Denmark Township Memorandum

To:	Denmark Township Town Board
Copies:	Troy Gilchrist, Town Attorney
From:	Kim Lindquist, Denmark Township Planning Consultant
Date: Meeting Date:	May 28, 2026 June 1, 2026
WSB Project No.	031789-000
Requests:	**Discussion of Accessory Structure Regulations- Attached Garage Regulations**

DISCUSSION

Recently, Board Member Flock was approached by a person interested in constructing a Barndominium within the Township. The tentative plans illustrate an approximate 9,000 sq ft building with 7,000 sq ft allocated to the attached garage and shop area and the remaining 2,000 sq ft living space. As proposed, the allocation of sq ft would not comply with recent February 2026 ordinance changes for accessory structures, specifically Section 2.G:

> Chapter Two, Part 3 1.2 (2) G. The total square footage of an attached garage shall not exceed 50% of the finished square footage of the residential dwelling to which it is attached.

Part of the deliberations about this ordinance language was that it addressed a concern that the principal structure could be mostly comprised of a garage and therefore the 50% requirement was supported. The goal was to not have a small house with an overly large garage. Additionally, it was recognized that the ordinance allowed more accessory structure opportunities for storage and garage space.

A lesson we've all learned is that it is hard to draft an ordinance which fits every situation; the accessory structure ordinance amendment is three months old. In principle, the Town may view a Barndominium favorably and want to vary from the ordinance. However, the request would not qualify for a variance and therefore, the correct approach would be to entertain a text amendment. The issue is that the prior ordinance did not have a square footage limit for attached garages and that portion of the structure could overshadow the house's living space. In the example above the garage and shop would be over 3 times the size of the living area.

Additionally, while the ordinance section above only addresses an attached garage, the Board and Commission should recall that the accessory structure sizes were also modified in the February amendments. Under the current ordinance, non-agricultural lots 20 acres and above are permitted 10,000 sq ft of accessory structure in up to five different buildings. Under the Barndominium scenario above, the property owner could have 10,000 sq ft of accessory structures and 7,000 sq ft of attached garage.

Another issue for consideration is the long-term use of properties with larger accessory structures or attached garages. The concern is always that future owners may take the opportunity to use accessory storage for business related uses, which is not the intention of the ordinance. Allowing

a significant amount of non-agricultural building storage on site may lead to less desirable land uses in the future.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff is requesting the Board discuss the issue raised and provide staff direction.