



Lodi Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

3755 Pleasant Lake Road Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

August 25, 2026 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, Meiners, Rentschler, Rogers, Stevenson, Strader, Sweetland
Absent: None
Others Present: Recording Secretary Michelle Joppeck,
Township Planner Hannah Firlit,
Township Planner Julia Upfal,
Township Attorney Jesse O'Jack,
Township Supervisor Jacob Schaible,
Township Trustee Leslie Blackburn,
Township Trustee Steve Marsh,
Township Trustee David Naebeck,
W Coats, Dixon, Xavier Edwards, Mary Guintow, Jane Mamarow, Vicki Marsh, Deanna Shailk, Kathy VanKoeving, and 13 other members of the public

3. Approval of Agenda

Strader requested to add approval of the 8/20/2026 sub-committee meeting minutes to the agenda.

Rentschler moved to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Rogers. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

4. Public Hearing: None

5. Public Comment

Public comment began at 7:02 pm. Public comment was received from 1 member of the public. Public comment ended at 7:03 pm.

6. Approval of Minutes – 6/23/2026 and Approval of Sub-Committee Meetings 6/30/2026, 7/23/2026 & 8/20/2026

Stevenson moved to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2026 Lodi Township Planning Commission regular meeting and the minutes of the 6/30/2026, 7/23/2026, and 8/20/2026 Sub-Committee meetings as presented. Second by Meiners. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

7. Old Business:

a. Copperleaf Crossing Revised Area Plan

Strader noted that it was requested to get missing requested information from Copperleaf Crossing by July 31, 2026. The updated plan and information were received on August 7, 2026, but would be considered anyway.

Strader asked for clarification on transition buffers and landscaping strips. Township Planner Firlit stated that any project that goes through site plan approval is required to have transition buffers and landscaping strips. Transition buffers are for lot boundaries that are not adjacent to a roadway. Landscaping strips are for lot boundaries adjacent to a roadway. Additionally, any building setbacks are measured from the end of the transition buffer, not from the property line. Building setbacks are measured from the property line when landscape strips are required so landscape strips can be part of building setbacks and do not need to be stacked. Fences are not addressed in transition buffers and landscaping strips, but both areas require landscaping that complies with Section 55.09 which lists a fence as a method of screening and can be located on the lot boundary. For a transition buffer, that section of the Zoning Ordinance says that the Planning Commission can require a fence as part of the screening requirements for the landscaping that is required within the transition buffer. With that information, Firlit interprets that a fence could be located within a transition buffer area.

Strader asked about perimeter open space. Firlit stated that that applies only to a PUD. The perimeter open space is in addition to the transition buffer and landscaping strips and are required to be landscaped. Firlit's interpretation is that a fence would be allowed in that perimeter open space as well due to the landscaping requirements.

A discussion was held regarding the Lodi Central District (LCD) and if that applies to Copperleaf Crossing. While Copperleaf Crossing is in the area labeled as LCD on the Master Plan, it is not zoned in LCD, so the regulations contained in the Zoning Ordinance regarding LCD do not apply to Copperleaf Crossing.

Strader asked what building setbacks would apply to Copperleaf Crossing. Firlit stated that since a PUD does not require additional setbacks, it would be whatever the underlying zoning setbacks are which in this case is AG.

Froberg asked if a deviation is requested, where does the measurement start. Firlit stated that if it is a 30-foot required transition buffer and they are showing a structure 20 feet from the property line, then it would be a deviation of 10 feet from the transition buffer requirement. If it is a structure that is required to meet the building setback, then that could be classified as a second deviation from the building setback. Froberg asked how to measure that deviation. Firlit recommended having the applicant specify what their proposed building setback is and the Planning Commission would determine if it is an appropriate deviation to be granted.

Froberg asked if, when the fence for the canines was approved, was the setback for the structures also approved. Strader said that it was originally presented as just a fence. The Planning Commission approved the fence, but the next month the Board of Trustees received information on the structures and the Board of Trustees approved it. Strader is unsure if the building setbacks were included as part of that approval.

