



LODI TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 5, 2025 at 6:30 pm

Lodi Township Hall
3755 Pleasant Lake Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

1. Call to order - Pledge of Allegiance

The regular meeting of August 5, 2025 opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:30 pm.

2. Roll Call

Present: Blackburn, Foley, Godek, Marsh, Matelski, Rentschler, Smith

Absent: None

3. Consent Agenda

- C-1: Approve – July 1, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes & July 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes (with Planning Commission)
- C-2: Accept - Investment Report (treasurer report)
- C-3: Approve - Checks for Approval – 7/2/2025-8/5/2025
- C-4: Recognize - Monthly Budget Report
- C-5: Amend Budget – none
- C-6: Recognize Planning Commission Minutes – July 22, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
- C-7: Recognize Board of Appeals Minutes – none
- C-8: Recognize Sheriff Report – not received

Smith moved to approve consent agenda as presented. Second by Foley. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried, 7-0.

4. Attorney Report: None

5. Planning Commission Update

Marsh reviewed the most recent Planning Commission meeting held on July 22, 2025.

6. Short Public Comment

Public comment began at 6:32 pm. Public comment was received from 2 people. Public comment ended at 6:34 pm.

7. Revision / Approval of Agenda

Smith moved to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Marsh. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried, 7-0.

8. Unfinished Business:

1. Short Term Rental Ordinance #2025-001 and Short Term Rental Resolution #2025-008

A discussion was held regarding some of the wording of the proposed changes.

Blackburn moved to approve Short Term Rental Resolution #2025-008 with the word non-transience under Section 40.31C removed. Second by Matelski. A roll call vote was taken. Godek=nay, Marsh=nay, Blackburn=aye, Matelski=aye, Rentschler=nay, Foley=nay, Smith=nay. Motion failed, 2-5.

Smith moved to approve Short Term Rental Resolution #2025-008 as presented. Second by Rentschler. A roll call vote was taken. Godek=aye, Marsh=aye, Blackburn=aye, Matelski=aye, Rentschler=aye, Foley=aye, Smith=aye. Motion carried, 7-0.

9. New Business:

1. Approval of Resolution #2025-009 – TPCC – New Quota Class C issues as a G-1 Liquor License.

Township Attorney Jesse O'Jack gave an overview of the request and the history of the request.

Smith moved to approve Resolution #2025-009 as presented. Second by Foley.

Marsh asked if this request combined with the recent site plan change request that came before the Planning Commission is indicative of a bigger change than they are telling the Township. Travis Pointe Country Club representative Kelly Allen stated that this request has nothing to do with the expansion request and that this request was started before the expansion request. According to Allen, the biggest reason for this request is because Travis Pointe Country Club wants to hire a professional manager for the Country Club which is not allowed under a Class C Liquor License. Marsh asked if there were any plans for any additional events or activities that might disturb neighbors. Allen replied that there would be no additional events or activities.

A roll call vote was taken. Rentschler=aye, Foley=aye, Smith=aye, Godek=aye, Marsh=aye, Blackburn=aye, Matelski=aye. Motion carried, 7-0.

2. Estimate from Alber Painting to paint the parking lot light poles \$1,000.00 per pole

With the new recycling program and residents dropping off recycling after dark, the parking lot poles should be painted to prevent accidents with those poles while there is no lighting.

Smith moved to approve the presented estimate from Alber Painting to paint the parking lot light poles at a cost of \$1,000.00 per pole. Second by Godek. A roll call vote was taken. Blackburn=aye, Matelski=aye, Rentschler=aye, Foley=aye, Smith=aye, Godek=aye, Marsh=aye. Motion carried, 7-0.

3. Purchase of fireproof filing cabinets for the Township office (total \$13,177.60)

a. 4 drawer 31" - \$5,445.20

b. 4 drawer 44" - \$7,732.40

Marsh moved to approve the presented purchase of a 4 drawer 31" fireproof filing cabinet for \$5,445.20 and a 4 drawer 44" fireproof filing cabinet for \$7,732.40 for the Township office. Second by Matelski. A roll call vote was taken. Smith=aye, Godek=aye, Marsh=aye, Blackburn=aye, Matelski=aye, Rentschler=aye, Foley=aye. Motion carried, 7-0.

