

Lodi Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

3775 Pleasant Lake Road Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

August 26, 2025 at 7 pm

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Chair Strader at 7:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

2. Roll Call

Present: Froberg, Marsh, Stevenson, Strader, Sweetland, Vestergaard
Absent: Rogers
Others Present: Recording Secretary Michelle Joppeck,
Township Planner Hannah Smith,
Township Attorney Jesse O'Jack,
Township Trustee Donald Rentschler,
Carly Rose, Haley Scheich, Don Scheich, and three other members of the public

3. Announcements: None

4. Approval of Agenda

Strader proposed swapping Old Business and New Business since it appeared that New Business would be quick. Marsh moved to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Stevenson. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none, absent=1. Motion carried.

5. Public Hearing: None

6. Public Comment

Public comment began at 7:01 pm. No comments were received from the public. Public comment ended at 7:01 pm.

7. Approval of Minutes – 7/22/2025 & 8/14/2025

Strader noted that she misstated that Riding Oaks has gates; Riding Oaks does not have any gates and she was speaking about the entry. No changes were made to the minutes per Township Attorney Jesse O'Jack since the minutes reflect what was said even if incorrect.

Vestergaard moved to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2025 Lodi Township Planning Commission regular meeting as presented. Second by Marsh. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none, absent=1. Motion carried.

Sweetland moved to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2025 Lodi Township Planning Commission special meeting as presented. Second by Stevenson. A voice vote was taken. Aye=4, Nay=none, abstain=2, absent=1. Motion carried.

8. New Business:

a. Application for Caretakers Living Quarters at 6760 Noble Rd, Parcel # 13-27-400-001, Haley Scheich

An application was submitted by Haley Scheich for a Final Site Plan for a Caretakers Living Quarters at 6760 Nobel Rd, Parcel #13-27-400-001. Strader explained that a Special Use permit would need to be obtained for the Caretakers Living Quarters which requires a public hearing. After the public hearing, the Planning Commission would make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees regarding the Special Use permit. The Board of Trustees would then make a decision regarding the Special Use permit. Site Plan approval would also need to be obtained per the Caretakers Living Quarters use standards. Township Planner Hannah Smith noted that it should be possible for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees regarding the Special Use permit and the Site Plan at the same meeting and, if the Planning Commission saw fit, could recommend Combined Preliminary and Final Site plan review instead of having to complete a Preliminary Site Plan review and Final Site Plan review separately.

Questions were asked by the applicant surrounding the process and answered by Strader. It was recommended for the applicants to have a meeting with Township Clerk Smith prior to Friday regarding the process and to submit the Special Use permit application so that the public hearing could be scheduled for September 23, 2025.

Froberg asked if there was any way to expediate the process for the applicant. Due to noticing requirements for the public hearing, there would not be a way to expediate the process. Marsh recommended labeling which building is proposed to be changed on the survey map to make that clearer.

Strader moved to set a public hearing for a Special Use permit for Caretakers Living Quarters at 6760 Noble Rd, Parcel # 13-27-400-001 by Haley Scheich for September 23, 2025 contingent on a Special Use application being submitted by August 29, 2025. Second by Sweetland. A roll call vote was taken. Sweetland=aye, Vestergaard=aye, Strader=aye, Stevenson=aye, Marsh=aye, Froberg=aye, absent=1. Motion carried.

b. Update Fence Ordinance 55.18.A.2

The Board of Trustees moved to direct the Planning Commission to update the Fence Ordinance 55.18.A.2 to include geotextile and plywood as prohibited fencing materials at their July meeting. Strader asked if there were any other materials that the Planning Commission wanted to add to the list of prohibited fencing materials while the ordinance is being deliberated.

Marsh asked how this request came about. Strader stated that this request was predicated by a complaint by a resident. Sweetland expressed concern over neighboring property owners having more say in what is allowed on a property than the actual property owners. O'Jack stated that he believes this issue was brought to the Township's attention by a complaint, but the complaint itself is not the reason for the requested ordinance change.

After receiving the complaint, the Township reviewed the ordinance and believes that the presented fencing materials should be prohibited regardless of the complaint in question. It was noted that changing the ordinance now, after the fence that is the subject of the complaint has already been erected, would allow that specific fence to be considered a legally nonconforming structure subject to the provisions of Article 56.0

Nonconformities per Article 55.18.D Existing Fences. Changing the ordinance now would not change the results of the complaint in question, but would only apply to new fences erected in the future after any changes to the Zoning Ordinance were passed.

