

MEETING MINUTES
EATON AREA JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2026 AT 6:00 PM
BASEMENT CONFERENCE ROOM
551 COURTHOUSE DRIVE, CHARLOTTE, MI 48813

1. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Attendance—Roll Call**
 - a. Present: Lawitzke, Orr, Scramlin, Owens, Chairperson Thering, and Shettler
 - b. Absent: Carlson
 - c. Staff: Andrea Hendrick and Hannah Stocker

4. **Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Treasurer Orr to approve the agenda with the addition of the Resolution to Establish the General Appropriations Act.

Supported by Chairperson Thering.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest

6. **Approval of June 23, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Lawitzke to approve the June 23, 2026 meeting minutes.

Supported by Commissioner Owens.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. **Approval of June 29, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Lawitzke to approve the June 29, 2026 special meeting minutes with a spelling correction.

Supported by Commissioner Scramlin.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. **Reports**

- a. **Legal** – Attorney Stocker reported that there were no legal matters requiring action.
- b. **Zoning** – Hendrick reported that the Commission's .gov domain, staff email accounts, zoning ordinance, and initial application forms were

in place. The website was under development and expected to be substantially functional by the end of August.

- c. **Chairperson** – Chairperson Thering recommended using the Wexford County Joint Planning Commission website as a model for a straightforward site containing agendas, minutes, ordinances, forms, and other public records.

9. Old Business

- a. **Zoning Board of Appeals** – Each participating township was asked to identify a proposed representative for the joint Zoning Board of Appeals before the August meeting. The Commission will consider nominations, after which the participating township boards will complete the required appointments.
- b. **Logo—Vision and Values** – Commissioners completed a worksheet identifying community land-use priorities, values, and preferred color schemes. Staff will use the responses to prepare logo concepts for future review.

10. New Business

- a. **Planning and Zoning Basics Training** – Hendrick presented an overview of Planning Commission responsibilities, zoning application types, site-plan review, public-hearing procedure, deliberation, findings of fact, motions, conditions of approval, and post-approval compliance. Commissioners were advised to base decisions on the ordinance standards and record, maintain consistent procedures, and clearly identify the factual and ordinance basis for approvals or denials. The training also distinguished a dimensional variance, which applies to a property with unique circumstances and is decided by the Zoning Board of Appeals, from a zoning text amendment, which changes the generally applicable ordinance standards and is recommended by the Planning Commission for action by the participating township boards.
- b. **11994 W. Grand Ledge Highway—Proposed Gas Station**
Staff and representatives of the prospective applicant presented a preliminary concept for a gas station and convenience store. The discussion focused on the ordinance's 75-foot setback for fuel-pump canopies, whether relief should be pursued through a variance or a generally applicable text amendment, the relationship of the canopy and circulation pattern to the roadway, underground and aboveground fuel storage, and possible limits on outdoor merchandise storage.

Commissioners generally indicated that the 75-foot canopy setback may be excessive, while expressing concern about reducing it too far. A range of approximately 40 to 50 feet was discussed for further study. The applicant may use the Commission's comments to determine whether to pursue a text amendment, a variance after the Zoning Board of Appeals is established, or a revised site design. No action was taken on the proposed development.

- c. **FOIA Procedures, Guidelines, and Public Summary** – Attorney Stocker reviewed the Commission's obligations under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, including receipt and tracking of requests, response deadlines, extensions, deposits, fees, exemptions, and publication of the adopted materials. The Commission secretary will serve as FOIA coordinator, with requests directed to secretary@eatonareajpcmi.gov and coordinated with zoning staff and legal counsel as needed.

Motion by Commissioner Owens to approve the FOIA Procedures and Guidelines and Public Summary, designating the Commission secretary as FOIA coordinator and using secretary@eatonareajpcmi.gov for FOIA requests.

Supported by Treasurer Orr.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Treasurer Orr to establish July 29, 2026 as the effective date of the FOIA Procedures and Guidelines and Public Summary.

Supported by Commissioner Owens.

Motion carried unanimously.

- d. **General Liability Insurance** – Treasurer Orr summarized efforts to obtain comparable coverage and confirmed that Commission approval was required under the purchasing policy. The proposed Michigan Township Participating Plan coverage also includes access to risk-management and training resources.

Motion by Commissioner Scramlin to approve coverage through the Michigan Township Participating Plan.

Supported by Commissioner Shettler.

Motion carried unanimously.

- e. **Resolution to Establish the General Appropriations Act** – Attorney Stocker explained that the resolution completes the Commission's budget-adoption process following the public hearing and approval by the participating township boards. The resolution identifies the

adopted budget, the chairperson as chief administrative officer, and the treasurer as fiscal officer.

Motion by Commissioner Lawitzke to adopt the Resolution to Establish the General Appropriations Act.

Supported by Commissioner Owens.

Motion carried unanimously by roll-call vote.

f. Internet Service Agreement

Motion by Treasurer Orr to accept the Eaton Conservation District's offer to provide internet service to the Commission for \$20 per month.

Supported by Commissioner Lawitzke.

Motion carried unanimously.

11. Public Comment

Frank Holmes, Eaton County Commissioner for District 14, stated that he attended to observe the Commission's progress.

12. General Discussion

Commissioners discussed adding an additional public-comment opportunity near the beginning of future agendas, following approval of the minutes, so the public may comment before the Commission considers substantive business.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Owens to adjourn the meeting.

Supported by Commissioner Lawitzke.

Motion carried unanimously.