4. Discussion regarding concerns as requested by Trustee Blackburn regarding communications/further discussion regarding Township procedures by Attorney

In explaining the reasoning for this agenda item, Blackburn stated the desire to empower the Board of Trustees to know what can be legally done to be more effective, to reduce the workload, have more fun, and be in connection with each other. Blackburn was looking for clarification on how to share information with the Board of Trustees and had questions regarding an email Blackburn sent regarding Arbor Preserve requesting a subcommittee to meet before the July Planning Commission meeting.

Additionally, Blackburn is interested in discussing topics outside of Board of Trustees meetings in order to streamline those topics, but the ways that have been tried have been stopped. Blackburn believes that misinformation has been received regarding how members of the Board of Trustees are allowed to communicate with each other. Blackburn is interested in looking into advisory boards to the Board of Trustees and adding open forum discussions to the Board of Trustees agenda.

Godek noted that she does not agree with Blackburn.

Marsh stated that he would be interested in a once a year, big picture planning meeting that involves all of Board members, Commissioners, and Township employees to talk about concerns generally. Marsh would also like more open discussion because he feels that sometimes the Board of Trustees is so cautious about the Open Meetings Act that it is difficult to get things done as well as possible.

Godek stated that she does not like the idea of committees given the size of the Township. She noted that Blackburn's request for transparency for the public is in conflict with Blackburn's request to have committees or subcommittees. In response to statements made by Blackburn, Godek stated that she returns every phone call that the Township receives and is open to discussing items with residents; no one has ever been turned away. Godek noted that there used to be annual meetings held by the Township and is not opposed to bringing them back.

Matelski stated that he likes the idea of an annual meeting.

Smith noted that the Planning Commission is the board that recommends action to the Board of Trustees. The Planning Commission does the fact finding and recommends approval or denial based on their findings of fact. The Board of Trustees should not have an influence on the Planning Commission. Township Attorney O'Jack confirmed that, for a specific item on the agenda, like a site plan approval, the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees are two independent bodies and there should be no influence from the Board of Trustees on the Planning Commission. The Township would be in legal trouble if the Board of Trustees were to influence the Planning Commission's decision.

Marsh is interested in having continuity in the Township. He expressed interest in a Deputy Supervisor. Godek noted that she already has a Deputy Supervisor, Jane Chronis. Marsh also expressed interested in a meeting with all of the Boards and Commissions to get to know everyone, learn what each body does, discuss any items happening in surrounding townships that may affect Lodi Township, and discuss what the Township is doing right, what could be improved and what is keeping people up at night. Blackburn stated interest as well.

Blackburn stated that there have been issues where Godek has stated "this is a lot," "I don't want to place attention on this right now" and Blackburn would like to help Godek and take

some items off of her plate. Godek stated that she does not need help completing her job nor does she need any items taken off of her plate.

Blackburn feels that not everything should go through the Clerk and/or Supervisor; it is an imbalance of power if it only goes through two people. Smith stated that it is not best practice for a Trustee to send information to all members of the Board of Trustees. Blackburn is interested in being able to share information with all members of the Board of Trustees. Smith recommended sending that information to her, as the Clerk, and she will pass it on to all members of the Board of Trustees. O'Jack confirmed that best practice regarding emails, in order to comply with the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act, is to channel everything to the Clerk since the Clerk is responsible for that information and the Township records.

O'Jack stated that the Open Meetings Act is the minimum requirements required to comply with the law. Items in the Open Meetings Act that may seem simple and straightforward are actually more complicated than they seem, which is evidenced by the multitude of court cases and Attorney General opinions surrounding these items. Generally, O'Jack believes it is better for the Board of Trustees to act as a whole regarding the Open Meetings Act rather than let an individual member make that decision policy wise. O'Jack is conservative in this area because he does not see a reason to chance violating the Open Meetings Act if it is not necessary.

O'Jack recommends that if the Township wants to have subcommittees, the Township should require those subcommittees to comply with the Open Meetings Act even if they are not required to under the Open Meetings Act.