Marsh asked if there would be a way to change the Zoning Ordinance so that anything that is not listed as allowed would need to come to the Township for approval before being erected. This would allow residents to be creative without having to list exactly what would be prohibited. The Planning Commission felt that this would belabor the process and make it more difficult for residents. O'Jack also noted that the ordinance should not be written in a subjective way where it could be claimed that the ordinance is enforced differently for different people which would open the Township up to lawsuits. The ordinance needs to be written based on precise factors.

Vestergaard asked how the ordinance applies to temporary fencing as geotextile fencing would make sense for temporary fencing, such as used during construction, but would not be desirable for a permanent fence.

Sweetland asked how decorative fencing is defined. Smith stated that generally decorative fences are defined as 50% opacity and less than four feet, but is not sure if that term is defined in Lodi Township's Zoning Ordinance. Smith also stated that the decorative fence requirements currently in the Zoning Ordinance only applies to fences inside of the front yard setback. Strader is interested in adding a definition or examples of what a decorative fence is to the Zoning Ordinance.

Marsh asked O'Jack how problematic the current Fence Ordinance has been in the past. O'Jack stated that in the past, that have been very few to no issues to his knowledge surrounding the current Fence Ordinance.

Strader moved to set a public hearing on September 23, 2025 for the proposed changes to the Fence Ordinance 55.18.A.2 with the addition of corrugated metal as a prohibited fence material as well as adding examples of decorative fencing to Section 55.18.B.1. Second by Froberg. A roll call vote was taken. Sweetland=aye, Vestergaard=aye, Strader=aye, Stevenson=aye, Marsh=aye, Froberg=aye, absent=1. Motion carried.

9. Old Business

a. Lodi Township Master Plan update

Proposed changes to Part 4 Existing Conditions and Trends of the Master Plan were provided, reviewed and discussed by Smith. Smith noted that CIB Planning was recently acquired by OHM Advisors. With this acquisition there are more resources for items like mapping available for updating the Master Plan.

Questions were asked by Planning Commission members and answered to the best of Smith's ability. Suggestions and edits were also requested and recommended by Planning Commission members.

Changes for Parts 5, 6, and 7 should be ready for next month's meeting.

b. Copperleaf Crossing update

Strader stated that a letter was received a few hours before the meeting from Copperleaf Crossing's attorney, Benjamin Bayram, stating that they are working hard to submit the new area plan, but there is no update at this time. He asked to be removed from future meeting agendas.

Froberg stated that, under Article 42, it is laid out very clearly about doing work outside of the Area Plan. The Planning Commission decided that the changes made to the Area Plan constitute a Major Change at the Planning Commission held on July 23, 2024. Nothing has been submitted since then. Froberg stated that her understanding is that the Planning Commission has the ability to refer this issue up to the Board of Trustees for any action they may take since this has been outstanding for so long. Froberg asked O'Jack what the requirements from the Planning Commission were to refer the issue to the Board of Trustees. O'Jack said that he would have to look into that. Froberg is concerned that allowing this issue to go so long without any progress sets a precedent for other property owners to be allowed to take as long. Vestergaard stated that he does remember another case where it took over two years to resolve an issue.

c. Solar Energy Systems Ordinance

The version of the draft Solar Energy Systems Ordinance in the packet is old and it was not noticed until it was too late to distribute a corrected copy.

Smith reviewed information that she has received and answers to questions that Commissioners had surrounding the proposed Solar Energy Systems Ordinance. Most of the new information was received from Dr. Sarah Mills who is the Director of the Center for EmPowering Communities at the Graham Sustainability Institute at University of Michigan.

Regarding where in the Township these systems might be built, according to Dr. Mills, systems covered under the draft ordinance would need to be adjacent to three phase wires. DTE has mapping tools showing where those systems are and the largest system it could handle. From what Smith understands and these tools, the Northeast corner of Lodi Township has an area that could support a Solar Energy System of up to 1.2 MW. There are also transmission lines that run between Zeeb and Wagner. A Solar Energy System could be built within a maximum of 3 miles from those transmission lines. For projects that are closer to the 50 MW cutoff, systems would need to be near a substation. The closest substations are in Ann Arbor by Polo Fields Golf & Country Club and in Saline, south of Austin Rd. A substation is showing on DTE's map at Waters and Wagner Rd, but Smith thinks, based on information received from Dr. Mills, that might be where transmission lines connect to the distribution lines or where two distribution lines intersect instead of being an actual substation. Sweetland asked if there was a substation on Parker Rd, north of Pleasant Lake Rd. Smith said that DTE's map does not show one there so she cannot verify that. Marsh stated that he believes he was told during construction that Copperleaf Crossing has three transformers that were triple phased.

