

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GEORGETOWN CHARTER TOWNSHIP
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS HELD JANUARY 28, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kendall Grable at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Kendall Grable (Chairman Grable), Tom Healy, Susan Ouellette, Kelly Kuiper, Tim Smit (alternate)
Members Absent: Kyle Terpstra
Others Present: Ryan Schab – Zoning Administrator (ZA)

#260128-01 – Approval of the Minutes of the [December 10, 2026](#) Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting.

Moved by Kelly Kuiper, seconded by Tom Healy to approve the [December 10, 2026](#) minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#260128-02 – Public Hearing – (VAR2601) Ross De Ruiter, SBA Auction Inc., 2286 Port Sheldon Ct., is **appealing the Zoning Administrator’s determination that the use of the site at 2286 Port Sheldon Ct. for the storage and rental of U-Haul trailers is an open air business as defined in Sec. 2.77 of the Township Zoning Ordinance, **which is determined to NOT be allowed, to NEVER have been allowed, to NOT be legal nonconforming, and to have NO legal nonconforming status rights** on a parcel of land described as P.P. # 70-14-27-100-032, located at 2286 Port Sheldon Ct., in an Industrial (I) zoning district, Georgetown Township, Ottawa County, MI. ([Application for Appeal](#), [Application for Use Zoning Compliance](#), [Determination Letter](#), [Certified Consent Judgement](#), [Property Notice](#))**

The ZA presented the [Staff Report](#).

Chairman Grable stated he felt they needed to separate the previous U-Haul dealer determination cited in the staff report [at 9651 42nd Ave] because it was in the Agricultural (AG) district. AG does not have the litany of permitted uses like the Industrial district has. He asked the ZA if he considered use (F) under the permitted uses in the Industrial district (17.2 of the Zoning Ordinance) which is, “motor freight terminals and distribution centers including garaging and maintenance of equipment.” He asked if that could loosely define a U-Haul storage site.

The ZA stated that could possibly be an interpretation of that ordinance. All the uses in Industrial were considered by the ZA. He stated he understood where Chairman Grable was coming from in terms of the previous determination [at 9651 42nd Ave] being in a different zoning district, however the use was exactly the same. He stated if that is an interpretation that the ZBA has, it could be valid, but that was not the ZA’s determination.

Chairman Grable asked if the applicant or a representative of the applicant would like to speak.

Ross De Ruiter (applicant) stated he didn’t understand the difference between Sunbelt Rentals and his U-Haul rental business. He stated he didn’t understand how they got to have their rental business as an open air business in an Industrial district. He stated he wanted to know what he had to do to comply and make it beneficial for everyone. He stated if he were to go across Chicago Drive to a different zoning district, then it would be allowed in that zoning district, but then the U-Hauls would be going on and off Chicago Drive, rather than an industrial park. He stated Sunbelt Rentals is

classified as a “contractor’s yard,” but residential users can also rent from them. He stated 50-75% of his U-Haul business is rented to contractors like moving companies, Amazon, UPS, and FedEx.

Tom Healy asked the applicant how big the building is.

Ross De Ruiter stated the building is 60’x180’ with a 40’x60’ office attached to the front.

Tom Healy asked how much of the vehicle storage is inside, if any.

Ross De Ruiter stated none. His auction business is ran inside. Any transactions for the U-Haul business are done inside the office, so it’s not an open air business like a food truck or a produce stand.

Tom Healy asked if the vehicles get maintenance on the site.

Ross De Ruiter stated they get maintenance at a U-Haul maintenance center. He stated they may fix a tire on site, but anything like oil changes and brakes get done at a certified center.

Tom Healy wanted to confirm that the essence of the applicant’s thought process is that the business right next door [Sunbelt Rentals] is basically the same business.

Ross De Ruiter stated yes, they store all their stuff outside in the lot. They have big lifts displayed. He stated he keeps his U-Haul trucks nicely lined up, rather than scattered and junky like the previous owner had it.

Tom Healy asked what the normal term of lease is for the U-Haul vehicles.

Ross De Ruiter stated it depends. Some people might rent a truck for a few hours, but sometimes with companies like FedEx or Amazon, they rent trucks for a month or two at a time.

Tom Healy asked if the vehicles remain “U-Haul” vehicles when rented to companies like FedEx or Amazon, or if those companies re-skin the vehicle to match their brand.

