



LODI TOWNSHIP BOARD OF APPEALS

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 7 pm

Lodi Township Hall
3755 Pleasant Lake Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

1. Call to order - Pledge of Allegiance

The regular meeting of April 21, 2026 opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:01 pm.

2. Roll Call

Present: Bauer, Chronis, Dever, Schaible, VanKoevering

Absent: Strader

Others Present: Township Attorney Jesse O'Jack,
Township Planner Hannah Firlit,
Township Engineer MC Moritz,
Trustee Leslie Blackburn,
Planning Commissioner Janet Rogers,
Planning Commissioner Brian Sweetland,
Recording Secretary Michelle Jopeck,
Kori Isaac, Daniel Graft, Chris Wilczynski, Chris Fairman, Simon
Whitelocke, Steven Finn, Alan Mumbu, Fernando Alberdi,
Katherine Kelly-Alpendi (sp?), Joe Wilczynski, Dixon, Craig Swenson,
Patricia Harroun, and 11 other members of the public

3. Approve 10/21/2025 Minutes

Dever moved to approve the minutes from the 10/21/2025 meeting as presented. Second by VanKoevering. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

4. Revision / Approval of Agenda

Schaible moved to approve the agenda as presented with the addition of reappointing Chronis as Chair. Second by Dever. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

5. Reappoint Jane Chronis as Chair

Schaible moved to reappoint Chronis as Chair. Second by VanKoevering. A voice vote was taken. Aye=4, Nay=none, abstain=Chronis. Motion carried.

6. **Request from Travis Pointe Country Club, 2829 Travis Pointe Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, regarding Lodi Township Parcels #M-13-13-400-008 (115.67 acres) & M-13-24-100-002 (63 acres) to appeal Ordinance #54.0 Section O-1&2 and Section I-3&4, to remove 244 regulated trees throughout the Golf Course property without being required to provide tree relocation or replacement.**

Schaible moved to open the public hearing at 7:05 pm. Second by Dever. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

Travis Pointe Country Club representatives Kori Isaac, Daniel Graft, and Chris Wilczynski made a presentation about their history, their request, and their reasoning and support for their request.

Township Planner Hannah Firlit reviewed her review of the request dated April 17, 2026.

Township Engineer MC Moritz reviewed the engineer's job especially with regard to this project, the history of the request from her point of view, and the comment she has as the engineer regarding the request.

The floor was then opened for comments and questions from the public.

A member of the public asked Township Attorney O'Jack the following question: if we followed all the procedures on a timely basis and did everything by the letter of the law, doesn't this become an issue of latches that you have to turn over? O'Jack was unsure about the question, but did not feel it pertained to this situation. Dever stated that this is absolutely not an issue of latches because it is not an unreasonable amount of time.

Dixon recommended making the ordinance clearer so that if someone removes an undesirable tree, they should not be off the hook to replace that tree, but that it should be replaced by a desirable tree instead. He also requested to keep the danger of flooding in mind. Flooding has increased and the Township's drainage infrastructure is already under strain. Removing even one tree can cause immediate issues.

A member of the public questioned Dixon's expertise regarding the connection between removing trees and flooding.

Patricia Harroun stated that the Township has ordinances for a reason and asked to try to follow them as much as possible, but did acknowledge that unhealthy trees may need to be removed. Removing 244 trees without any replacement does not seem reasonable even when it is a golf course.

Another member of the Township noted that the request is to maintain trees that the developer, golf course, and the community have put in, not to strip the land to put something in. In addition, if you look at the greater Travis Pointe community, individual homeowners have installed many trees as well. In light of that and the amount of trees that Travis Pointe installed during construction, it feels punitive now that they are trying to do maintenance on those trees.

A member of Travis Pointe asked the Board member how many have played or know golf.

Fernando Alberdi asked the Board to consider the economic devastation if replacement is required. If replacement is required, members will leave which will bankrupt the club, the site will go into disrepair, and it will be detrimental to the Township. The variance is not overly onerous compared to what the economic devastation would be if Travis Pointe were to go out of business.

Another member of the community stated that there have been a lot of memorial trees planted at the Club to honor loved ones who have passed away. That member asked Travis Pointe where they wanted the memorial tree planted because they were aware that, in the past, some willow trees got so big that drains were getting plugged up and caused flooding so they did not want to plant their memorial tree in a place that would cause issues. Those willow trees needed to be removed in order to stop the flooding. Additionally, the member had another flooding event which led to some trees being removed and replaced further down the golf course to prevent future flooding. VanKoevering asked if any of the memorial trees were slated to be removed. The member stated they were not because those trees were planted in cooperation with Travis Pointe to ensure they would be planted somewhere where planting a new tree would not cause crowding and/or flooding.

