



Gratiot County
Department of Community Development
214 E Center St., Ithaca, MI 48847
Phone (989) 875-5201

TO: Gratiot County Board of Commissioners
FROM: Gratiot County Planning Commissioners
SUBJECT: Recommendation – Proposed Gratiot County Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment
DATE: April 29th, 2026

Attached please find the recommendation from the Planning Commissioners regarding the proposed text amendment to the Gratiot County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 5 Rural Preservation District Section 5.3 Special Land Uses. Included is the Zoning Administrator's report, Planning Commissions proposed meeting minutes from April 29th, 2026, and a draft of the proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance. The notice to the public were provided April 9th, 2026 and April 16th, 2026, Gratiot County Clerk, April 2nd, 2026 and Townships under Gratiot County Zoning April 2nd, 2026.

The proposed text amendment is to add an existing use permitted by Special Land Use Permit, "jj. Theaters, or other similar places of public assembly", to Chapter 5, the Rural Preservation District. Currently, the proposed use is only allowed in the B-2 Highway Business District. The proposed use is highly limited in Gratiot County Zoned Townships as there are only two areas in one township currently Zoned as B-2. The requirements of Chapter 16 relating to the proposed use will remain unchanged.

Recommended Action:

Approve the proposed Gratiot County Zoning Ordinance text amendment to include "M. Theaters, and other places of public assembly" in Chapter 5 Rural Preservation District Section 5.3 Special Land Uses as "M".



Planning Commission
Gratiot County Department of Community Development
214 E Center St., Ithaca, MI 48847
Phone (989) 875-5201

April, 29th, 2026

Gratiot County Board of Commissioners
Attn: Chair, Dave Owens

Re: Gratiot County Planning Commission Recommendation of Proposed Text Amendment

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to inform the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners of the Gratiot County Planning Commission's recommendation regarding the Proposed Gratiot County Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Application to add "M. Theaters, or similar places of public assembly" as a Use Permitted by Special Land Use in Chapter 5. Rural Preservation District Section 5.3 Special Land Uses. The language is currently existing in Chapter 11. B-2 District and in Chapter 16 Special Land Uses Section 16.7 JJ "Theaters, or similar places of public assembly".

The proposed amendment was submitted to the Gratiot County Planning Commission by property owner Joshua L. Shaffer. On April 29th, 2026, a public hearing was held, and the request was reviewed by the Gratiot County Planning Commission. It is so recommended by the **Gratiot County Planning Commission** that the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners **Approve** the proposed text amendment.

Attached is a copy of the tentative minutes from the Planning Commission meeting on **April 29th, 2026**, the application for a proposed text amendment, and the Zoning Administrator's report. If you have any questions please contact Diandra Messer at dmesser@gratiotmi.com or (989) 875-5201.

Thank you,

David Justin
Chairman - Pro Tern
Planning Commission

Diandra Messer
Deputy Permits Officer
Gratiot County Department of Community Development



Gratiot County Planning Commission
 Department of Community Development
 214 E Center St., Ithaca, MI 48847
 permits@gratiotmi.com / (989) 875-5201

Office Use Only:
 Date Received

Special Land Use/Rezoning Application

Elba, Hamilton, Lafayette, Newark, North Star and Sumner Townships

Submit this completed application to the Gratiot County Community Development Office. A public hearing will be scheduled at which time the application and detailed site plan will be reviewed. All property owners within 300 feet of the property lines of the parcel in question will be notified. Application Fee (Non-refundable): \$450.00

1. Property Owner Information

NAME: Joshua L + Melissa A Shaffer Trust MAILING ADDRESS: 6193 Lincoln Rd.
 CITY/VILLAGE: Elwell STATE: MI ZIP CODE: 48832
 EMAIL ADDRESS: Shafferconstruction PHONE #: 989-620-5482
@yahoo.com

2. Parcel Information

ADDRESS: 5689 N. Rich Rd. CITY/VILLAGE: Alma
 STATE: MI ZIP CODE: 48801 PARCEL #: 14-001-005-30
 ZONING DISTRICT: Rural Preservation CURRENT USE: Residence / Ag
 TOWNSHIP: ELBA HAMILTON LAFAYETTE NEWARK NORTH STAR SUMNER

3. Zoning Information

Rezoning Text or Map Amendment: *Check all that apply below*

Proposed Amendment	Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text Amendment	Original Language: _____ Proposed Language: <u>M. Theaters, or similar places of public assembly</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Map Amendment	Current Zoning District: _____ Proposed Zoning District: _____
Land Description	***Include copy of most recent tax bill or copy of deed.
Reason for Request	_____
Site Plan	***Include copy of site plan with property lines, existing structures, water features (drains, lakes, ponds, creeks, etc.), labeled roads and nearest cross roads.

Special Land Use Permit:

Proposed SLUP	_____
Land Description	***Include copy of most recent tax bill or copy of deed.
Statement	***Include a written statement describing how the special and use being requested meets the specific standards for the use. Standards for all SLUs can be found in the Gratiot County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 16 Special Land Uses.
Site Plan	***Include (12) physical copies or (1) digital copy of site plan meeting the requirements of Zoning Ordinance Section 14.4.

3. Adjacent Property Owners

Include all names and addresses of property owners with real property within 300' (adjacent) of the proposed parcel affected by the request: Twz. Supervisors + Clerks of Gratiot County Zoning

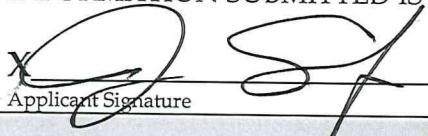
4. Applicant Information

NAME: <u>Joshua & Melissa Shaffer</u>		MAILING ADDRESS: <u>6193 Liguola Rd.</u>	
CITY/VILLAGE: <u>Elwell</u>	STATE: <u>MI</u>	ZIP CODE: <u>48632</u>	
EMAIL ADDRESS: <u>shafferconstruction@yahoo.com</u>		PHONE #: <u>989-620-5482</u>	

I hereby grant permission for members of the *Gratiot County Planning Commission* to enter the above-described property (or as described in the attached) for the purpose of gathering information related to this application.

Note to Applicant: This is optional and will not affect the decision on your application.

APPLICANT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PAYMENT OF ALL FEES APPLICABLE TO THIS APPLICATION. APPLICANT HEREBY CERTIFIES THAT THE PROPOSED WORK IS AUTHORIZED BY THE OWNER OF RECORD AND AGREES TO CONFORM TO THE GRATIOT COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE. ALL INFORMATION SUBMITTED IS ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF APPLICANTS KNOWLEDGE.