Ross De Ruiter stated they remain U-Hauls. He stated those companies may put a number on the vehicle so they can classify it in their own systems, but they remain visibly U-Hauls.

Tom Healy asked the ZA what the timeline or time limit would be if the ZBA tabled this to go to the Planning Commission.

The ZA stated they had a Planning Commission meeting on February 4, 2026 so it could be addressed then. Considering they need time to post notices, any draft language for an ordinance amendment would go to the March 04, 2026 meeting.

Chairman Grable asked the applicant how much of his business is the auction versus the U-Haul business.

Ross De Ruiter stated it was about 60/40. He stated the U-Haul business would do well since there is a need for it in the area. He stated there used to be a U-Haul dealer where National Storage is on Port Sheldon St. He stated he didn’t know the zoning there, but it was allowed a couple years ago before it was a storage facility.

Tim Smit asked the applicant if when he was looking for a new building, did he do any due diligence to see if his business was even allowed in that spot. He stated based on the staff report and how the business was discovered by the code enforcement officer, it seemed as though he did not.

Ross De Ruiter stated every place he's been prior to Georgetown has never had an issue, nor have they required them to apply to be in a building.

Tim Smit asked the applicant if he never had to do fire inspections or anything like that before.

Ross De Ruiter stated when he was in Zeeland he was in an industrial zone and he had no problems there, nor when he was in Hudsonville.

Tim Smit asked the applicant if he has had U-Hauls before and if it was a franchise.

Ross De Ruiter stated it's not a franchise, he's just an authorized dealer.

Tim Smit stated the only reason he asked these questions was because it might have helped with the process.

Ross De Ruiter stated his realtor told him the U-Haul use was a fine use in industrial. He stated he's never had any issues in any other municipality. He stated he had never heard of an open air business before he had to apply with Georgetown.

Chairman Grable opened the public hearing.

John Kersaan, President of Grand River Construction, 2374 Port Sheldon Ct., stated he is a neighboring business directly behind the applicant's building. He stated he is also the owner of the subject property. He stated he bought the property from Great Lakes Roofing, he and his business partner made a lot of effort to clean up the subject property. When they were discussing leasing it out, they didn't want just any business going in there because they didn't want it to look trashy. He stated he had gone to zoning first about his own business because he wasn't sure the construction yard was going to be allowed in that area or not. He stated they did go to zoning when it came to the U-Haul business, but he couldn't believe there was an issue with zoning about running the U-Haul business there. He stated yes, he and the applicant could have been more up front with zoning, but he also felt the U-Haul business could be "put in different buckets" and right now it's in a bucket that doesn't fit and maybe they could put it in a bucket that does fit.

Jon Gillmore, U-Haul Company of Western Michigan President, stated he was as surprised as anybody on this issue. He stated he opens a lot of dealers and the biggest comment he gets from everybody is they don't want the U-Haul business in commercial districts, they want it in industrial. He stated he was surprised they couldn't make this fit in industrial. He stated people typically want to keep a U-Haul dealer out of a commercial corridor and put it in an industrial area. He stated there was an agricultural issue with the last U-Haul determination in Georgetown and there is a very different zoning between industrial and agricultural, and they are not similar. He referenced the transportation hub use and he felt U-Hauls have certainly come to industrial areas under that classification. He stated being in industrial keeps the business out of a busier commercial area and customers are able to get out to Chicago Drive safely. He stated usually he's fighting to get a U-Haul dealer into a *commercial* area rather than into an *industrial* one. He stated classifying the business as a transportation hub would be a much more direct way to allow the business rather than

going through an entire rezoning, which would take months. He stated he hoped the ZBA would consider that tonight and to know that the U-Haul business is an absolute need in the community.

Karl Holtzhueter, 7649 Bluebird Dr., stated he owns a couple business in the Boulder Bluff office condos. He stated he had highly recommended Georgetown Township to the applicant as a very pro-business community. He stated he was stunned when he learned the U-Haul use wasn't allowed in the subject property's zoning district. He stated as a business owner, what the applicant is going through is very stressful right now. He stated he hoped the ZBA members had gone out to the site to see for themselves the property is very compatible with the use. He stated the applicant signed a long-term lease because he felt Georgetown was the community he wanted to do business in and it's where he wants to be.

Chairman Grable closed the public hearing.

