

MINUTES

DRAFT

**THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
THOMAS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
8215 SHIELDS DRIVE, SAGINAW, MICHIGAN
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2026, 7:00 P.M.**

Members Present: R. Iamurri, S. Garvie, D. Bird, and P. Lynch
Absent: S. Yockey, J. Curry
Others Present: D. Sika, Community Development Director
A. Bicigo, Code Enforcement Officer/Planning Assistant
5 Interested Parties

Iamurri called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Lynch, supported by Bird to approve the agenda as presented.

VOTE 4 YEAS 0 NAYS 2 ABSENT MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Garvie, supported by Lynch to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2026 meeting.

VOTE 4 YEAS 0 NAYS 2 ABSENT MOTION CARRIED

New Business:

A. Site Plan Review – Paws and Beyond

Sharon Maher of 7916 Gratiot Rd, owner of Paws & Beyond, presented their request for approval of an already-constructed fenced area. The fenced area is currently used for their outdoor “Doggy Day Camp,” in which several dogs are taken outdoors off-leash in the fenced area while supervised. Maher stated that, per their original approval, all dogs were to be taken out one-on-one on a leash. Lynch commented that extensive soundproofing was installed when the business originally moved in, and that allowing groups of dogs outdoors seems to defeat the purpose of the soundproofing. Maher stated that the dogs are being taken outside in groups to learn to play and interact with other dogs while off-leash. She also stated that there will be barking, as she “has never met a dog that doesn’t bark.”

Iamurri presented the attached letter from Lydia Nelson of 7901 Abbe Ct.

Renee Kretz of 145 Pringle Dr stated concerns regarding barking dogs, not just during the daytime when dogs are outdoors, but also during the overnight hours. She also stated that dogs have gotten loose and run

through her and her neighbor's yards. Maher stated that dogs are walked and trained outside of the new containment area.

Wendy Buse of 115 Pringle Dr also spoke with concerns about dogs being kept outside and barking. She stated that she has contacted the business directly about the issue but has been reluctant to call the police because she does not want to escalate the situation.

Iamurri stated that barking dog complaints should be addressed to the Thomas Township Police Department. Sika stated that the Planning Commission originally approved the site plan with several conditions to protect the neighborhood from any negative effects from barking dogs. He stated that the Code Enforcement Officer received a complaint regarding barking dogs and dogs being kept outdoors and sent a violation letter due to the site plan violations, which triggered the amended site plan review.

Robert Mitchell of 191 Stroik Dr stated that he has not heard barking dogs from Paws & Beyond.

Jim Maher of 7916 Gratiot Rd stated that no dogs have gotten loose from their facility. He also stated that the neighbors have dogs that bark and that they are doing everything in their power to prevent dogs from barking, but dogs are going to bark. If any dogs bark while outside, they are brought inside.

Sharon Maher stated that they do help look for lost dogs when they are able, if a lost dog is reported in the area. They also work with Saginaw County Animal Care and Control to help locate the owners of lost dogs.

Garvie asked if the noise has increased since the containment area was added, or if there had been a barking issue since it was originally approved. Kretz and Buse agreed that it has increased this summer.

Lynch clarified that the request is to allow dogs outdoors in the containment area without leashes.

Bird stated that when the original site plan was approved in 2023, one of the major concerns was noise, and that the issue of noise needs to be taken into account. He also asked about the business's hours of operation and the ratio of staff to dogs. S. Maher stated that staff arrives at 7:00 a.m., at which point dogs that are boarded overnight are taken out to relieve themselves. She also stated that she currently has six employees and an average of 20 to 30 dogs per day.

Motion by Lynch, supported by Bird to deny the site plan as presented.

VOTE	2 YEAS	2 NAYS	2 ABSENT	MOTION FAILED
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Sika explained that if no motion to approve the site plan is made or passed, the proposed site plan will be denied by default. Bird asked if the site plan could be revisited at a later date. Sika explained that it cannot be left open-ended. However, the applicants can re-appear to present an amended site plan if they so choose.

B. Discussion on Donation Bin Ordinance

Sika explained that the township received a request from a company to place a clothing donation bin within the township. Upon review, the township attorney advised that an ordinance should be adopted to regulate donation bins, as there currently is no ordinance in place. Sika presented a draft ordinance to the Planning Commission for review. Sika stated that, because no ordinance is in place, a donation bin could be placed anywhere within the Township with no recourse. He also explained that it is the attorney's opinion that an

ordinance should be adopted to prevent this issue. Sika stated that the draft ordinance requires site plan review with the Planning Commission to grant a permit to install donation bins. Discussion took place regarding the regulations in the draft ordinance.

Adjournment:

Motion by Lynch, supported by Bird to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

VOTE

4 YEAS

0 NAYS

2 ABSENT

MOTION CARRIED

Paws and beyond

Lydia Nelson <lydianelson987@gmail.com>
To: <145kretz@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 18 at 1:05 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Lydia Nelson, and I live at 7901 Abbe Ct, Saginaw, MI 48609. I am writing to share my concerns regarding the excessive barking coming from the nearby dog daycare.

We hear barking at all times of the day, including at night, with what seems to be the most significant amount occurring during pick-up and drop-off times. The barking is loud enough that it frequently causes our two dogs to start barking as well.

I am my grandfather's full time caregiver, and he has dementia. The constant barking is upsetting and confusing for him, which has made the situation especially difficult for our household.

I have also spoken with other neighbors who have expressed similar concerns about the excessive barking. I hope the board will take these concerns into consideration when reviewing the possible expansion.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

- The Nelson's