 3-10-26
Applicant Signature Date

DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

APPLICATION - APPROVED DENIED

DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: 4/29/26

Zoning Administrator Signature Date



GRATIOT COUNTY

214 E CENTER STREET

ITHACA, MI 48847

Ph: (989) 875-5201

Fax: (989) 875-5260

PERMITS@GRATIOTMI.COM

WWW.GRATIOTMI.COM

Pay by Account In Full




TOTAL AMOUNT DUE

\$ 450.00

SHAFFER JOSHUA L & MELISSA A

6193 W LINCOLN RD

ELWELL, MI 48832

Pay by Invoice Code	Type	Record No.	Invoice No.	Address	Amount Due
	---		00011225		\$ 450.00
			Fee Detail: 450.00	PLANNING FEES	
Total Amount Due					\$ 450.00

CHAPTER 5
RP – RURAL PRESERVATION DISTRICT

SECTION 5.1 PURPOSE

This District is intended to preserve areas in the County that would generally be characterized as primarily rural, and exhibit unique, fragile, or significant nature features. The District is to be applied to lands that are subject to periodic flooding, are adjacent to sources of water supply, contain unstable soils, or contain significant animal habitats or environmental features unique to the County. The regulations are designed to provide a degree of protection for sensitive natural features and open spaces. A variety of uses are permitted in this District, however, the intensity of development is limited in order to protect the natural character and abundant resources that are found within it.

SECTION 5.2 USES PERMITTED BY RIGHT

Land and/or buildings in this District may be used for the following purposes By Right:

- A. Detached single family dwellings.
- B. Family day care homes.
- C. Accessory buildings and uses, as outlined in Sections 2.11 and 2.12.
- D. Home occupations.

SECTION 5.3 SPECIAL LAND USES

The following uses may be permitted by obtaining Special Land Use Approval when all applicable standards as cited in Chapter 16 are met.

- A. Country clubs and golf courses.
- B. Riding stables.
- C. Public or private campgrounds.
- D. Private recreation areas, including gun clubs.
- E. Removal and processing of topsoil, stone, rock, sand, gravel, lime, or other soil or mineral resources.
- F. Group day care homes or facilities.
- G. Public or private schools.

- H. Bed and breakfast establishments.
- I. Cemeteries.
- J. Planned Unit Developments.
- K. Public utility buildings, without storage yards.
- L. Forest management operations; and, Harvesting of wild crops such as marsh hay, ferns, moss, berries, tree fruits, and tree seeds.
- M. Theaters, or similar places of public assembly

SECTION 5.4 DISTRICT REGULATIONS

The following dimensional requirements shall be met for any use in this District, unless otherwise provided.

- A. **Lot Area:** The minimum lot size in this District shall be two (2) acres.
- B. **Lot Width:** The minimum lot width in this District shall be two hundred (200) feet.
- C. **Front Yard:** The minimum front yard setback in this District shall be one hundred (100) feet.
- D. **Rear Yard:** The minimum rear yard setback in this District shall be fifty (50) feet.
- E. **Side Yard:** The minimum side yard setback in this District shall be twenty-five (25) feet.
- F. **Building Height:** No principal building in this District shall exceed a height of thirty-five (35) feet, or two and one-half (2 ½) stories, whichever is less.
- G. **Lot Coverage:** The total area of all buildings on the parcel shall not exceed a maximum of twenty (20) percent of the parcel size.
- H. **Floor Area:** The minimum total floor area for any dwelling constructed in this District shall be nine hundred sixty (960) square feet on the ground floor, unless otherwise specifically provided.

SECTION 5.5 OTHER PROVISIONS

All uses permitted by Right or Special Approval shall comply with all applicable provisions of this Zoning Ordinance, including but not limited to those listed below as a reference guide.

- Chapter 1 Definitions
- Chapter 2 General Provisions
- Chapter 14 Site Plan Review
- Chapter 15 Parking and Signs

adjacent residential uses, as outlined in Section 2.29.

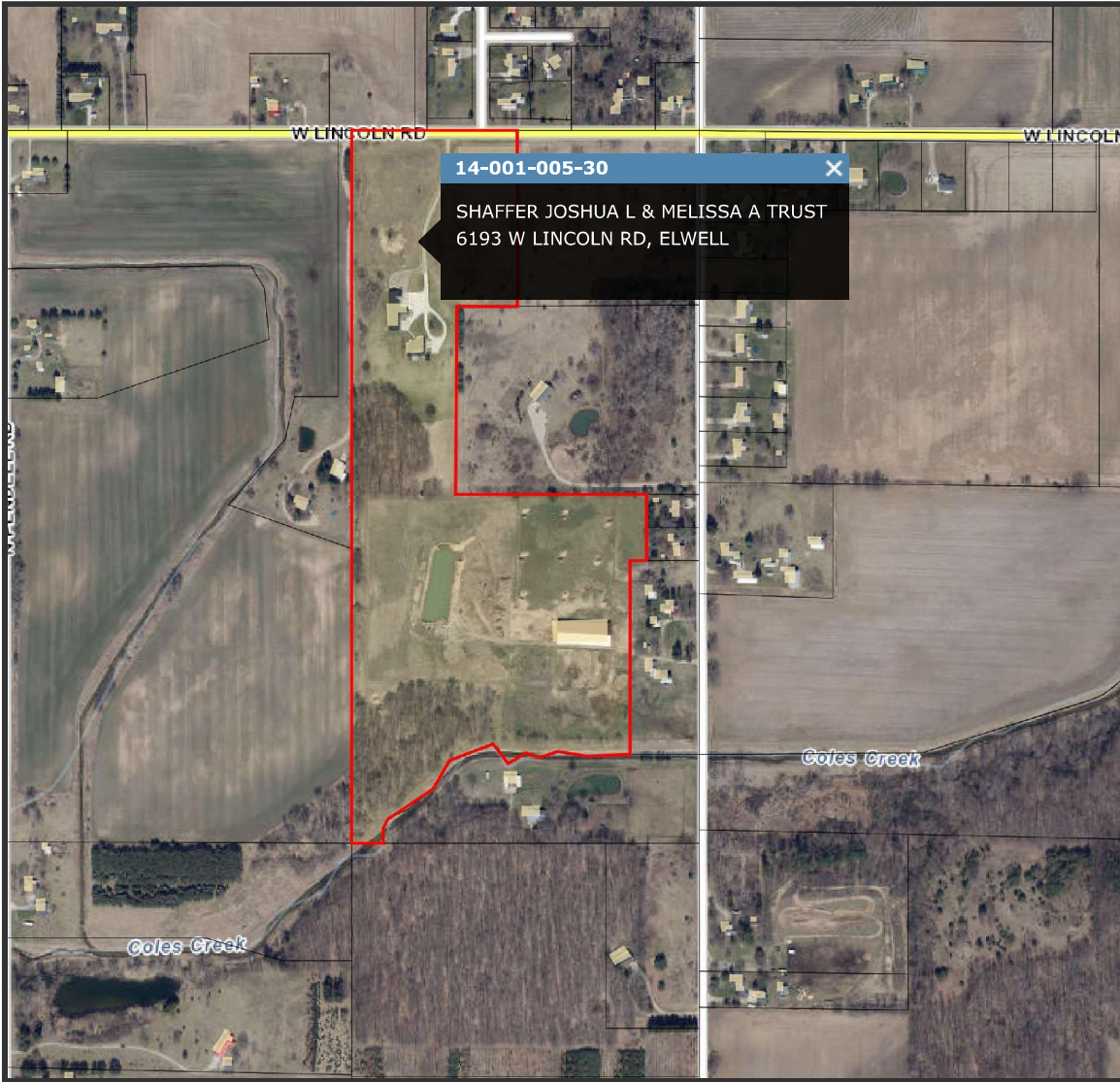
3. Any outside storage shall be so screened to obstruct outside vision of the materials from any public road, or adjacent property.
4. All driveways, parking, loading, storage, and vehicular circulation areas shall be paved or treated so as to prevent dust.
5. Trash containers shall be enclosed by a structure screened on at least three (3) sides.
6. The property shall be kept free of litter, and in a sanitary condition.
7. Reasonable and practicable measures shall be taken to minimize the effect of odor, vapor, glare, heat, or smoke from the use, on adjacent properties.