Sweetland asked if a substation would need to be built to get the power to the grid. Smith said that the massive projects would likely need to build a substation, but she has not

heard that systems under 50 MW would need to do so. Smith said that, according to Dr. Mills, it is not completely infeasible for a Solar Energy System to be built in Lodi Township and it would be good to have an ordinance in place before a development looks at property in Lodi Township.

Strader asked if likely areas for Solar Energy Systems would be something that should be referenced in the Master Plan. Smith said that it would be a good idea and will look into that further.

Smith also looked into drainage and impacts to drainage tiles per Sweetland's request. In the draft ordinance, there is a provision that states that drainage should be contained within the site in line with natural drainage patterns. The Graham Sustainability Institute at University of Michigan has a database of zoning ordinance in Michigan that are in place currently. Smith found a few ways that communities have addressed drainage tiles. Smith will ask the Township Clerk to send out the language found in those ordinances referencing drainage tiles with the corrected copy of the draft Solar Energy Systems Ordinance for review by the Planning Commission.

Regarding setbacks, Smith found that ordinances in the database from the Graham Sustainability Institute range anywhere from 50 to 300 feet. Most do not exceed 100 feet for non-participating property lines. Smith feels that the 100 feet in the draft ordinance is reasonable, but a larger setback would not be unreasonable if the Planning Commission wished to increase those setbacks. According to Dr. Mills, the land in the setback has not been found suitable for farming. Also, from Dr. Mills' experience, screening helps with the visual impact of the system and noise requirements mitigate the nuisance issue for noise levels. Strader asked if the landscaping buffers would be in addition to the setbacks or if they would be located in the setback. Smith stated that, typically, the landscaping buffers are within the setbacks, but could be required to be in addition to the setbacks if the Planning Commission wanted.

For changes to the draft ordinance, Smith stated that she took out the references to the Public Service Commission and updated the definitions and language based on the new guidance documents released from Michigan State University and the University of Michigan.

Finally, Smith requested confirmed that Lodi Township does not want to address the larger systems with a compatible ordinance or a separate ordinance at this time and is waiting until lawsuits against the State legislation is resolved. Smith reviewed the options that Lodi Township has. The Planning Commission feels that it is unlikely that Lodi Township would be a target for a large system and feels that it is more important to address the smaller systems at this time. Smith agrees that that is a good plan. It is easier to take the ordinance for the smaller systems and build it up for larger systems in case the State legislation changes than to start from scratch.

Stevenson asked if it would be possible for developers to find a large piece of land that suits their needs and then run a power line to the necessary infrastructure instead of trying to find land that fits their needs next to the energy infrastructure that they need.

Smith asked for any additional comments or questions to be forwarded to her. O'Jack stated that he would prefer for Commissioners to send their comments or questions to the Township Clerk to be passed on to Hannah Smith for Freedom of Information Act reasons.

Strader is interested in making sure that our Fire Department is equipped with the equipment that is needed to take care of any fires that may occur at these types of systems. That could be accomplished by having the developer provide that equipment or having them provide the funds needed for the Fire Department purchase that equipment.

With the local communities dealing with requests to build Data Centers, Strader asked if that was something that Lodi Township should look into creating an ordinance for. Smith stated that she does not know enough about Data Centers to answer that. She will look into it.

O'Jack discussed Joint Planning Commissions and the benefit that they would have in situations like this.

10. Public Comment

Public comment began at 9:02 pm. Comments were received from 2 people. Public comment ended at 9:09 pm.

11. Reports

- A. Board of Trustees: Marsh reviewed the most recent Board of Trustees meeting held on August 5, 2025.
- B. Commissioners: None
- C. Planning Consultant: Smith noted again that CIB Planning was acquired by OHM Advisors.
- D. Engineering Consultant: None

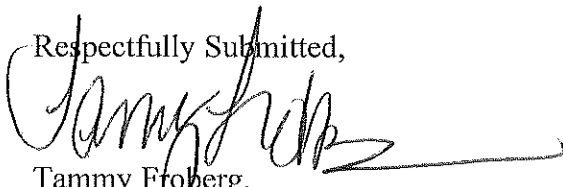
12. Other Business: None

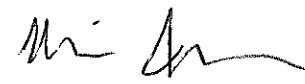
13. Adjournment

Sweetland moved to adjourn at 9:13 pm. Second by Stevenson. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none, absent=1. Motion carried.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,


Tammy Froberg,
Planning Commission Secretary


Michelle Joppeck,
Recording Secretary