Dever moved to close the public hearing at 7:55 pm. Second by Schaible. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

Dever stated that it is reasonable to adjust replacement numbers, but no information was provided about why no replacement is being offered. Dever felt it was reasonable to not require replacing the undesirable trees. He also asked if there are places to plant memorial trees, are there not still places now to plant replacement trees without destroying the golf course? A representative from Travis Pointe responded that they were not going to plant a tree exactly where a tree was removed because it would be counter negative to what they are trying to achieve.

Dever asked if they have done an analysis of any location where they might be able to replace one or more trees without destroying the improvements that they are making or is there not a square foot on the golf course where a replacement tree could be planted? If there is nowhere to plant a replacement tree, then the memorial trees would need to stop being planted. The Travis Pointe representative stated that there could be areas where replacement trees could be planted, but they would need to analyze that. Dever stated that there has been no showing that there is nowhere where they could safely put replacement trees.

Dever also stated that regarding the economic impact of having to replace the trees, the Zoning Board of Appeals cannot take that into consideration. Monetary impact cannot be reviewed as part of the variance review.

VanKoevering asked, other than the trees that are diseased and overcrowded that are proposed to be removed, what is the plan to make it healthy and to be stewards. A Travis Pointe representative stated that, in his opinion, the plan they have should take care of that, but it is something that will need to be assessed as time goes on. The tree removal is partly to be able to grow turf grass, make the course safer, protect equipment, and maintain the intended use, but it is also to make the remaining trees healthier and more beautiful.

VanKoevering asked if the presented plan is to steward the intended use of the property and not necessarily for the continued overall health of the woods they have. A Travis Pointe representative said that some of the trees may be on easements or not on their property, but they feel like they have put their best plan forward and it will be a continual thing. The trees that they are recommending removal of are the trees that they feel are the most important to remove right now.

Questions about items brought up in letters from members of the public regarding this request were asked by VanKoevering and answered by a Travis Pointe representative.

Bauer asked if the overgrowth on the trees is from a lack of maintenance over the last 50 years. A Travis Pointe representative stated that it is probably lack of maintenance on the trees, the spacing of the trees, and the species of the trees as some of them are not good golf course trees.

Dever stated that he sees this as something that will not come back to the Zoning Board of Appeals again in 10 years because this request is to play catch up from years of lack of maintenance, where trees were planted in the wrong place, or where the wrong type of trees were planted. He sees it as a laudable and necessary action on the part of the golf course and it is the Board's job to reconcile the maintenance plan with the ordinance where some, but not total, discretion is allowed.

Schaible asked O'Jack if the original site plan did not have the trees being requested to be removed on it, could removing those trees be seen as returning the site to the original site plan. O'Jack said it would be difficult to say since the original site plan cannot be located due to being filed with Washtenaw County. Mortiz said she asked the County if they had the original site plan and their response suggested it is pretty unlikely.

Bauer asked, of the 10,000 trees on the property, how many are undesirable trees and how many are overcrowded. A Travis Pointe representative said that would take a longer study to figure out.

Chronis asked how many trees have been planted in the past 10 years or so. A Travis Pointe representative said about 12.

Schaible asked when the last time the golf course was remodeled. A Travis Pointe representative said never.

Dever moved to grant the variance for removal of the requested 244 trees with the requirement of the planting of 103 replacement trees for the reasons set forth in Township Planner Firlit's review dated April 17, 2026 (appended to the end of the minutes) for the Findings of Facts. Second by Chronis.

Schaible asked if a time frame for the tree replacement could be added to the motion. Firlit and O'Jack stated that the Zoning Ordinance states that a site plan has 545 days to begin substantial building construction and can be extended by the Planning Commission for an additional 365 days. Additionally, the Zoning Ordinance allows the Zoning Board of Appeals to be allowed to put conditions on a variance.

After further discussion, Dever amended his motion and moved to grant the variance for removal of the requested 244 trees with the requirement of the planting of 103 replacement trees within 3-years for the reasons set forth in Township Planner Firlit's review dated April 17, 2026 (appended to the end of the minutes) for the Findings of Facts. Second by Chronis. A roll call vote was taken. Schaible=aye, Chronis=aye, VanKoevering=aye, Dever=aye, Bauer=aye. Motion carried.