O'Jack also mentioned that, if a member of the public contacts a Trustee or Commissioner regarding an issue being deliberated, that Trustee or Commissioner should relay that conversation and information to the whole Board of Trustees or Planning Commission. Additionally, if an item is given to a Trustee or a Commissioner during a meeting, even if that message is personal, that member should tell the other members and the public what they were given so that people cannot misconstrue the situation as someone receiving information regarding the issue that is not being shared.

Blackburn stated that the Planning Commission has said that Marsh is not allowed to discuss issues surrounding Copperleaf Crossing since he is the owner. Blackburn disagrees with that decision and feels that Marsh can have one-on-one discussions with members of the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees regarding Copperleaf Crossing. O'Jack cautioned against one-on-one meetings because, after a certain point, it ends up looking like discussion because information changes as the one-on-one meetings progress.

O'Jack recommends the Board of Trustees decide and put into writing how the Board of Trustees would like to handle these issues to help guide members of the Board of Trustees.

O'Jack stated that he will be in trouble legally if the Board of Trustees makes a decision before the facts are presented to them. For this reason, O'Jack does not recommend members of the Board of Trustees conduct or participate in polling. If the Board of Trustees wants to allow polling, it should only be allowed after all of the facts and information have been stated. Similarly, the Board of Trustees and the Planning Commission should not make any decisions based on the public's opinion. The public is allowed to comment, but the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees need to make their decision based on the facts, information and the Zoning Ordinance.

Blackburn asked if it would be acceptable for a Trustee to Bcc information to the whole Board of Trustees with a note asking the Clerk to add the information to the public record and add it to the packet. Blackburn feels that it would make the Clerk's job easier because everyone already has the information and received it at the same time. Legally, O'Jack does not have an issue with a Trustee sending information via Bcc email to the entire Board of Trustees if it is information not linked to an issue, such as information from a training session. If it is a topic about something in front of the Board of Trustees or the Planning Commission, legally, O'Jack would recommend the information be sent to the Clerk so that the Clerk can then pass it on to the entire Board of Trustees. This way the member that submitted the information can verify that that information was passed on to the entire Board of Trustees. Blackburn thinks that this adds to the Clerk's workload. Smith disagrees.

Marsh asked, if he has a conversation with a constituent or received a letter from a constituent, does he need to relay that to the Clerk. O'Jack said that it would depend on the content of the information provided. If it was regarding an item being discussed, then it should be shared with the entire Board of Trustees or Planning Commission. That can be done either by sending it to the Clerk or mentioning it during an open meeting. If the content is not regarding an ongoing item, then it would not be necessary to be shared.

Blackburn brought up an occasion where an email was sent to Godek and Smith regarding picking up a Board of Trustees packet. Blackburn was told that that email violates the Open Meetings Act. Blackburn believes that that does not violate the Open Meetings Act and asked O'Jack his opinion on the situation. To pick up a Board of Trustees packet, O'Jack does not think that it would be an Open Meetings Act issue. Smith stated that it is best practice. People make mistakes and reply all when they should not have. In order to mitigate that risk, Smith stated that she always follows best practice. Smith stated that Blackburn can do whatever, but, for best practice as the Clerk, she would like to see members of the Board of Trustees use Bcc if more than one member is being emailed. Smith is frustrated with Blackburn telling Smith that what she does is valued with those statements always being followed with a "but." Smith is frustrated with Blackburn constantly trying to take work off of her plate because those tasks are her statutory duty.

O'Jack restated his suggestion that the Board of Trustees decide what they are comfortable with and put it in writing as a procedure so that it is standardized, clear, and nondebatable.