JJ. Theaters, or similar places of public assembly.

1. Lighting for parking areas or outdoor activity areas shall be shielded to prevent light from spilling across any property line.
2. Main buildings shall be set back a minimum of one-hundred (100) feet from any residential property line.
3. Access driveways shall be located no less than one hundred (100) feet from the centerline of the intersection of any street or adjacent driveway.
4. For uses exceeding a seating capacity of two-hundred and fifty (250) persons, a traffic impact study shall be submitted by the applicant. Such study shall describe internal circulation and projected impacts on traffic operations, capacity, and access on adjacent and nearby streets that are likely to provide access to the site.

KK. Truck terminals, freight terminals and maintenance facilities.

1. Minimum lot size shall be three (3) acres.
2. The lot location shall be such that at least one (1) property line abuts a County Primary road. The ingress and egress for all vehicles shall be directly from said thoroughfare.
3. The main and accessory buildings shall be set back at least seventy five (75) feet from all property lines.
4. Truck parking and staging areas shall be fenced and screened from the view of any abutting Residential District or use by a decorative fence or wall, or a landscaped equivalent.



Gratior GIS Authority



Map Publication:
04/15/2026 12:02 PM



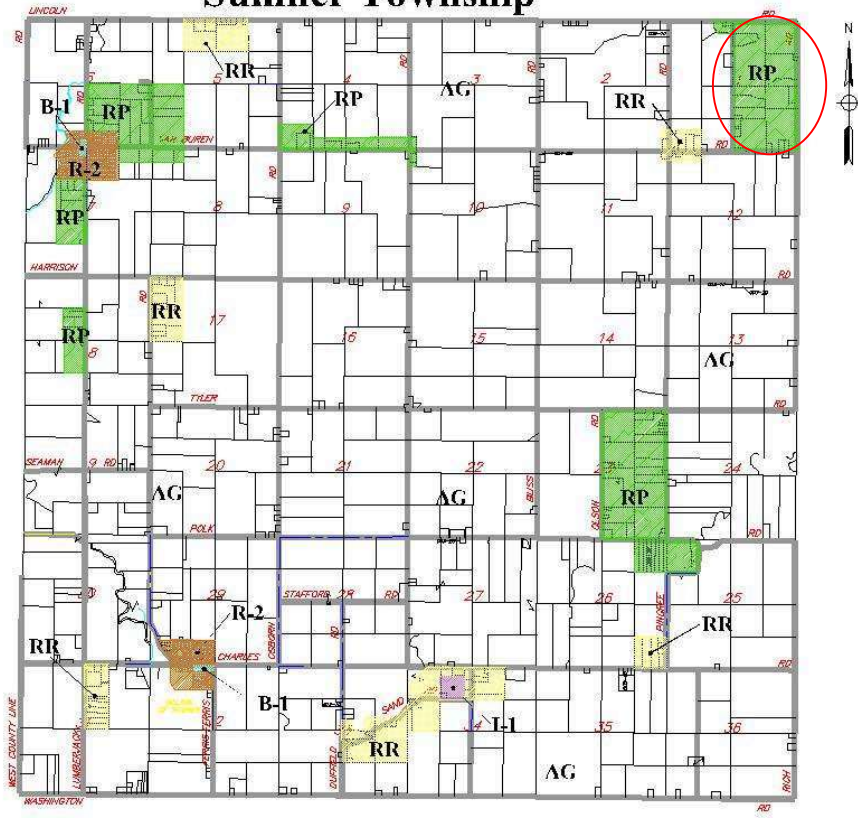
Disclaimer: This map does not represent a survey or legal document and is provided on an "as is" basis. Gratior GIS Authority expresses no warranty for the information displayed on this map document.

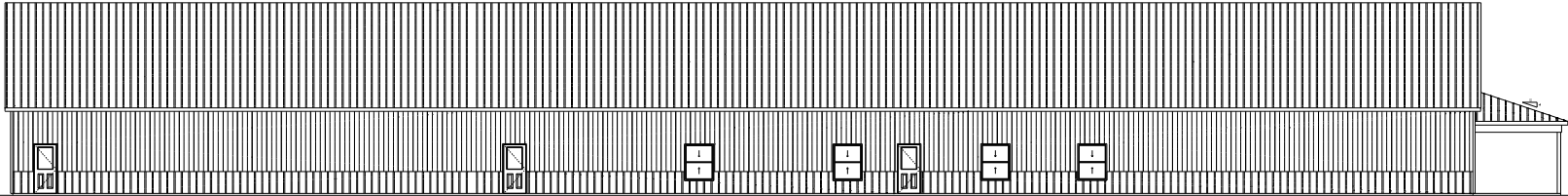
Sumner Township

- AG** Agricultural
- RP** Rural Preservation
- RR** Rural Residential
- R-1** Low Density Residential
- R-2** Medium Density Residential
- MBP** Manufactured Home Park
- B-1** Local Business
- B-2** Highway Business
- I-1** Industrial

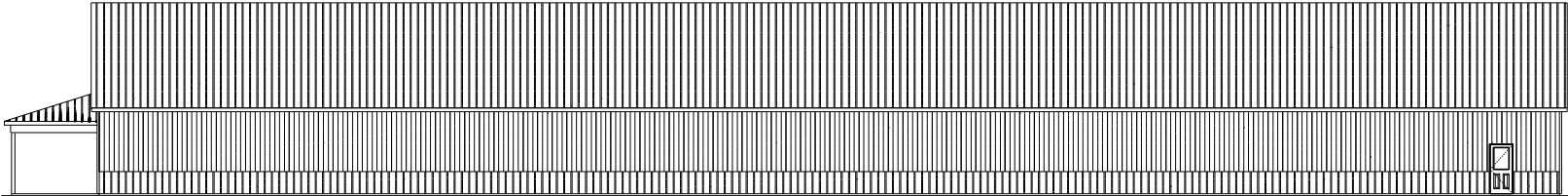
Note: This map should be used for illustrative purposes only and is not to scale. For exact boundaries consult the County Zoning Administrator.

