

TEXT AMENDMENT REPORT

TO: Planning Commission **DATE:** November 10, 2025
FROM: Rodney C. Nanney, AICP, Community and Economic Development Director
PROJECT: PTXT25-02 Zoning Text Amendment (Charter Township of Union)

ACTIONS REQUESTED: To hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to Sections 2 (Definitions), 3 (Zoning Districts and Maps), and 6 (Standards Applicable to Specific Land Uses) to add Firearms Dealer to the list of allowable home occupation and home-based limited business activities, subject to limitations, to revise the definition of Gunsmith, and to add new definitions for Firearm, Destructive Device, Federal Firearms License, and Firearms Dealer; to review the proposed amendments and public comments from the hearing; and to deliberate and make any recommendations to the Board of Trustees for final action.

Background Information

As we discussed during the Planning Commission's regular meeting in May, it has come to the attention of staff that the current public hearing/special use permit approval requirement for a gunsmith/firearms dealer, where allowed as a type of home occupation in the AG, R-1, R-2A, and R-2B zoning districts, presents some unique challenges for those interested in this land use. Given the nature of a business involving firearms, the public hearing notice requirements for a special use permit application may have unintended but potentially adverse safety and security impacts for the operator and their residence.

In many cases, the activities of a gunsmith/firearms dealer require issuance of a federal firearms license (FFL) from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), in addition to any local zoning-related approval. The following is a summary list of federal firearms licenses:

Federal Firearms License (FFL) Types

Type	Description
01	Dealer in Firearms Other Than Destructive Devices (Includes Gunsmiths)
02	Pawnbroker in Firearms Other Than Destructive Devices
03	Collector of Curios and Relics
06	Manufacturer of Ammunition for Firearms
07	Manufacturer of Firearms Other Than Destructive Devices
08	Importer of Firearms Other Than Destructive Devices
09	Dealer in Destructive Devices
10	Manufacturer of Destructive Devices
11	Importer of Destructive Devices

Manufacturing-related licensed activities (such as #06, #07, and #10) are allowable activities in the Township's General Industrial (I-2) zoning district under the category of "Manufacturing, General." Some of the more intensive commercial licenses (such as #02, #09, and #11) would only be appropriate in the Township's Business Districts, where "gunsmiths" are currently listed as an allowable use subject to site plan approval.

Per the Planning Commission's direction from the May meeting, staff has prepared a proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment to:

1. Replace the term "gunsmith" as used in the current Zoning Ordinance with "firearms dealer" to be more consistent with federal firearms dealer licensing requirements;
2. Eliminate the public hearing/special use permit approval requirement for a firearms dealer as an allowable home occupation; and
3. Make clear that this allowance for a firearms dealer to operate as a home occupation is limited in scope by adding prohibitions against certain activities of a more intensive character that are not appropriate in a residential neighborhood.

Several new definitions are also proposed to be added to better coordinate our Ordinance with the federal licensing terminology.

Project Timetable

Under the requirements of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, this Zoning Ordinance amendment is subject to a Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to the Board of Trustees along with review and comment from the Isabella County Planning Commission.

Recommendations

Under the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended, the Planning Commission has the responsibility to hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance or Official Zoning Map, and to make any recommendations for final action to the Board of Trustees. Following the public hearing, review, and deliberation, I recommend that the Planning Commission consider taking action by **motion to recommend to the Board of Trustees that the proposed amendments to Sections 2 (Definitions), 3 (Zoning Districts and Maps), and 6 (Standards Applicable to Specific Land Uses) of the Zoning Ordinance No. 20-06 to add Firearms Dealer to the list of allowable home occupation and home-based limited business activities, subject to limitations, to revise the definition of Gunsmith, and to add new definitions for Firearm, Destructive Device, Federal Firearms License, and Firearms Dealer be adopted as presented or be adopted with the following additional changes:**

Please contact me with any questions about this information.