Xavier Edwards, a Copperleaf Crossing representative, stated that the fence that the Planning Commission approved is exactly what was built. Township Engineer MC Moritz went to the site, measured and confirmed that every post was placed where it was stated that it would be posted. Also, it was presented clearly as a home for Harry from the beginning. Strader stated that it was known that it was for Harry, but it was presented as an exercise yard not a home. Edwards stated that they sometimes call it a run, but it was always intended to be a home. Froberg said that regardless of what was described, it has changed and the Planning Commission is trying to get the deviation list straight. Edwards stated that they have already put in measures to take the noisy canines out of the enclosure at night to help with the noise complaints. Another Copperleaf Crossing representative stated that that cannot be a point of discussion anymore because they have already proved on their end that it is no longer the case so the Planning Commission cannot keep bringing it back up. Froberg stated that she can bring it up as many times as she wants, but concedes that the neighbors have not complained and the fact that mitigation steps were taken is appreciated, but has no bearing on whether it gets approved or not. Edwards clarified that the Planning Commission brings it up like it is still an issue, but has been resolved.

Strader stated that Uses were not addressed in their response and that Uses have to go on the Area Plan so that the Uses can be matched up to the Zoning Ordinance. Since the applicant did not provide them, Strader matched up the Uses with the businesses according to her opinion: Animal Kingdom Veterinary Hospital falls under the Veterinary Hospital use, Creature Comforts Bed & Bath falls under the Kennel use, and Copperleaf Forest falls under the Plant Nursery and Farm Market uses. Creature Conservancy has some farm animals, so that could fall under Keeping of Farm Animals and Livestock, non-farm and it also has some aspects that fall under the educational aspect of the Institutional use. The issue is the exotic animal exhibits and the breeding.

Froberg asked if the Creature Conservancy qualifies to become like a Detroit Zoo. Edwards said that the price to join AZA is outside of Creature Conservancy's budget, but their qualifications are good enough to work with AZA.

Strader stated that, from a public safety standpoint, she would like a list of animals that are agreed upon not to have be included in the Area Plan Agreement so that every party is aware of that, especially in case the property/business is sold.

Froberg reviewed her notes from the previous meeting and noted that it was agreed that Creature Conservancy falls under the Institutional use due to the educational nature. Strader was then comfortable with the Uses.

Strader stated that her goal would be to have one set of goals and one set of documents on file that covers everything for future questions or changes.

Since Copperleaf Crossing is surrounded by Residential lots and Section 42.302.C.2 states that "uses shall be compatible with abutting Residential uses," Strader asked if, in the future,

Copperleaf Crossing could put the carnivores somewhere that do not abut residential lots. Edwards asked how a large carnivore is defined because the carnivores on site are technically not classified as large carnivores, but as canines. Strader was unsure how to adjust the terminology, but would like to see some way of balancing the very residential nature that they are butting up against versus the desires and plans of the Creature Conservancy. Strader expressed the idea of having the animals housed in an enclosed secure structure at night like most zoos do. Edwards stated that the enclosure is designed to the standards that are required and moving the animals in at night is not a requirement.

Strader expressed concern about the large carnivore safety plan because it only addresses cougars. A discussion was held regarding the term carnivore. Strader stated that, if it has big teeth and eats meat, she wants to know the safety plan for those animals. Strader asked to limit any large meat-eating mammal so that if an animal dies, it can be replaced, but no more can be added. The only exception would be the Clouded Leopards since there are plans to breed those. A Copperleaf Crossing representative asked if it was within the Planning Commission's jurisdiction to request that. Township Attorney O'Jack stated that he was not sure if that question was appropriate at that time, but if there were questions about jurisdiction, have their lawyer contact O'Jack with those questions. Strader stated that her concern is where they are located and balancing the needs of the residents who have lived there for a long time and Copperleaf Crossing's needs as a conservancy.

A discussion was held regarding the Clouded Leopard breeding application. Strader asked for the Township to be notified of the plan if an animal escapes. Schaible said that he is working with the Washtenaw County Sheriff's office to set up protocols and notification procedures.

Strader asked for the Township to be notified if any additional mammalian carnivores are to be added. O'Jack stated that he was unsure of how ongoing approvals would work, but both sides could agree and put limits on number of animals or types of animals.

Froberg stated that of the 18 items requested last meeting, only 3 have not been received. Froberg asked that, if area 46 is to be used for canines, please clarify on the plans that it is an 8-foot fence for canines. Edwards stated that the reason it probably was not specified as a canine shelter is because animals are rotated.

Strader stated that she is concerned that the noise problem was moved to another area on the property and the Township will now get complaints from neighbors in the new area. She also stated that she is concerned with the animals that would be a safety issue if they escaped being placed on the borders of the property right next to residential properties.

Copperleaf Crossing representatives explained that animal placement is a multi-faceted issue and explained some of the reasoning for their decisions and animal placements. Marsh also asked for clear, written requests from the Planning Commission so that they can provide the information the Planning Commission is looking for in order to move forward.