Gratiot County Zoning Map
Adopted 11/20/01

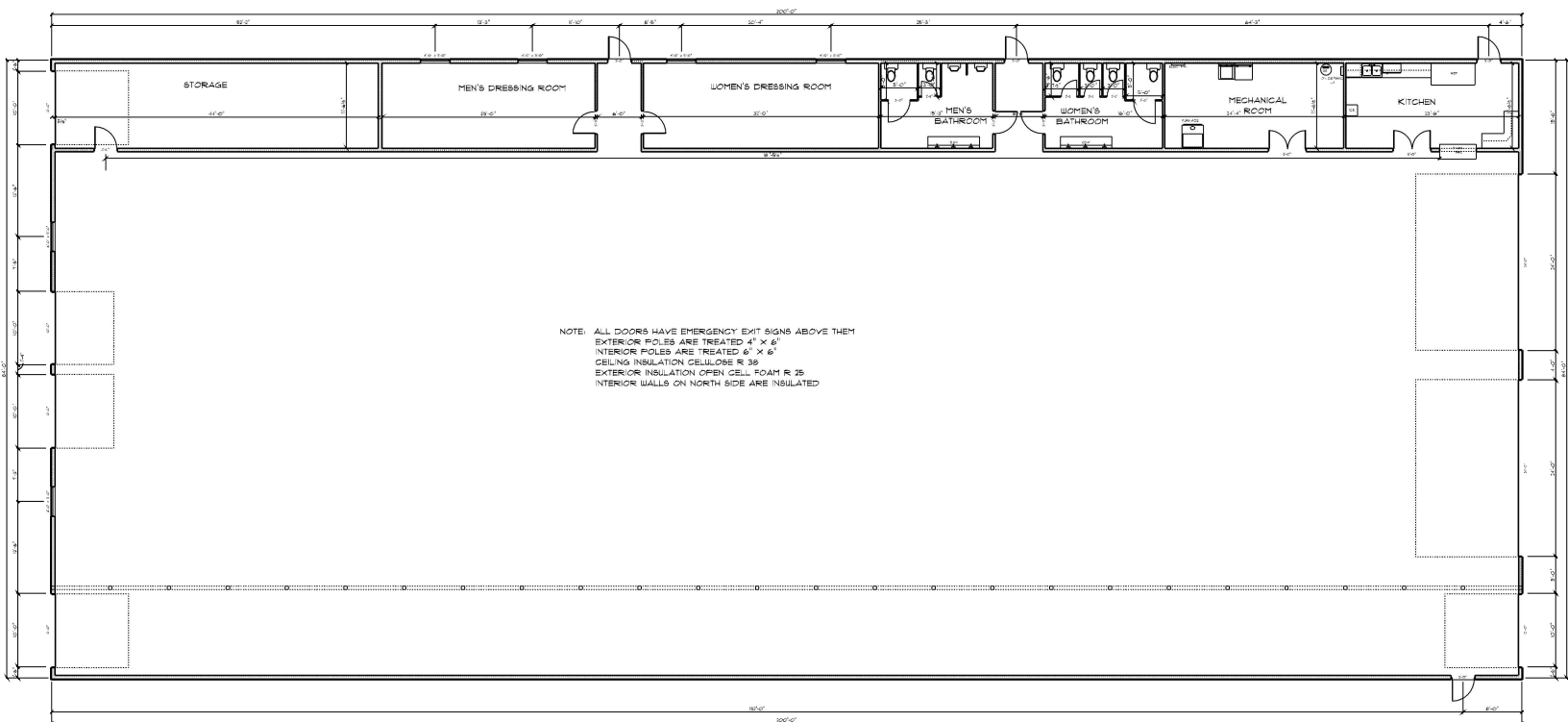


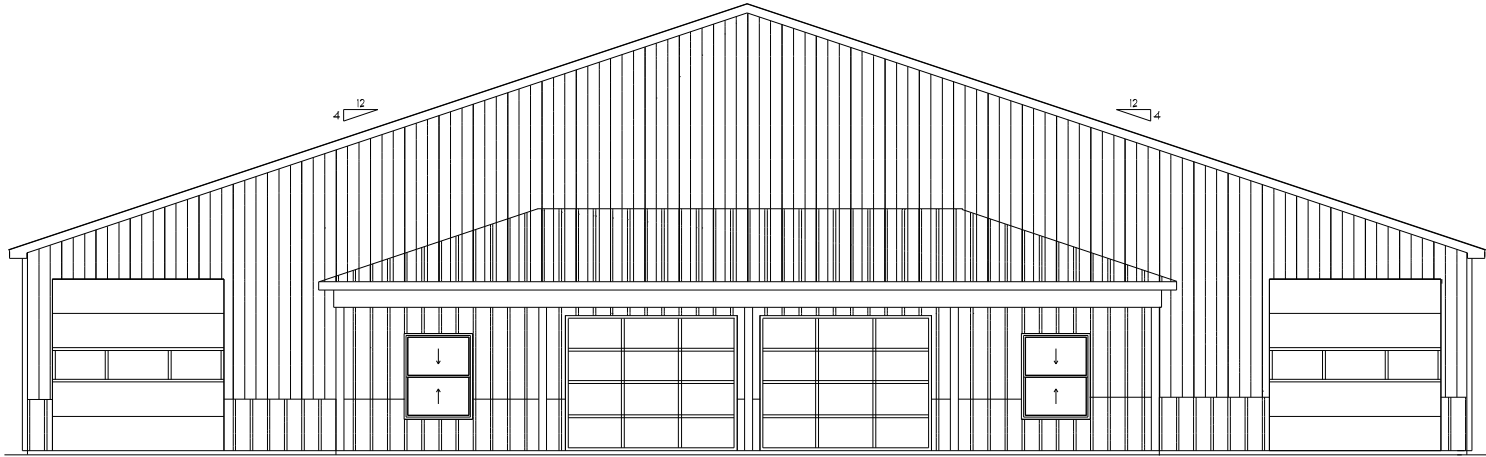


NORTH ELEVATION

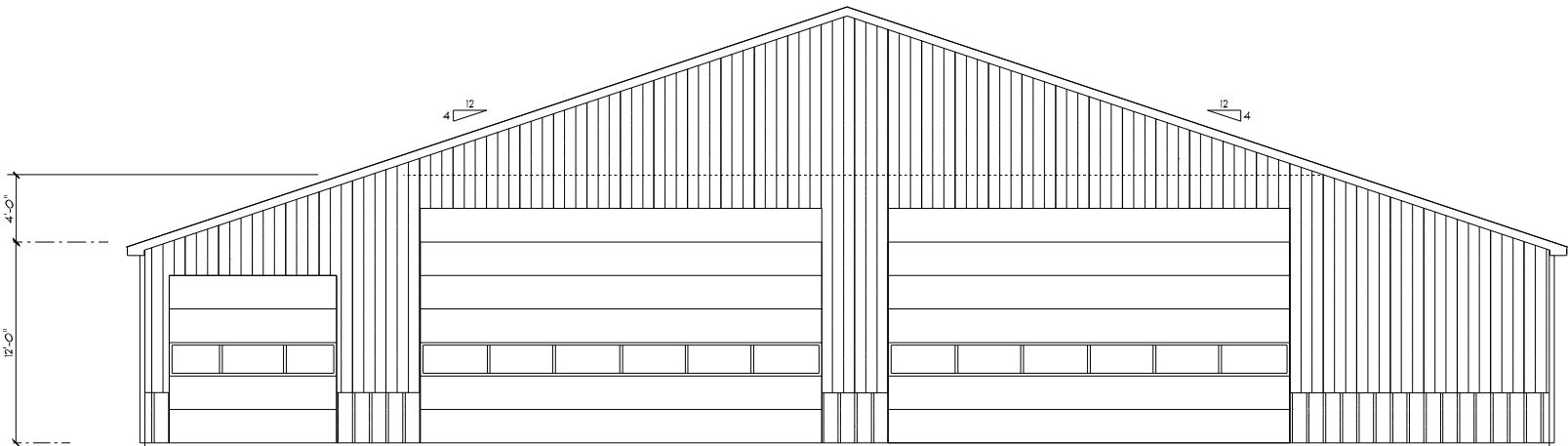


SOUTH ELEVATION





WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



Gratiot County
 Department of Community Development
 214 E Center St., Ithaca, MI 48847 / permits@gratiotmi.com / (989) 875-5201