7. Public comment

Public comment started at 8:49 pm. Public comments were heard from 5 members of the public. Public comment ended at 8:56 pm

8. Adjournment

Dever moved to adjourn at 8:56 pm. Second by VanKoevering. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jane Chronis,
Chair



Michelle Joppeck,
Recording Secretary

April 17, 2026

Zoning Board of Appeals
Lodi Township
3755 Pleasant Lake Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

RE: Travis Pointe Country Club Variance Review

Attn: Zoning Board of Appeals Chair Jane Chronis

Subject:	Variance Review
Description of Application:	The applicant is requesting a variance remove 244 regulated trees without being required to provide tree relocation or replacement.
Site Location:	2829 Travis Pointe Road (Travis Pointe Country Club) Parcel #M-13-13-400-008 and #M-13-24-100-002
Applicant:	Travis Pointe Country Club 2829 Travis Pointe Road Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Zoning:	PUD, Planned Unit Development
Application Date:	March 12, 2026

Dear Board Members:

We have completed a review of the above variance request to permit removal of trees without providing the required tree relocation and replacement. The requested variance is from the requirements outlined in *Section 54.08.I*, and *Section 54.08.O* of the Township's Zoning Ordinance.

VARIANCE REQUEST BACKGROUND

In 2025, Travis Pointe Country Club submitted site plans to the Township for a golf course renovation project consisting of clearing and re-grading of golf course features, including installing underdrains for bunkers, re-grassing, and adjusting the boundaries or locations of golf course features. These plans were reviewed and recommended for approval by the Township Engineer.

Following approval of the plans, it was brought to the Township's attention that trees were being taken down on the site as part of the project. After communication to the applicant that removal of regulated trees is not permitted without proper review and approval of a replacement plan, the applicant stopped



further cutting of any trees. The initial site plans that were reviewed by the Township Engineer did not include tree removal or replacement information.

Section 54.08.I Woodland and Tree Preservation Standards of the zoning ordinance addresses tree removal and requirements for preservation and replacement. *Section 54.08.O Tree Relocation and Replacement* details the replacement requirements, which are calculated based on the species and size of the trees to be removed.

Upon review of the tree removal/replacement standards, it is our understanding that the applicant has submitted this request to be granted a variance from the replacement standards for the 244 trees proposed to be removed (essentially, to not have to replace those trees).

VARIANCE REQUEST INFORMATION

As part of their submittal, the applicant has provided details on the existing conditions of the property and has submitted a detailed inventory of the trees proposed to be removed from the site. The application materials indicate there is a total of more than 10,000 existing trees on the site, including some of the original site trees and some that have been planted over time. The applicant notes that the trees being removed are predominantly those that have been negatively affected by disease, have been compromised by cluster planting patterns, or are structurally compromised or dead.

We have reviewed the provided inventory against the ordinance requirements as part of our review, and offer the following analysis:

Based strictly on species and size data, the proposed removal would require a total of 742 replacement trees. However, there are some additional considerations that the Zoning Board of Appeals may wish to consider in its review of the request.

- (1) The ordinance lists species of trees that are prohibited to be used as replacement trees, as they are considered undesirable species (*Section 54.08.O.4*). While evaluating this list in comparison to the inventory provided, a number of trees proposed to be removed are species that would be prohibited to be re-planted to replace what is being removed. This includes silver maples, Austrian pines, elm species, black locusts, ash species, among others.
- (2) The inventory also indicates the health of each tree, many of which are indicated to be in poor health. The inventory includes a ranking matrix of health (1=worst, 5=best). The majority of trees are ranked 3 or below on the health matrix.

Given this information, we have done additional calculations for the Board's consideration. Leaving the undesirable species out of the calculation, a total of 78 trees are proposed to be removed. This requires a total of 323 replacement trees.

Additionally, taking into consideration the health of the remaining trees, it may be noted that 57 of the 78 trees are ranked as a 2 or lower health rating, and roughly half of those (25 total) are ranked at 1, which is the worst health indicator.

This information is summarized in the table and written form below for easy reference:



Summary Table:

	NUMBER OF TREES REMOVED	NUMBER OF TREES REQUIRED AS REPLACEMENT
TOTAL BASED SOLELY ON SPECIES & SIZE	244	742
TOTAL WITH UNDESIRABLE SPECIES REMOVED	78	323
TOTAL WITH UNDESIRABLE SPECIES REMOVED, AS WELL AS THOSE WITH A HEALTH RATING OF 1	53	238
TOTAL WITH UNDESIRABLE SPECIES REMOVED, AS WELL AS THOSE WITH A HEALTH RATING OF 1 OR 2	21	103

In written summary:

- If you find that all 244 trees need to be replaced, then 742 replacement trees will be necessary.
- If you find that undesirable trees do not need to be counted, then only 78 trees will need to be replaced, and only 323 replacement trees will be necessary.
- If you also find that trees with a health rating of 1 do not need to be counted, then only 53 trees will need to be replaced, and only 238 replacement trees will be necessary.
- If you also find that trees with a health rating of 1 or 2 do not need to be counted, then only 21 trees will need to be replaced, and only 103 replacement trees will be necessary.
- If you find that no trees need to be replaced, then no replacement trees will be necessary.