Chairman Grable wanted to state a couple things. Section 2.77 of the Georgetown Zoning Ordinance does classify the U-Haul business as an open air business [Includes uses operated for profit substantially in the open air, including: (A) Bicycle, utility truck or trailer, motor vehicle, boats, or home equipment sale, repair, rental, or storage services] and the ZBA does not have the authority to change that definition. Their role is limited to interpret the ordinance. He stated every once in a while they get a situation that really makes them scratch their heads. He stated he did look at the subject property site. He stated he's struggling to understand, if the U-Haul dealership has an office where all the transactions are taking place inside, how that is "open air."

Kelly Kuiper stated she has been in the zoning administrator's position and she stated Georgetown Township has had really high quality ZAs that document every single decision they make. She stated that documentation makes it difficult for new ZAs to think creatively or outside the box because so many decisions have already come before the township and to not follow that precedent potentially creates another problem for the township in terms of legal liability. She stated there was a lot of documentation that ushered the current ZA to come to the conclusion he did. She stated the ZA is great at his job and he does work hard for the residents and this was just a really tough decision when there's so much precedent set already. She stated on the other hand, local zoning ordinance is often used to find ways to prohibit things instead of getting creative to allow businesses to succeed. She stated she would rather look at an ordinance and say, "How can we make this work?" She stated she didn't know that it was ultimately the ZBA's job to find creative ways to make sure every business is successful, but she felt there was a way forward. She stated she did struggle with the decision that Sunbelt Rentals was being classified as a contractor's yard because it simply is not a contractor's yard. She stated a past ZA got creative and classified Sunbelt Rentals as a contractor's yard, and while she does not think that's the appropriate classification, they are operating successfully and in a similar manner to what the applicant is requesting. Ultimately, her opinion was that the township could figure out a way to allow the use, whether it be permitted or as a special land use. She stated she felt it would be a successful use in the industrial district and particularly in this case because the property does border highway service commercial zoning. She does not believe it should be rezoned at all. She stated she wondered if there was a way to temporarily classify the property as a motor freight terminal to allow the applicant to continue while the township figures out a way to allow some of the uses that are already operating in that area.

Chairman Grable stated he believed if they were to table the item, it would pause any enforcement action.

Kelly Kuiper asked if pausing enforcement action would allow the applicant to continue operating the business.

The ZA stated yes, it would.

Tom Healy stated he agreed rezoning would be impractical. He asked what the ZBA thought about allowing the Planning Commission to look at Sec. 2.77 and make adjustments to it. He stated he felt there were inconsistencies in that section of the ordinance, and gave the example of bicycles being lumped in with utility trucks and trailers as rentals, and it seemed impractical.

Chairman Grable stated Arrowaste [waste management company] is renting dumpsters right next door to the subject property and wondered how that was any different.

Kelly Kuiper stated if they were to send Sec. 2.77 to the Planning Commission for review, the ZBA should have specific suggestions as to what they look at. She stated they need to clarify or adjust the definition of open air business as the business uses lumped under it are not all appropriate, and further, they should adjust the zoning districts as they relate to open air businesses. She stated the township also needs to clarify this type of use better in the industrial district as a permitted use because it's already happening at Sunbelt Rentals and Arrowaste, and these are not contractor items being rented. She stated they would be having a different conversation entirely if someone had complained about the open air business occurring at the subject property, but that is not the case. She stated it was not necessary to have Sunbelt Rentals come back to the zoning department to have any formal reapprovals, but should the ordinance be amended to allow open air businesses in industrial districts, updating Sunbelt Rentals' use zoning compliance to reflect it as an open air business would help to clarify their actual business use in the future.

Tom Healy stated he knew Kelly Kuiper had a lot of experience dealing with ordinances and he also stated the ZA did an excellent job making his initial determination. He stated the way things are currently set up, the ZBA's hands are tied and the only way out is to go to the Planning Commission and ask them to fix the ordinance. He stated it was a small section that should be able to be addressed. He asked Kelly Kuiper if she would be able to lend some of her ordinance expertise and insight into how it should be structured.

Kelly Kuiper stated the ZA is incredibly qualified to write that language, but she would be happy to check it or offer guidance.

Chairman Grable stated "open air" is a nebulous term, because does "open air" mean storing anything in a parking lot and conducting business inside, or does it mean having a farm stand outside. He stated Fazoli's restaurant has closed on Baldwin Street [near Cottonwood Dr], which is zoned commercial service where the U-Haul rental would be a permitted use. He asked rhetorically if people would rather have a U-Haul rental in front of Meijer on Baldwin St.