Zoning Administrator Report

Elba, Hamilton, Lafayette, Newark, North Star and Sumner Townships

1. Applicant Name / Property Owner (If Different)		
APPLICANT NAME: Joshua Shaffer	Site Photo: See Attached Map of Elba, Hamilton, Lafayette, Newark, North Star, Sumner Township	
PROPERTY OWNER NAME: Joshua L. & Melissa A. Shaffer Trust		
2. Application Information		
ADDRESS: N/A	CITY/VILLAGE: N/A	
STATE: N/A	ZIP CODE: N/A	PARCEL #: N/A
TOWNSHIP: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ELBA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HAMILTON <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAFAYETTE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEWARK <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NORTH STAR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SUMNER		
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: N/A		
ZONING DISTRICT: Rural Preservation		
CURRENT USES PERMITTED BY SPECIAL LAND USE: Country Clubs and Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Public or Private Campgrounds, Private Recreation Areas (Including Gun Clubs), Removal and processing of topsoil, stone, rock, sand, gravel, lime, or other soil or minerals, Group daycare homes or facilities, Public or Private Schools, Bed and breakfast establishments, Cemeteries, PUDs, Public Utility Buildings, without storage yards, Forest management operations; and, Harvesting of wild crops such as marsh ahy, ferns, moss, berries, tree fruits, and tree seeds.		
PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT: Add: "Theaters, or similar places of public assembly" to Chapter 5 Rural Preservation Section 5.4 Special Land Uses as "M. Theaters, or similar places of public assembly"		
(Language is existing in current Zoning Ordinance. Permitted by SLUP in Chapter 11 B-2 Highway Business District. Guidelines are existing in Chapter 16 16.7 Specific Special Land Use Standards JJ.)		
3. Request under Review		
Proposed text amendment submitted by a property owner to add: "Theaters, or similar places of public assembly" to Chapter 5 Rural Preservation Section 5.4 Special Land Uses as "M. Theaters, or similar places of public assembly". Property owner would like to utilize existing structure on his property as a wedding/event venue – is classified under MI Building Code as assembly use (typically A-2 or A-3 depending on size and if the venue is serving food/drinks or not).		
4. Ordinance Standards (Include Section # & Page #) Indicate compliance/noncompliance with applicable standards.		
Section 18.8 Criteria for Text Amendments: The Planning Commission and County Board shall consider the following criteria:		
Section 18.8 A. The proposed amendment would correct an error in the Ordinance.		
Section 18.8 B. The proposed amendment would clarify the intent of the Ordinance.		
Section 18.8 C. Documentation has been provided from County Staff or the Zoning Board of Appeals indicating problems and conflicts in implementation or interpretation of specific sections of the Ordinance.		
Section 18.8 D. The proposed amendment would address changes to state legislature.		

Section 18.8 E. The proposed amendment would address potential legal issues or administrative problems with the Zoning Ordinance based on recent case law or opinions rendered by the Attorney General of the State of Michigan.	
Section 18.8 F. The proposed amendment would promote compliance with changes in other County Ordinances, or State or Federal regulations.	
Section 18.8 G. The proposed amendment is supported by the findings of reports, studies, or other documentation on functional requirements, contemporary building practices, environmental requirements and similar technical items.	
Section 18.8 H. Other criteria as determined by the Planning Commission or Count Board of Commissioners that would protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, protect public and private investment in the County, and enhance the overall quality of life in Gratiot County.	

5. Sample Motions

Approve - Motion to recommend approval of the Proposed Text Amendment submitted by Josh Shaffer to add: "M. Theaters, or similar places of public assembly" to Chapter 5 Rural Preservation Section 5.4 Special Land Uses.

Approve with Conditions - Motion to recommend approval of the Proposed Text Amendment submitted by Josh Shaffer to add: "M. Theaters, or similar places of public assembly" to Chapter 5 Rural Preservation Section 5.4 Special Land Uses with the following conditions: _____.

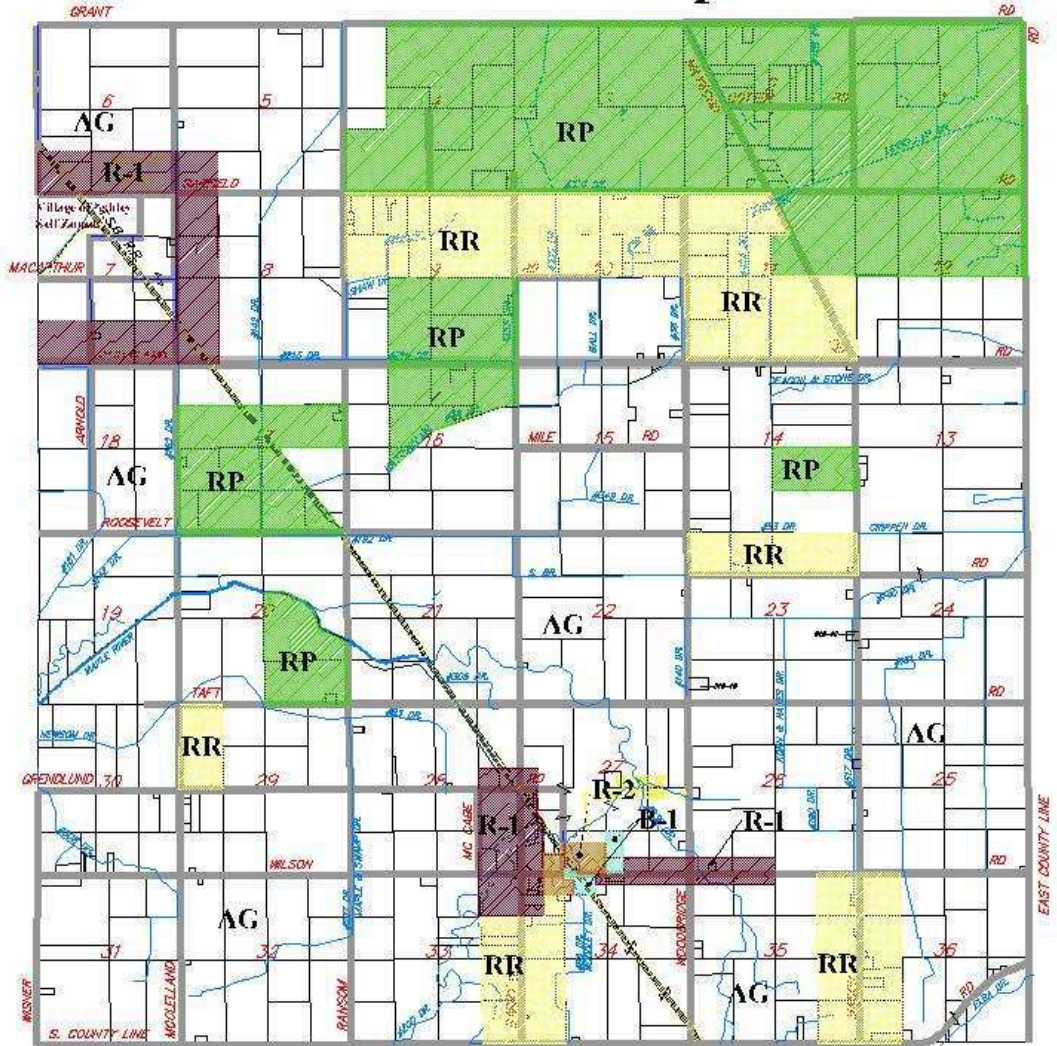
Deny - Motion to recommend denial of the Proposed Text Amendment submitted by Josh Shaffer to add: "M. Theaters, or similar places of public assembly" to Chapter 5 Rural Preservation Section 5.4 Special Land Uses.

