conforming in both lot area and lot width.
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Standard No. 2 – Substantial property right:

- It is common for houses near Lake Michigan to have decks facing the water. The deck extension on the south side is to access an existing door, which does not currently have a safe point of egress.
- The elevation of the deck is significantly lower than the elevation of the house on the south property, which appears to lessen potential impact.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Standard No. 3 – Will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent parcels, or material impact on the intent and purpose of the Ordinance:

- No correspondence was received regarding the application.
- The addition of the deck connecting to the home appears to reduce potential risk in that area.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Standard No. 4 – Request is not of such a recurrent nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation:

- The narrow lot width and existing conditions of the site make this request unique to the property
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Motion by Dumbrell, seconded by Egedy-Bader, to **approve** dimensional variance from Section 10.01.C.4. to construct a ~268 sqft deck addition with a setback of one-foot from the southern side lot line for the property at 18209 Shore Acres Drive.

Which motion carried unanimously, as indicated by the following vote:

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Bunek Dimensional Variance #2 – Retaining Wall

Standard No. 1 – Exceptional or extraordinary circumstances:

- The property is entirely encumbered by the Critical Dune Area and High Risk Erosion Area, both which are regulated by EGLE. The property is legally non-conforming in both lot area and lot width. There is an approximate 20' difference in elevation in this portion of the property.
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Standard No. 2 – Substantial property right:

- The intent of the retaining wall is two-fold. First, to provide better access to the home with conveniently located parking. Second, the retaining wall would aid in preserving the existing dune, which is susceptible to erosion. It is common that properties in the Critical Dune Area utilize retaining walls to stabilize dunes under EGLE's direction.
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Standard No. 3 – Will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent parcels, or material impact on the intent and purpose of the Ordinance:

- No correspondence was received regarding the application.
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Standard No. 4 – Request is not of such a recurrent nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation:

- The narrow lot width of the property combined with the topography of the parcel results in a request which is unique to this parcel.
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Motion by Egedy-Bader, seconded by Dumbrell, to **approve** a dimensional variance from Sections 14.13.C and 14.13.C.3 to construct a retaining wall with a maximum height of 10.5' and a zero-foot setback from the southern side lot line for the property at 18209 Shore Acres Drive.

Which motion carried unanimously, as indicated by the following vote:

Ayes: Dumbrell, Slater, Hesselsweet, Voss

Nays: None

Absent: Egedy-Bader

B. ZBA Variance Application No. 26- 02 – Turek Dimensional Variance

Applicant:	Zach Vandenberg – Peterson and Vandenberg Environmental
Property Owner	Glenn & Susan Turek
Address:	18205 Shore Acres Dr
Parcel Number:	70-03-32-335-008
Lot Size:	.37 acres
Zoning:	R-1 – Single Family Residential

Chaphalkar provided an overview through a memorandum dated January 22nd.

The applicant, Zach Vandenberg, was present to address any questions.

Because of the nature of the request, the discussion points for request #26-01 also encompass those related to #26-02. The proposed retaining wall crosses the property line between the two subject properties, resulting in the requested zero foot setback.

Turek Dimensional Variance – Retaining Wall

Standard No. 1 – Exceptional or extraordinary circumstances:

- The property is entirely encumbered by the Critical Dune Area and High Risk Erosion Area, both which are regulated by EGLE. The property is legally non-conforming in lot width. There is an approximate 20' difference in elevation in this portion of the property.
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Standard No. 2 – Substantial property right:

- The retaining wall would aid in preserving the existing dune, which is susceptible to erosion. It is common that properties in the Critical Dune Area utilize retaining walls to stabilize dunes under EGLE’s direction
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Standard No. 3 – Will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent parcels, or material impact on the intent and purpose of the Ordinance:

- No correspondence was received regarding the application.
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Standard No. 4 – Request is not of such a recurrent nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation:

- The narrow lot width of the property combined with the topography of the parcel results in a request which is unique to this parcel.
- The board had no additional discussion regarding this standard.

Ayes: Czarnik, Dumbrell, Egedy-Bader, Hesselsweet, Slater

Nays: None

Absent: Bray

Motion by Egedy-Bader, seconded by Hesselsweet, to **approve** a dimensional variance from Sections 14.13.C and 14.13.C.3. to construct a retaining wall with a maximum height of 14-feet and a zero-foot setback from the northern side lot line for the property at 18205 Shore Acres Drive.

Which motion carried unanimously.

C. Housekeeping – Appointment of Secretary

Motion by Dumbrell, seconded by Egedy-Bader to **nominate and appoint** Czarnik to the position of Secretary.

Which motion carried unanimously.

VI. REPORTS –

Chaphalkar provided an update on expected ZBA applications.

VII. EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Chaphalkar', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cassandra Chaphalkar

Acting Recording Secretary