Strader brought up the idea of requiring berms or solid fencing to help solve some of the issues.

Deviation requests were reviewed. With the discussion about fences in the transition buffer from earlier, the first deviation request for site element 23 – Livestock Fence for the emus being in the transition buffer is likely not necessary. Strader expressed that item 24 should be moved outside of the 30-foot transition buffer and 30-foot building setback. Marsh stated that

that is what they were already agreeing to in the plans.

For the deviation request for the bird and aviary enclosures marked as site elements 6, 30, 31 and 32, Strader stated that she does not have an issue with the deviation request, but wants to make it clear that just because those are allowed to be there is not permission for other structures to be built inside of the transition buffer. Meiners asked how noisy the birds in those enclosures are. Marsh stated that the noisiest birds on campus are the peacocks and parrots. The parrots are located in the center of campus though and the rest of the birds are fairly quiet. After discussion, it was determined that site elements 6, 30, 31 and 32 violate the setback rule in Section 30.101 and the transition buffer rule in Section 30.203.E.1.

Strader asked Marsh if site element 29 needs to be moved to be 6 feet off of the property line per Zoological Association of America (ZAA)'s requirements. Marsh stated that they were told that the perimeter fence needs to be 6 feet tall instead of the 5 feet tall fence they had, but did not say anything about the location of the fences.

The non-conformances requested were reviewed. Froberg asked if the area around Building M will become additional parking because staff have been spotted parking there. Marsh stated that many things are in flux and unknown while going through this process and it is unlikely that that area will become parking long term. Froberg also asked about the temporary enclosures behind Building M. Marsh stated that they have been used as enclosures for domestic dogs for the residents of Building M, but since no one is currently living there now, the future of those is unclear. Strader acknowledged that the fence along Ann Arbor-Saline Road has been located there for a long time and she does not have an issue with it. Marsh stated that if they decide to rebuild the fence and redo the area, they are happy to move the fence to be outside of the landscape strip requirement.

O'Jack explained the concept of a Zoning Ordinance and explained why it is unlikely that cargo containers were ever permitted in Lodi Township. The provision was later added to the Zoning Ordinance avoid any confusion about the fact that they are not permitted. O'Jack also stated that the cargo containers were never on the site plan and approval to put them in was never received. O'Jack said that he was not saying that they are not appropriate or that the Planning Commission should not find a way to allow them, but he is saying that they are not legally nonconforming. Meiners asked if the cargo containers have been moved since they were obtained or if they have stayed where they were placed. Marsh said that they have stayed where they were placed when they were received and explained the need for them in order to keep feed safe and free from pests. Froberg said that her recommendation would be to let the Board of Trustees figure out how to deal with the cargo container issue. Froberg is also recommending letting the Board of Trustees decide about how to deal with fences over 6 feet tall. Strader stated that her recommendation, if the Board of Trustees allows them, would be to allow the cargo containers, but prohibit the amount to no more than 8. Marsh said that he was agreeable to that.

Strader listed a set of items that she felt needed added or corrected on the Area Plan drawings:

- The cover sheet must be titled Copper Leaf Crossing, A Planned Unit Development in the top heading.
- A better legend is needed.
- The Notes listed in the bottom left-hand corner do not seem to be referenced anywhere

- There is a fence, but there is no fence legend.
- Building 47 is not shaded as Future
- The transition buffer is shown as going through Marsh's residential property, but is not part of the PUD in question.
- It is not clear where the front lot line is
- There are things in the table that need to be clarified
- The project narrative, deviations and uses need to be on the Area Plan

Marsh asked if they would be given the list. Strader said that she could. Froberg asked if those items were in Firlit's review report. Strader stated that they were not. Firlit stated that she is comfortable with items like the use narrative being provided as supplementary documents as part of the submittal instead of being printed on the Area Plan, but understands if the Planning Commission feels differently. Strader's concern is the number of documents that have been submitted over the past few years and would like one document for the final plan to make it easier to find and understand at a later time. Froberg's concern was making the applicant ask for something that is not required in the Zoning Ordinance.

Edwards stated that each meeting feels like a shifting goal post because information requested is provided and then changes or more information is requested at the next meeting. Marsh stated that he needs to know which interpretation of how information counts as being provided that they are supposed to follow: whether everything needs to be on the Area Plan drawings or if they can be provided as exhibits or supplementary documents.