Elba Township

- AG** Agricultural
- RP** Rural Preservation
- RR** Rural Residential
- R-1** Low Density Residential
- R-2** Medium Density Residential
- MHP** Manufactured Home Park
- B-1** Local Business
- B-2** Highway Business
- I-1** Industrial

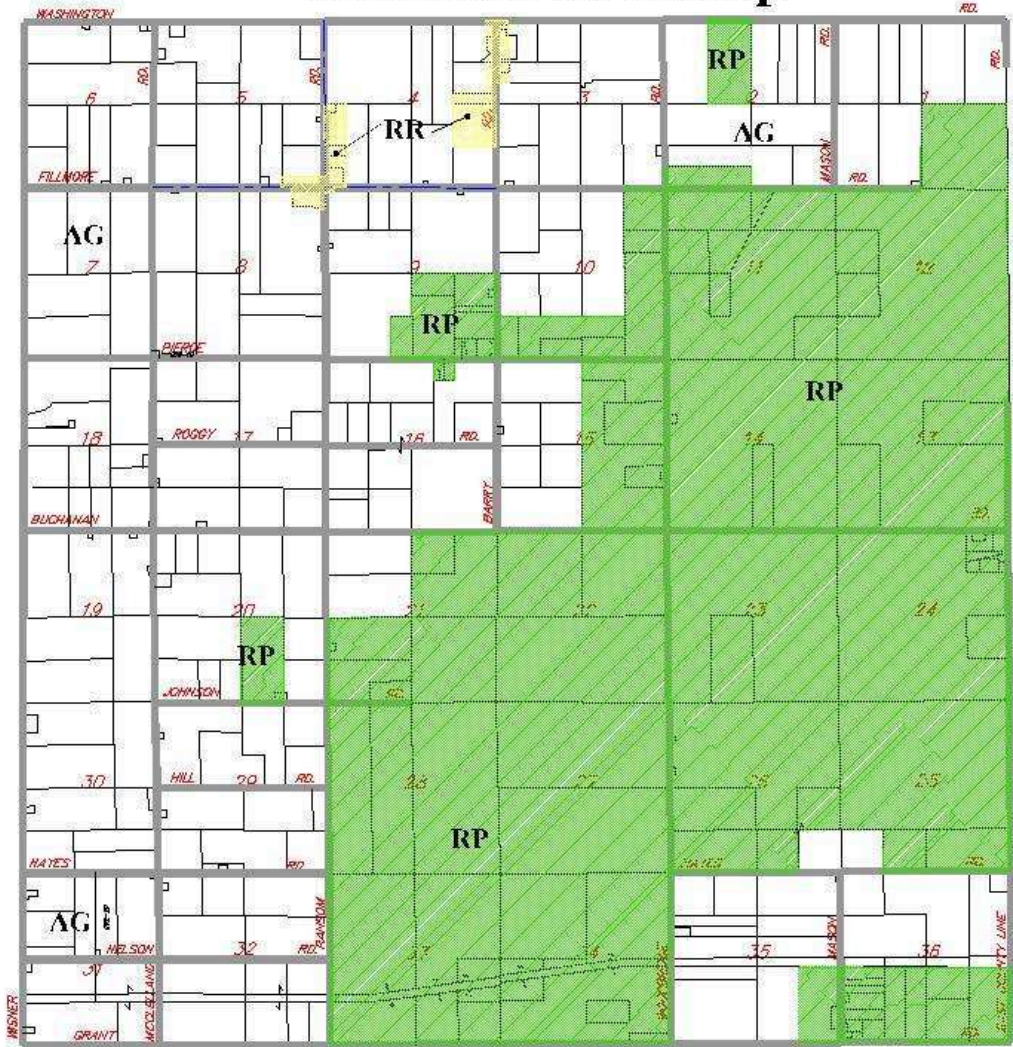
Note: This map should be used for illustrative purposes only and is not to scale. For exact boundaries consult the County Zoning Administrator.

Gratiot County Zoning Map
Adopted 11/20/01



Hamilton Township

- AG Agricultural
- RP Rural Preservation
- RR Rural Residential
- R-1 Low Density Residential
- R-2 Medium Density Residential
- MHP Manufactured Home Park
- B-1 Local Business
- B-2 Highway Business
- I-1 Industrial



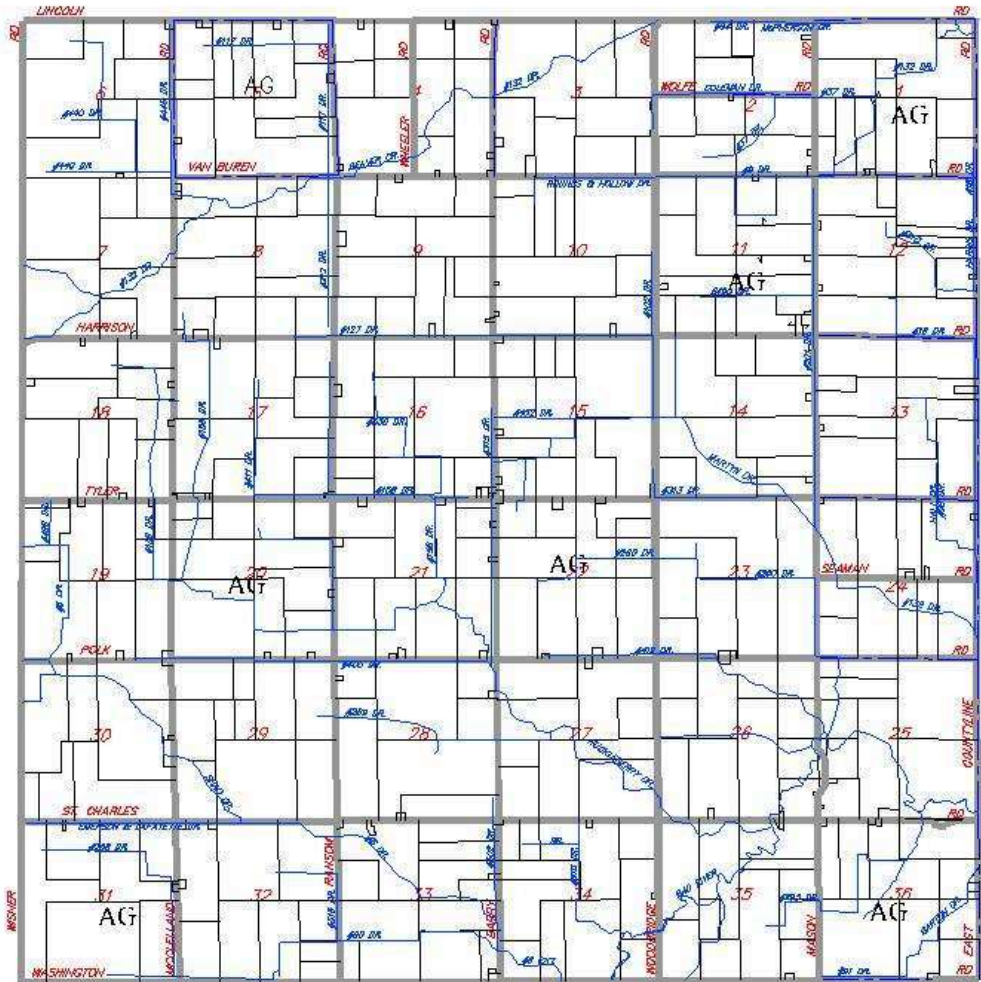
Gratiot County Zoning Map
Adopted 11/20/01

