

# VAN BUREN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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## August 28, 2024 - Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order & Attendance** - The meeting was called to order by Alyssa Hosbein at 6:30 PM.

**Present:** Tom Motycka, Barbara Rose, Kurt Doroh, Alyssa Hosbein, Will Pugsley, Tony Hemenway and Lisa Ransler. **Absent:** Scott Cedarquist, Celinda Gilmore and Jan Peterson

2. **Approval of Agenda** - Motion by Motycka, supported by Pugsley, to approve the August 28, 2024, agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**

3. **Approval of Minutes from July 24, 2024** - Motion by Doroh, supported by Motycka, to approve the minutes from the July 24, 2024, meeting. **Motion approved unanimously.**

4. **Public Comment** - No public comments were received.

5. **Reports**

- a. **County Board of Commission (BOC):** - Doroh reported that the county broadband initiative is progressing on time and under budget. It is anticipated that approximately one million dollars will be returned to the county for reappropriation.
- b. **Land Preservation Board (LPB):** Next meeting scheduled for September 11, 2024, at the Human Services West Building in Hartford.
- c. **Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC):** Paul Schincariol and Bob Barron were appointed to the Materials Management Planning Committee. Marcy Hamilton updated the Commission on her work to upgrade regional parks and trails.
- d. **Local Visits Report / Coordination of Local Visits:** Doroh reported on discussion in Columbia Township regarding renewable energy trends and battery storage facilities. Rose commented that Covert Township was having similar discussions and reviewing their storage container ordinance. Motycka reported that Decatur reviewed Midwest Fest and Hosbein commented that the Health Department was present at Decatur Township meeting to discuss concerns related to water quality and safety, particularly at "the lake of the woods."
- e. **Staff Report:** Ransler distributed information regarding a renewable energy academy workshop hosted by EGLE in Kalamazoo on October 28.

6. **Unfinished Business**

**Planning Commission By-Laws:** A review of the proposed changes to the Planning Commission by-laws was conducted. The following points were discussed, and Ransler will update the draft with the recommended changes.

- Changing terms of office for commission members to three years.
- Clarification on conflict of interest.
- Annual report requirements.
- Provisions for ex officio members.

## 7. New Business

### a. Member Appointment Applications:

- i. Motion by Doroh with support from Rose to recommend Gordon Andrews for appointment to the Planning Commission. **Motion approved unanimously.**
- ii. Motion by Motycka with support from Hosebein to recommend Nicholas Carlson for appointment to the Planning Commission. **Motion approved unanimously.**

**b. Proposed Columbia Township Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment:** The amendment aimed to refine zoning regulations within Columbia Township, particularly regarding renewable energy installations and battery storage facilities. There was extensive discussion about the need for these regulations to balance community interests, safety concerns, and the advancement of renewable energy infrastructure. The commission emphasized the importance of setting clear guidelines for battery storage to avoid potential conflicts with state-level regulations. After discussion, motion by Motycka, supported by Hemenway, to concur with the Columbia Township Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment. **Motion approved unanimously.**

**c. Proposed Antwerp Township Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment:** This amendment involved modifying zoning designations within Antwerp Township at 28210 Red Arrow. Discussion centered on how the changes might affect future development, traffic flow, and community character. The commission agreed that the amendment aligns with the township's long-term planning objectives, ensuring orderly growth and land use management. After discussion, motion by Motycka, supported by Doroh, to concur with the Antwerp Township Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment. **Motion approved unanimously.**

**d. Proposed Paw Paw Township Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment:** The proposed text amendment for Paw Paw Township focused specifically on updating signage regulations within the township. The discussion centered on modifying the size, placement, and lighting of signs in different zoning districts to ensure that they are consistent with the township's aesthetic and safety standards. After discussion, motion by Motycka, supported by Doroh, to concur with the Paw Paw Township Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment. **Motion approved unanimously.**

## 8. Adjournment - Hosbein adjourned the meeting at 7:20 PM. .

The next meeting is scheduled for September 25, 2024, at 6:30 PM, but may need to be rescheduled due to quorum concerns.