In response to Blackburn's question regarding the email sent regarding the Arbor Preserve project, O'Jack restated that the Planning Commission is a completely independent body and the Board of Trustees as a whole or as individual Trustees should not influence the Planning Commission's decision. In response to Blackburn's statement that a specific resident has not been able to get her questions answered, O'Jack stated that most of the resident in question's comments were public comment and generally public comment should not be responded to. Public comment is a way for the public to comment and share their opinion on issues. Blackburn also asked if the suggested list of people who should meet to discuss the Arbor Preserve item from the email in question could get together as a subcommittee under the bylaws of the Planning Commission. O'Jack stated that from his understanding, that is not what he considers an advisory committee to be; an advisory committee would discuss general plans, not a specific issue. The Board of Trustees and the Planning Commission are supposed to be completely impartial and O'Jack is unsure how that would be ensured with an advisory committee. O'Jack feels, for the meeting Blackburn requested, the issues requested to be discussed are what the Planning Commission meeting is for. If someone does not like the

decision that the Planning Commission made, that does not mean that they should get to meet with them separately. Godek stated that the email made it sound like there was something that came up that was held back from the Planning Commission and questioned, if someone had information that was vital to the Arbor Preserve issue, why was it not given to the Planning Commission.

Blackburn asked who had the conversations with Toll Brothers while it was being deliberated by the Planning Commission. O'Jack stated that the Township Planner, Township Engineer, and Township Supervisor all had certain responsibilities in the project that required discourse with Toll Brothers. Blackburn feels that a lot of energy is spent centering corporate developers to have connection and access to these commissions and the public is behind a wall for access. Blackburn wants to know how to center the public's input, especially for residents in the surrounding area, because those voices should be just as centered, if not more so, than the corporation's, in Blackburn's opinion. O'Jack stated that the Township Planner's job is to review the plans and tell the developer, in their opinion, what is missing or what needs to be done, not have Toll Brothers asking the Township Planner for items. The Township needs the Township Planner to be an independent authority for legal reasons.

Blackburn is frustrated with the availability of the plans for the Arbor Preserve project to the Board of Trustees. Blackburn was told that this issue is not in front of the Board of Trustees yet and was questioned as to why the plans were being requested. Blackburn wanted the plans to be able to track the project and have as much information as possible before it goes to the Board of Trustees. O'Jack stated that he has no objection to Blackburn paying for a copy of the plans, but cautions that the plans purchased by Blackburn were likely not the final plan that will be before the Board of Trustees. Before it gets to the Board of Trustees, technically there is no plan for members of the Board of Trustees to review. O'Jack does not want the Board of Trustees to make a decision before the information is provided to them. He advised that if Blackburn wants to review all of the current and previous plans, that is allowed, but no decision can be made based on those plans; decisions can only be made based on the plans that are provided to the Board of Trustees. Blackburn would like to have all of the information in order to make an informed decision. O'Jack noted that the members of the Board of Trustees who have attended the Planning Commission meetings have done a good job of not saying anything at those meetings in order to not influence the Planning Commission's decision. Doing so protects the decision and the Township. O'Jack also stated that while it is difficult, even if a decision is made that does not align with an individual Trustee's beliefs, it is the job of the members of the Board of Trustees to support that decision once it has been made, even if they do not personally agree with it. O'Jack cautioned to never come to a meeting with a list of facts that only supports one side. Lists that support both approving and denying are necessary so that it does not look like the decision was made ahead of time.

O'Jack reminded the Board of Trustees that the Consent Judgement for Arbor Preserve controls the Township. No one is allowed to take a stance against the Consent Judgement. The only way that any changes can be made to the Consent Judgement would be to file a lawsuit in court.

Blackburn asked how to make sure that all information necessary for making a decision is received prior to the Board of Trustees meeting, such as the Township's insurance policy. O'Jack reviewed the history of the Arbor Preserve project in relation to the Township's insurance policy.

O'Jack restated his suggestion that, he does not care if it required or not, unless there is an absolutely great reason not to, the Township should keep everything open.

Blackburn expressed gratitude for having the preceding conversation and getting to hear different points of views. Blackburn's recommendation is to let it brew and see where it goes.

10. Closed Session: None

11. Public Comment

Public comment began at 8:14 pm. Public comment was received from 11 people. Public comment ended at 8:34 pm.

12. FYI: Blackburn responded to a comment regarding not standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

13. Next meeting will be on September 2, 2025 starting at 6:30 pm.

14. Adjournment

Smith moved to adjourn at 8:36 pm. Second by Rentschler. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried, 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christina Smith,
Lodi Township Clerk



Michelle Joppeck,
Recording Secretary