Lafayette Township

- AG Agricultural
- RP Rural Preservation
- RR Rural Residential
- R-1 Low Density Residential
- R-2 Medium Density Residential
- MHP Manufactured Home Park
- B-1 Local Business
- B-2 Highway Business
- I-1 Industrial

Note: This map should be used as a general guide only. It is not intended to be used as a legal document. For more information, contact the County Planning Department.

Gratiot County Zoning Map
Adopted 11/20/01

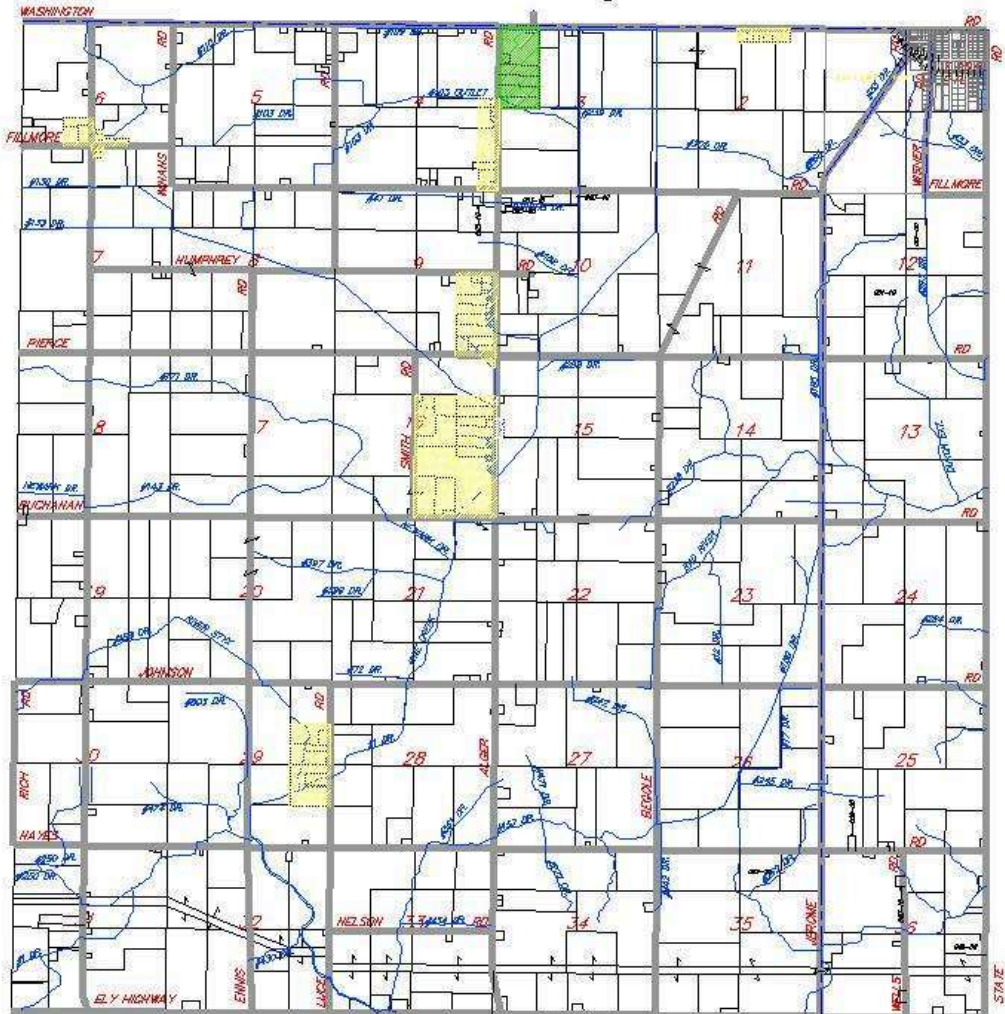


LAFAYETTE TOWNSHIP
T.11N—R.11W
GRATIOT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Newark Township

- AG Agricultural
- RP Rural Preservation
- RR Rural Residential
- R-1 Low Density Residential
- R-2 Medium Density Residential
- MHP Manufactured Home Park
- B-1 Local Business
- B-3 Highway Business
- I-1 Industrial

Gratiot County Zoning Map
Adopted 11/20/01



SCALE: 1" = 2000'

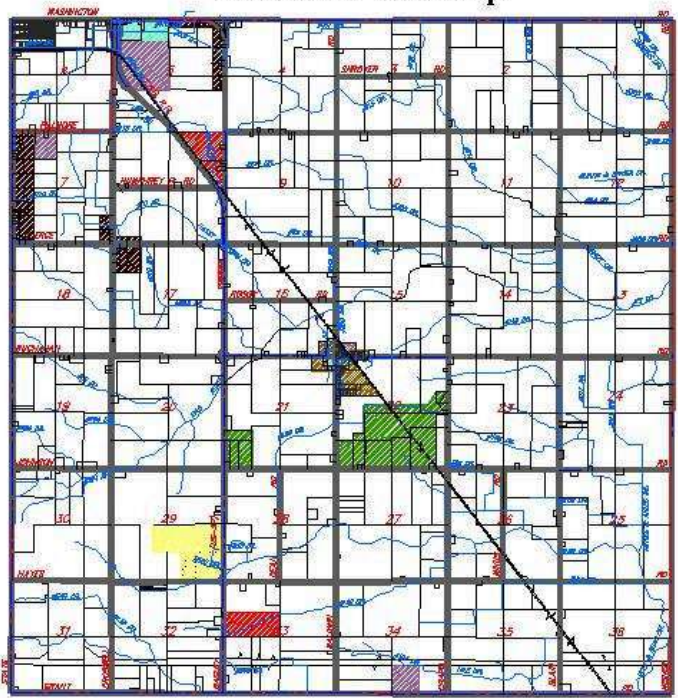
NEWARK TOWNSHIP
T.10N. - R.3W.
GRATIOT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

