

**Van Buren County Planning Commission**  
**57418 CR 681, Hartford, MI 49057**  
**September 24, 2025 – 6:30 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

- 1. Call to Order and Attendance:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Alyssa Hosbein. **Present:** Scott Cedarquist, Jan Petersen, Will Pugsley, Barbara Rose, Tony Hemenway and Alyssa Hosbein **Absent:** Tom Motycka, Will Pugsley, Barbara Rose **Others Present:** Lisa Ransler, staff
- 2. Approval of Agenda:** Doroh, supported by Hosbein, made a motion to approve the September 24, 2025 agenda. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3. Approval of Minutes:** Hosbein, supported by Carlson, made a motion to approve the August 27, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.
- 4. Public Comment:** None.
- 5. Reports**
  - a) Board of Commissioners Liaison Report:** Doroh reported that the County Surveyor position has been eliminated (elected position), the County broadband initiative continues with MEC being 90% complete, but lagging with a few ISP's. Several SWAT team recognitions with the Sheriff's Department.
  - b) Land Preservation Board (LPB):** Cedarquist reported that the board has finalized the new application processes for grants related to farmland preservation. They are preparing for a new grant cycle with 2 interested property owners and are conducting outreach to townships that are not yet involved.
  - c) Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC):** At the last board meeting, they heard presentations from Jerry Happel regarding the County's Digital Information Department and from John Eglehoff regarding the materials management program.
  - d) Local Visits:** Peterson reported on the Dune's Day Program in Covert and commented that it was well attended and the presentations by EGLE were great.
  - e) Staff Report:** Ransler noted that over the past several months it has been difficult to obtain a quorum. She explained that State legislation allows Planning Commissions to consist of 11, 9, or 5 members. Since at least 5 members typically attend, reducing the membership requirement from 11 to 9 could help ensure more frequent quorums. Peterson, supported by Cedarquist, moved to direct staff to draft a resolution recommending to the Board of Commissioners that the Planning Commission membership be reduced from 11 to 9. Motion carried unanimously.
- 6. Old Business:** None.

## 7. New Business

- a) **Cass County Master Plan:** The Planning Commission reviewed the draft Cass County Master Plan dated August 2025 and expressed overall support for its direction and organization. Commissioners appreciated the plan’s structure, use of data, and the emphasis on supporting local planning efforts across jurisdictions within the county.

A brief discussion focused on the land designated for mineral resource extraction. While the plan includes maps showing these areas and notes that regulation is the responsibility of local municipalities, Commissioners felt that this section could be strengthened by including more context or guidance—such as why these specific areas were selected, how environmental considerations might be addressed, and examples of best practices for local regulation.

The Commission asked staff to send a letter of support for the plan, with a suggestion to expand the discussion on mineral resource areas to help local governments more effectively address future extraction-related planning.

- b) **Paw Paw Township Zoning Amendment – HCI District Facilities:** The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed zoning text amendment submitted by Paw Paw Township, which adds Mini/Self-Storage Facilities as a permitted use and Indoor Recreation Facilities as a special land use within the Heavy Commercial/Industrial (HCI) zoning district. The amendment also includes updates to definitions, parking standards, and clarifies permitted and special land uses for both the HCI and General Commercial (GC) districts.

Discussion included consideration of the township’s intent to promote adaptive reuse, expand commercial and recreational services, and support flexible development options. Commissioners noted that the amendment is consistent with the township’s Master Plan and modern zoning practices.

Cedarquist, supported by Petersen, made a motion to concur with the Paw Paw Township Planning Commission zoning ordinance amendment. Motion carried unanimously.

- c) **Pine Grove Township Zoning Map Amendment** The Planning Commission reviewed a zoning map amendment request from Pine Grove Township. The request involved rezoning a parcel from Agricultural (AG) to Commercial (C) zoning to accommodate expanded land use potential.

Commissioners briefly discussed the consistency of the request with the township’s Master Plan and the surrounding land use patterns. There were no significant concerns raised.

Cedarquist, supported by Doroh, made a motion to concur with the Pine Grove Township zoning map amendment as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

- d) **South Haven Charter Township PUD Rezoning – 73½ Street** The Planning Commission reviewed a zoning map amendment request from South Haven Charter Township to rezone

approximately 10 acres near 73½ Street from Commercial to High-Density Residential (HDR) through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process. The applicant, Safe and Easy Self Storage LLC, proposes a 45-unit residential neighborhood that includes private infrastructure and shared recreational amenities such as a pool, basketball court, and pickleball court.

The Commission discussed the proposal's alignment with the Van Buren County Master Plan, including goals related to compact growth, housing diversity, and development in areas served by infrastructure and services. The site is located in a transitional area near M-140 and is adjacent to public utilities and existing neighborhoods. Doroh, supported by Petersen, made a motion to concur with the South Haven Charter Township's proposed rezoning from Commercial to HDR via PUD.

- e) **Drozd PA 116 Requests – Bloomingdale Township** The Planning Commission reviewed two applications submitted by Drozd Family Grain for enrollment in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116). The parcels are actively used for corn and soybean production, each exceeding the 40-acre eligibility threshold, and are located in Bloomingdale Township, which does not administer its own zoning ordinance. Therefore, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners serves as the approving authority. The specific parcels included in the application are: Parcel **80-05-036-021-00** (36th Street) and Parcel **80-05-002-002-75** (2nd Avenue)

Each application requests a 10-year preservation agreement. The Planning Commission's role is advisory and focuses on whether the applications are consistent with township and county land use and farmland preservation goals. Cedarquist, supported by Hosbein, made a motion to support the Drozd PA 116 applications and to forward a favorable advisory comment to the County Board and Conservation District. Motion carried unanimously.

- f) **Southwest Michigan Housing Asset Mapping – Region J** Ransler introduced the project as an informational item. The program is as a collaborative regional effort to inventory housing assets, and types of housing stock across counties within Region J. The purpose of the initiative is to better understand housing needs and guide future planning decisions. Commissioners were directed to a web link for more information.

**8. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.