Respectfully submitted,

Rodney C. Nanney, AICP, Director

Community and Economic Development Department

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF UNION
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Charter Township of Union Planning Commission was held on November 18, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Union Township Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Squattrito, Bradshaw, Browne, Hayes, Lapp, McDonald, Olver, Shingles, Thering

Others Present

Rodney Nanney, Community and Economic Development Director; Peter Gallinat, Zoning Administrator; Tera Green, Administrative Assistant

Approval of Agenda

Olver moved **Lapp** supported to approve the agenda as presented. **Vote: Ayes: 9. Nays: 0. Motion Carried**

Approval of Minutes

Shingles moved **Olver** supported to approve the October 21, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented. **Vote: Ayes: 9. Nays: 0. Motion carried.**

Correspondence / Reports/ Presentations

- A. Board of Trustees Update – Thering gave updates from the October 22nd and November 12th Board of Trustees Meetings.
- B. ZBA Update – McDonald gave an update on the November 5th ZBA meeting.
- C. Community and Economic Development Monthly Report
- D. Other Reports or Correspondence

Public Comment

Open: 7:13 p.m.

No comments offered.

Closed: 7:13 p.m.

New Business

- A. **PTXT25-02 Zoning Ordinance amendments to add Firearms Dealer as an allowable home occupation activity subject to limitations**
 - a. Introduction by staff
 - b. Public Hearing
 - c. Commission deliberation and action (recommendation to the Board of Trustees to adopt, reject, or adopt with revisions; or to postpone action)

Nanney introduced PTXT25-02, a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment to add “Firearms Dealer” as an allowable home occupation activity, subject to specific limitations. He explained that the current Zoning Ordinance uses the term “gunsmith,” which requires a Special Use Permit and a public hearing. This public hearing process notifies surrounding property owners that firearms are present on the premises, which may increase safety concerns for the resident.

Staff presented a proposed text amendment—previously directed by the Planning Commission in May—to replace the term “gunsmith” with “firearms dealer,” remove the Special Use Permit and public hearing requirement for this use as a home occupation and clarify that the allowance is limited in scope by prohibiting more intensive activities that are not appropriate in residential areas.

This proposed amendment will require a Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to the Board of Trustees, as well as review and comment from the Isabella County Planning Commission.

Public Hearing

Open: 7:18 p.m.

No comments were offered.

Closed: 7:19 p.m.

Deliberation by the commissioners.

Browne moved **Bradshaw** supported to recommend to the Board of Trustees that the proposed amendments to Section 2 (Definitions), 3(Zoning Districts and Maps), and 6 (Standards Applicable to Specific Land Uses) of the Zoning Ordinance No. 20-06 to add Firearms Dealer to the list of allowable home occupation and home-based limited business activities, subject to limitations, to revise the definition of Gunsmith, and to add new definitions for Firearm, Destructive Devices, Federal Firearms License, and Firearms Dealer be adopted as presented. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Bradshaw, Browne, Hayes, Lapp, McDonald, Olver, Shingles, Squattrito and Thering. Nays: 0. Motion Carried.**

B. PPRPA25-001 Private Road Permit Application for Magnolia Lane off of St. Andrews Drive (Terri Sommerville)

- a. Introduction by staff
- b. Updates from the applicant
- c. Commission questions and discussion
- d. Commission deliberation and action (approval, denial, approval with conditions, or postpone action)

Nanney introduced PPRPA25-0001, noting that it is the first Private Road Permit application submitted under the Township’s Private Road Ordinance No. 24-01. He provided an overview of the property and explained that, before any permits can be issued, a lot combination must be completed prior to construction of the private road.

Nanney also stated that the Township Engineer will need to approve the use of MDOT 23A gravel for the road surface as an alternative to the 22A or 21AA gravel materials specified in the ordinance.

Staff reported that the application is in good order and recommended approval subject to the conditions outlined in the staff report.

Pete Lorenz of Lorenz Surveying & Engineering provided additional information regarding the required land combination to establish the necessary road frontage for the private road.

Deliberation by the commissioners.