North Star Township

- AG Agricultural
- Rural Preservation
- RR Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Manufactured Home Park
- Local Business
- Highway Business
- Industrial

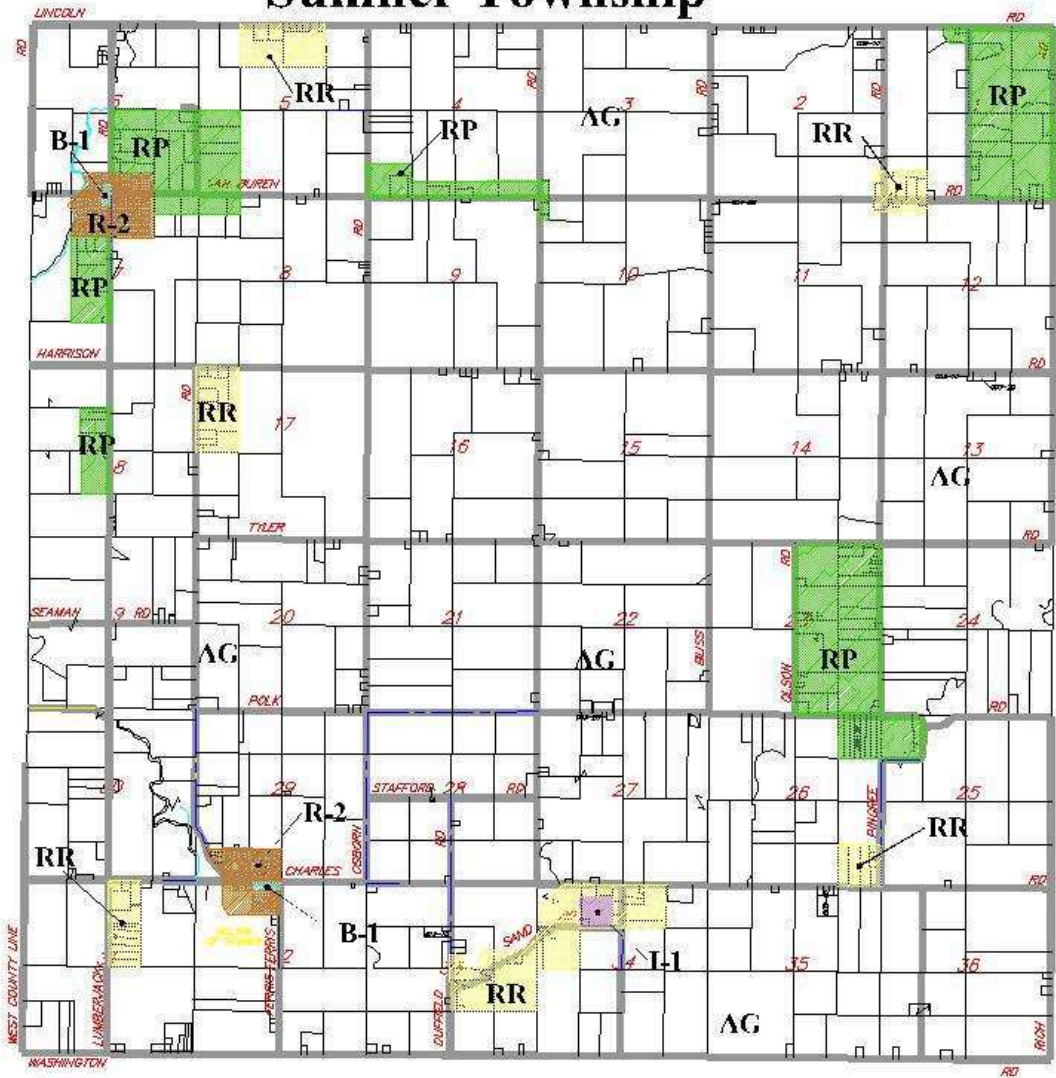
Other 2008 map should be used for planning purposes only and should not be used for legal purposes. For more information, contact the County Planning & Zoning Department.

Grand County Zoning Map
Adopted ??/??/??



Sumner Township

- AG Agricultural
- RP Rural Preservation
- RR Rural Residential
- R-1 Low Density Residential
- R-2 Medium Density Residential
- MBP Manufactured Home Park
- B-1 Local Business
- B-2 Highway Business
- I-1 Industrial



Note: This map should be used for illustrative purposes only, and is not to scale. For exact boundaries consult the County Zoning Administrator.

Gratiot County Zoning Map
Adopted 11/20/01



Planning Commission
Gratiot County Department of Community Development
214 E Center St., Ithaca, MI 48847
Phone (989) 875-5201

Proposed Minutes of the April 29th, 2026 Meeting

The Gratiot County Planning Commission held a special meeting **Wednesday, April 29th, 2026** beginning at **5:00 pm** in the **Board of Commissioner's Room at Gratiot County Courthouse, 214 E Center St., Ithaca, MI 48847.**

- 1. Call to Order at 5:00pm**
- 2. Chair Pro Tem**
Board Action: Motion by Robert Endter, support by Alyssa Chaffin to appoint David Justin as Chair Pro Tem in due to absence of Chair Karla Childers, and absence of Vice-Chair David Ringle. Motion Carried 5-0-2.
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 4. Roll Call:**
Present: Robert Endter, David Justin, Alyssa Chaffin, Bonnie Gustavison, Arthur McClintic
Absent : David Ringle, Karla Childers
- 5. Approval of the Agenda:**
Board Action: Motion by Robert Endter, second by Arthur McClintic to approve Agenda. Motion Carried 5-0-2.
- 6. Approval of March 4th Minutes:**
Board Action: Motion by Robert Endter, second by Arthur McClintic to approve minutes. Motion Carried 5-0-2.
- 7. Public Comment**
None
- 8. Old Business:**
None
- 9. New Business:**
 - a. Public Hearing for Proposed Text Amendment
 - i. Open Public Hearing at 5:03pm
 - ii. Explanation
 1. As provided by applicant Josh Shaffer
 - iii. Zoning Admin Report
 1. Staff recommend approval to address current limitedness of proposed use as currently written in the ordinance.
 - iv. Open Public Comment @ 5:08pm
None

- v. Close Public Comment @ 5:09pm
- vi. Close Public Hearing @ 5:09pm
- vii. Discussion and Questions
- viii. Vote to Recommend or Request Additional Info
 Board Action: Motion by **Robert Ender**, second by **Arthur McClintic** to **Recommend to the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners Approval of the Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to Chapter 5 Section 5.3 Special Land Uses**. Motion Carried 5-0-2.
- b. Form 1212 Driver Authorization needs to be turned in to Tony for approval – he will submit to Admin
- c. Form 2210 Expense Voucher is used for mileage; submit to Community Development Office following each meeting
- d. Per Diem will be paid out directly (do not need to complete a form)

10. Committee and Special Reports:

11. Adjournment:

Board Action: Motion by **Robert Ender**, second by **Arthur McClintic** to adjourn at **5:21pm**. Motion Carried 5-0-2.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diandra Messer, recording secretary.

_____ Date

Minutes respectfully Accepted by David Justin, Secretary.

_____ Date