VARIANCE REVIEW CRITERIA

Dimensional or non-use variances are regulated under *Section 59.08 Variances* of the Zoning Ordinance. A non-use variance may be allowed by the ZBA only in cases where the applicant has shown there is **reasonable evidence of practical difficulty** in the official record of the hearing, and that all of the following conditions are met:

1. **Practical Difficulties.** Strict compliance with the specified dimensional standard(s) will deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other property owners in the same zoning district, create an unnecessary burden on the applicant, or unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose.

Finding: Strict compliance with the specified dimensional standard may create a burden on the applicant if siting of the required 742 replacement trees is infeasible throughout the course. The applicant narrative notes that strict compliance would prevent necessary agronomic improvements needed to improve the conditions and management of the property. If strict



compliance diminishes the feasibility of the site to operate properly as a golf course, this may prevent the owner from using the property for its permitted and approved purpose.

2. **Substantial Justice.** The variance will give substantial relief and justice to the applicant, consistent with justice to other property owners in the same district.

Finding: It should be noted the property is zoned PUD, Planned Unit Development, which is a unique zoning district. The Board may note that other development projects that utilize the Planned Unit Development zoning mechanism have also sought relief from tree replacement standards.

3. **Unique Circumstances.** The need for the variance is due to unique circumstances peculiar to the land or structures involved, that are not applicable to other land or structures in the same district.

Finding: The application notes that the need for the variance is specific to the conditions of the property and land management practices for the specific use of the property. The applicant notes that the turfgrass used for the golf course differs from typical lawns in terms of needed light, airflow, and drainage, to which the trees have been a detriment.

4. **Preservation of Property Rights.** The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right possessed by other property owners in the same zoning district.

Finding: The applicant has noted that the tree removal and non-replacement is necessary for the continuation of proper land management for the golf course.

5. **Public Safety and Welfare.** The requested variance can be granted in such fashion that the spirit of this Ordinance will be observed and public safety and welfare secured. In addition:
- a. The granting of a variance will not increase the hazard of fire or otherwise endanger public safety.
 - b. The granting of a variance will not unreasonably diminish or impair the value of surrounding properties.
 - c. The granting of a variance will not alter the essential character of the area or surrounding properties.
 - d. The granting of a variance will not impair the adequate supply of light and air to any adjacent property.

Finding: The spirit of *Section 54.08 Natural Features Protection and Preservation* of the ordinance is to “*protect and preserve natural features to the maximum extent possible when land is developed [which] promotes general public health, safety, and welfare, encourage use of land in accordance with its character and adaptability, protect the natural environment, and conserve natural resources and energy.*” The applicant is proposing to remove 244 of an existing total of 10,000 trees on the site, and notes that some are suffering due to disease and overcrowding. The management of the trees and natural features of the site may speak to protecting and preserving natural features to an extent, as well as encouraging use of land in accordance with its character. The arborist report included in the application notes that many trees are in poor health and removal will improve the health of the property. The applicant should show that the lack of replacement also speaks to the intent of this ordinance. The



requested variance will not increase hazards or endanger public safety or welfare, or impair the supply of light and air. The applicant notes that maintaining a healthy and well-managed course maintains property values and character of the area.

6. **Not Self-Created.** The problem and resulting need for the variance has not been self-created by the applicant or the applicant's predecessors.

Finding: The applicant narrative notes that proposed tree removal is based on disease, historic improper planting patterns, structural issues and tree decline, among others. The need for the variance from replacement standards is noted that replacement would not correct the issues of overcrowding. This may be considered as not self-created.

7. **More than Mere Inconvenience.** The alleged hardship and practical difficulties that will result from a failure to grant the variance include substantially more than mere inconvenience or an inability to attain a higher financial return.

Finding: Failure to grant the variance as requested would require 742 trees to be planted on the site, which may be more than mere inconvenience if the site does not have capacity for this amount of trees to be planted on the site in a healthy and sustainable pattern.

8. **Minimum Necessary Action.** The reasons set forth in the application justify the granting of the variance, and the variance is the minimum necessary relief to allow reasonable use of the land, building, or structure. The granting of a lesser variance will not give substantial relief and justice to the applicant, consistent with justice to other property owners in the same district.

Finding: The applicant has noted that the removal plan is strategic to improve land management and restore the original design intent, but has not necessarily made clear that this is the minimum necessary variance to allow reasonable use of the land. While the proposed number of removal may be the minimum necessary and full replacement (742 trees) is infeasible, the applicant has not provided information that *any* replacement on-site is not feasible.

- If you find that no trees need to be replaced, then no replacement trees will be necessary.

Sincerely,
OHM Advisors

Hannah (Smith) Firlit
Planner