Olver moved **Thering** supported to approve the PPRPA25-0001 Private Road Permit plans dated October 28, 2025 for Magnolia Lane a 24-foot-wide gravel private road located off of Saint Andrews Drive in the northeast quarter of Section 19 and in the R-1 (Rural Residential) zoning district, finding that the proposed private road can comply with the requirements of the Private Road Ordinance No. 24-01, subject to the following conditions.

1. Approval of a land combination application for the eight (8) existing lots shall be required prior to the start of construction for the new private road.
2. Township Engineer acceptance of the applicant's proposal to use MDOT 23A gravel for the road surface in place of the ordinance standard 22A or 21AA gravel.
3. Conformance to the remaining requirements of Section 12.0 (Outside Agency Permits and Approvals) of Ordinance No. 24-01 prior to the start of construction or the new private road.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Bradshaw, Browne, Hayes, Lapp, McDonald, Olver, Shingles, Squattrito and Thering. Nays: 0. Motion Carried.

Other Business

A. Master Plan Updates

Nanney presented the draft Plan for Housing as part of the proposed Township Master Plan updates, seeking feedback from the Commissioners.

Discussion:

A question was raised regarding the wording in Section A1. Nanney explained that development is intended to be directed into the existing water system to avoid costly expansion and long-term maintenance.

By general consensus, the Commission requested that greater emphasis be placed on affordable housing for persons with disabilities of all ages, with wording that is inclusive and thoughtful. Additionally, it was requested that the language be broadened to ensure inclusivity for all and that policies be created to encourage more accessible housing units.

A question was raised regarding the wording in the last paragraph of Section B3: "Accessory uses such as small-scale retail, dining, or personal services may be permitted within principal buildings to support the daily needs of residents and staff, provided such uses are internal and not externally visible." By general consensus, the Commission requested that the last phrase, "provided such uses are internal and not externally visible" be deleted, allowing the Township to retain flexibility in applying these policies to future development proposals.

Commissioner McDonald asked about the merits of integration within the Zoning Ordinance of new land use and site development regulations that would apply to supportive housing and shelter facilities. Nanney explained that using the Planned Unit Development (PUD) option is the preferred approach, as it is more flexible and adaptable than any formal zoning district regulations would need to be to properly address the broader possible range of development and land use conditions.

Extended Public Comments

Open: 8:53 p.m.

No comments were offered.

Closed: 8:53 p.m.

Board Comment

Hayes – Thanked Rodney and staff for their efforts in preparing the materials for the meeting. He also announced that the City of Mt. Pleasant will host their Downtown Christmas Extravaganza on December 6. The Broadway Theater will feature Letters to Santa and free movie showings, and he encouraged everyone to stop by.

Nanney – announced that the holiday lighting on Pickard Road will be installed this week and invited everyone to check it out.

Adjournment – Chair Squattrito adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

APPROVED BY:

Jessica Lapp – Secretary
Tom Olver – Vice Secretary

(Recorded by Tera Green)

DRAFT

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF UNION PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE - ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS

NOTICE is hereby given that a public hearing will be held by the Planning Commission on **Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Township Hall Board Room **at 2010 South Lincoln Road**, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858 to receive public comments on proposed amendments to the Charter Township of Union Zoning Ordinance to amend Section 2.2 to add new definitions for Firearm, Destructive Device, Federal Firearms License, Firearms Dealer, and Gunsmith; to amend Sections 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.13, 3.14, and 3.15 to delete the term Gunsmith, and to insert Firearms Dealer as an allowable principal use in the B-4, B-5, and B-7 Business Districts; and to amend Section 6.19 to add Firearms Dealer as an allowable home occupation or home-based limited business subject to added restrictions; all by authority of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended (MCL 125.3101 et seq.).

The proposed amendments, Zoning Ordinance, and Zoning Map may be inspected during business hours at the Township Hall and are available for viewing on the Township's website at:

<http://www.uniontownshipmi.com/>.

Any interested person may submit their views in person, in writing, or by signed proxy prior to the public hearing or at the public hearing. Written comments may be sent to the Charter Township of Union Planning Commission, 2010 South Lincoln Road, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858, sent via email to info@uniontownshipmi.com, or dropped off in the drop box next to the Township Hall entrance.