Kelly Kuiper stated open air businesses could only be in that district as a special land use, so they might not meet the criteria to approve a special land use, but she understood what Chairman Grable was saying and she completely agreed. She stated they know where they would rather have a U-Haul dealer be located.

Tim Smit stated he agreed a rezoning was not necessary. He stated he again wanted to point out that the applicant never came in for zoning approval which has resulted in this meeting. He stated he wasn't sure if the ZBA had to direct the Planning Commission to rewrite the zoning ordinance

or if the ZA could have initiated that with the Planning Commission. He stated he felt Georgetown Township is not hard to do business with, but there are a lot of rules and they are black and white. The rules exist to keep the community operating in the right way so the township doesn't get sued and there is a lot of precedent that lead up to this point. He stated he understood this was stressful for the applicant, but felt like this could have been figured out when the applicant moved into the property [had the applicant come in for zoning approval]. He stated he felt he could not speak for the Planning Commission, but felt this issue could be resolved. He stated Sec. 17.2 permitted uses [in Industrial zoning] needed to be cleaned up and some businesses need to be reclassified.

Chairman Grable confirmed there was a consensus that the ZBA wants to have the Planning Commission look at Sec. 17.2 and Sec. 2.77.

Kelly Kuiper stated ultimately it's up to the Planning Commission, but that the ZBA should make a recommendation to allow open air business to be a permitted use in the industrial district.

Moved by Kendall Grable, seconded by Tom Healy to table the appeal while the Planning Commission reviews Sec. 2.77, the definition of open air business, and Sec. 17.2, the uses permitted in the Industrial District, of the Zoning Ordinance.

Yeas: Kendall Grable, Tom Healy, Susan Ouellette, Kelly Kuiper, Tim Smit (alternate)

Nays: None

Absent:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#260128-03 – Public Comments

There were no public comments.

#260128-04 – Other Business

There was no other business.

#260128-05 – Adjournment

Moved by Kelly Kuiper, seconded by Susan Ouellette, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.



Grand River Construction, Inc.

General Contractors • Commercial and Industrial • Concrete Specialist

January 21, 2026

**Georgetown Township
1515 Baldwin Street
Jenison, MI 49429**

Re: SB Auction, Inc. – U-Haul activities at 2286 Port Sheldon Court

Dear Board Members,

Grand River Construction is a neighboring business to SB Auction, Inc. We are writing to show our support for SB Auction, Inc.'s appeal of the township's determination that a U-Haul rental business at 2286 Port Sheldon Ct. is nonconforming. Many businesses in this neighborhood have outdoor storage and components of an open air business including construction equipment, semi trailers, salvage yards, and others. Permitted uses include motor freight terminals, cartage businesses, and vehicle repair establishments which are all very similar to a U-Haul rental business. Sunbelt Rentals, a neighboring business directly adjacent to SB Auction Inc. is an open air equipment rental business and used to be a part of a parcel for an open air auction business.

We understand that an open air business like a flea market may not fit with the neighboring businesses but believe that a U-Haul business is a great addition to the neighborhood and the community as a whole. We believe the township should focus on allocating resources to support and encourage local businesses.

Sincerely,

John Kersaan

John Kersaan
President, Grand River Construction Inc.
2374 Port Sheldon Court



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11/19/2026

Zoning Board of Appeals / Georgetown Twp.
1515 Baldwin Street
Jenison, MI 49429

Re: Support for SB Auctions Inc. — Outdoor Storage of U-Haul Trucks at 2286 Port Sheldon Ct. Jenison, MI 49428

Dear Board Members,

As a neighboring business, I am writing in support of SB Auctions Inc.'s request for permission to conduct outdoor staging of their U-Haul rental trucks at their Port Sheldon Ct. address. The activity is functionally equivalent to the neighboring equipment rental company's use, which already stores inventory outdoors. Therefore, the township has already set a precedent for such an open-air business on an industrial-zoned parcel.

It's essential for the township to act in line with such precedents to continue reducing the undue burden and confusion on local businesses. Approving SB Auctions' request ensures consistent treatment of like uses and fair competition.

Sincerely,

Matthew Henderson
President, Nu-Wool Co., LLC.
2472 Port Sheldon St • 616-669-0100