For additional information, and for individuals who require special accommodations per the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact Peter Gallinat, Zoning Administrator, by phone at (989) 772 4600 extension 241.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF UNION
ISABELLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

ORDINANCE NO. _____

An ordinance to amend the Charter Township of Union Zoning Ordinance No. 20-06 by amending Sections 2 (Definitions), 3 (Zoning Districts and Maps), and 6 (Standards Applicable to Specific Land Uses) by authority of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended (MCL 125.3101 et seq.); to provide for repeal; to provide for severability; to provide for publication; and to provide an effective date.

Proposed additions to the current text of the Zoning Ordinance are highlighted below in blue underlined text and proposed deletions are shown using ~~red strikethrough text~~.

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF UNION, ISABELLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN, HEREBY ORDAINS:

PART ONE – Title

This Ordinance shall be known and may be referred to as the “Charter Township of Union Ordinance Number _____, Ordinance Amending the Charter Township of Union Zoning Ordinance.”

PART TWO – Amendments to Section 2.2

Section 2.2 (Definitions) is hereby amended to revise the definition of Gunsmith, and to add new definitions for Firearm, Destructive Device, Federal Firearms License, and Firearms Dealer, as follows:

Firearm. Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any destructive device.

A. **Destructive device.** Any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine, or similar device; and any combination of parts from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

B. **Federal firearms license (FFL).** A certificate issued by the United States government to engage in specific firearms-related business or import activities subject to federal regulation.

Firearms Dealer. Any person engaged in the business of selling firearms at wholesale or retail, which can include incidental import of firearms; repairing firearms; or fitting barrels, stocks, or trigger mechanisms to firearms.

Gunsmith: ~~A person who makes or repairs firearms.~~ See “Firearms Dealer.”

PART THREE – Amendments to Section 3.4

Section 3.4 (Permitted Uses by District) is hereby amended to replace Gunsmith with Firearms Dealer, and to amend the Zoning District and Use Standards entries in this row, as follows:

Key: A=Accessory Use
P=Principal Permitted Use
S=Special Use
[blank]=Use Not Permitted

Land Use	AG	R-1	R-2A	R-2B	R-3A	R-3B	R-4	B-4	B-5	B-7	I-1	I-2	OS	Use Standards
Commercial and Retail Uses														
Gunsmith Firearms Dealer	S	S	S	S				P	P	P				Section 6.19

PART FOUR – Amendments to Sections 3.6 through 3.9

Sections 3.6 (AG, Agricultural District), 3.7 (R-1, Rural Residential District), 3.8 (R-2A, One- and Two-Family, Low-Density Residential District), and 3.9 (R-2B, One- and Two-Family, Medium-Density Residential District) are hereby amended to delete “Gunsmith” from the list of allowable Special Uses in each zoning district, as follows:

Section 3.6: AG, Agricultural District

SPECIAL USES

- ~~Gunsmith~~

Section 3.7: R-1, Rural Residential District

SPECIAL USES

- ~~Gunsmith~~

Section 3.8: R-2A, One- and Two-Family, Low-Density Residential District

SPECIAL USES

- ~~Gunsmith~~

Section 3.9: R-2B, One- and Two-Family, Medium-Density Residential District

SPECIAL USES

- ~~Gunsmith~~

PART FIVE – Amendments to Sections 3.13 through 3.15

Sections 3.13 (B-4, General Business District), 3.14 (B-5, Highway Business District, and 3.15 (B-7, Retail and Service Highway Business District), are hereby amended to replace “Gunsmith” with “Firearms Dealer” in the list of allowable Principal Permitted Uses in each zoning district, as follows:

Section 3.13: B-4, General Business District

PRINCIPAL PERMITTED USES

- ~~Gunsmith~~ Firearms Dealer

Section 3.14: B-5, Highway Business District

PRINCIPAL PERMITTED USES

- ~~Gunsmith~~-[Firearms Dealer](#)

Section 3.15: B-7, Retail and Service Highway Business District

PRINCIPAL PERMITTED USES

- ~~Gunsmith~~-[Firearms Dealer](#)

PART SIX – Amendments to Section 6.19

Subsections “C.7.” (Allowable Uses) and “C.8.” (Prohibited Uses) of Section 6.19 (Home Occupations and Home-Based Limited Businesses) are hereby amended to add Firearms Dealer to the list of allowable uses and to expand the list of prohibited uses, as follows:

Section 6.19 Home Occupations and Home-Based Limited Businesses

C. General Requirements.

7. Allowable Uses. The following uses shall be permitted as home occupations and home-based limited businesses:
 - a. Home offices for such professionals as architects, doctors, brokers, engineers, insurance agents, lawyers, accountants, writers, salespersons, and similar occupations.
 - b. Personal services, including beauty and barbershops (one-chair operations only) and animal grooming (provided there is no overnight keeping of animals).
 - c. Home office for a massage therapist.
 - d. Music, dance, arts and crafts classes, and private tutoring and instruction for a maximum of five (5) pupils at any given time.
 - e. Studios and workshops for artists, sculptors, musicians, and photographers; and for weaving, lapidary jewelry making, cabinetry, woodworking, sewing, tailoring and similar crafts.
 - f. Repair services, limited to watches and clocks, small appliances, computers, electronic devices, and similar small devices.
 - g. A lemonade stand or similar incidental sales activity operated under adult supervision by one (1) or more minor residents of the premises shall be permitted as a temporary home occupation, provided that; signage is limited to temporary signs permitted in the zoning district.
 - h. ~~A-i.~~ Firearms dealer, as defined in Section 2.2 (Definitions) and subject to the limitations and prohibited uses as specified in this Section, and to maintaining an active federal firearms license in good standing where the scope of activities requires this license.
8. Prohibited Uses. The following uses are expressly prohibited as a home occupation or home-based limited business.
 - a. General repair and servicing of motor vehicles or recreational vehicles, body and paint shops, welding shops, and storage or dismantling yards.
 - b. Kennels and veterinary clinics.
 - c. Medical or dental clinics.

- d. Retail stores and eating or drinking establishments.
- e. Adult regulated uses and sexually oriented businesses.
- f. Any use or process that creates noise, vibration, glare, fumes, odor, electrical interference, or similar nuisances to persons off the premises; creates or exacerbates any hazard of fire, explosion, or radioactivity; or causes visual or audible interference or fluctuations in line voltages off the premises.
- g. Any use involving outdoor display, parking or storage of materials, goods, supplies, vehicles or equipment; or the use of machinery, equipment or facilities not commonly incidental or accessory to a residential dwelling.
- h. Any firearms dealer in or importer or manufacturer of destructive devices as defined in Section 2.2 (Definitions); any pawnbroker in firearms; any manufacturer of ammunition for firearms; any outdoor sales or demonstrations of firearms; or any indoor or outdoor gun range activities of a firearms dealer outside of a hunting club, gun club, or indoor or outdoor gun range as allowed in the zoning district.

PART SEVEN – Repeal

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provisions of this amendatory ordinance, except as herein provided, are hereby repealed only to the extent necessary to give this amendatory ordinance full force and effect.

PART EIGHT – Severability

If any section, subsection, clause, phrase or portion of this amendatory ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion thereof.

PART NINE – Publication

The Clerk for the Charter Township of Union shall cause this amendatory ordinance to be published in the manner required by law.

PART TEN – Effective Date

This amendatory ordinance was approved and adopted by the Charter Township of Union Board of Trustees, Isabella County, Michigan, on _____, 202____, after initiation and a public hearing by the Planning Commission on _____, 202____ as required pursuant to the Michigan Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended, and after introduction and a first reading by the Township Board on _____, 202____ and publication after such first reading as required by Michigan Act 359 of 1947, as amended. This amendatory ordinance shall be effective on _____, 202____, which date is more than seven days after publication of the ordinance as is required by Section 401(6) of Act 110 of 2006, as amended, provided that this effective date shall be extended as necessary to comply with the requirements of Section 402 of Act 110 of 2006, as amended.