Strader noted that the landscaping is not shown on the Area Plan. Marsh argued that it is not necessary for the Area Plan. Strader said that the Natural Features Determination is required for the Area Plan. Strader said that she would like to see the following items from the Minimum Area Plan Information chart in Section 42.110 added to the Area Plan:

- "A detailed use statement describing proposed use(s); including land or building areas for each use, number of units, number of anticipated employees, or other applicable information to verify Ordinance compliance,"
- "Draft of Area Plan agreement or statement"
- the natural features fronting Ann Arbor-Saline Road, the driveway from Pleasant Lake Road and the location of the 100 trees that have been planted

Marsh argued that putting a draft Area Plan agreement would be potentially confusing to put on the Area Plan since it is only the draft and will likely be changed later on in the process.

Strader said that she would like to see the septic fields labeled as septic fields instead of how they are currently labeled.

Firlit recommended including a legend showing how the wells are labeled to make that clearer.

Strader asked if the gravel lot for overflow parking is existing or proposed. Strader also asked about the handicap parking spots and if the concrete pad between the two spaces is existing or proposed. Marsh stated that they were proposed and were explicitly told not to do anything with the site until this process was completed. Firlit asked for additional information needed to complete the parking calculations. Froberg thought that this issue was a closed issue already. Firlit confirmed that the applicant still needs to provide the square footage for the

kennel and the veterinary clinic in order for her to complete the parking calculations. Firlit also needs the dimensions of site element 10 to make sure that the parking spaces and aisle widths are appropriate and if it is proposed to stay gravel or will be paved. Marsh stated that the intention is to pave site element 10, but leave site element X as gravel. Firlit asked for that information to be included on the plan. Marsh noted confusion as to whether to show current conditions or future conditions on the Area Plan.

In response to questions, O'Jack stated that due to the complexity of the issue, he would prefer if the Findings of Facts were written out completely before any motion has been made.

Froberg read her notes:

- Use Information based on Use Table - Section 20.04 Table of Uses by District.
 - Creature Conservancy - Institutional / educational in nature
 - Animal Kingdom – Veterinary Hospital
 - Creature Comforts – Kennel
 - Copperleaf Forest – Plant - Nursery / Farm Market
- Area 45 and 46 on the Area Plan – Commissioners recommend noise mitigation strategies upon Area Plan approval
- Site Elements 6, 30, 31, and 32
 - Deviations requested:
 - Transition Buffer – 20 feet from property line
 - Set Back – 20 feet from property line
- Section 42.110 Required Area Plan Information to be included on plans
 - A detailed statement describing proposed use(s); including land or building areas for each use, number of units, number of anticipated employees, or other applicable information to verify Ordinance compliance.
 - Draft of Area Plan statement
 - A Natural Features Determination, with a general description and preliminary delineation of existing natural features on and abutting the site, per Section 54.08 (Natural Features Protection and Preservation).
- The square footage of area for the Kennel and Vet Clinic are needed to ensure parking requirements for each use are met.
- The paved handicap parking spots in X need to be noted as being paved in the future.
- At the time of approval, the Planning Commission will ask the Board of Trustees to come up with a potential dangerous animal list and maximum, address the cargo containers, and address the Ordinance stating that fence heights only apply to Residential properties.
- Potential Building H needs to be moved outside of the transition buffer and setbacks once the transition buffer as shown is corrected.

Froberg moved to postpone decision on the Area Plan application until the next Planning Commission meeting with target dates of the applicant providing supplementary information by September 11 and Hannah providing it to the Planning Commission and filling out an updated report by September 16. Second by Meiners. A roll call vote was taken. Strader=aye, Stevenson=aye, Rentschler=aye, Rogers=aye, Meiners=aye, Froberg=aye, Sweetland=aye. Motion carried.

b. High-Power Facilities Zoning Ordinance

Meiners reviewed the role and progress of the Data Center Ordinance Sub-Committee. The sub-committee first tried to define what kinds of facilities the Township would like to be subject to regulations. Second was looking at what impacts on the Township, neighbors, and resources would explain why the Township would like to regulate those facilities. Third was how the Township goes about regulating those facilities such as amending the Zoning Ordinance or writing new ordinances. The sub-committee realized that due to the recent other facilities requested to go in other local communities, that looking at only computational facilities is not sufficient. The sub-committee requested to broaden their focus to all kinds of facilities that consume, general or transform large amounts of power in some ways in order to protect the Township from other types of facilities and future facilities that may be unknown at this time. Meiners asked the Planning Commission to recognize and allow the broadening of the sub-committee's focus from data centers to high-power facilities.

Meiners also noted that the original Data Center Moratorium expired on August 12, 2026 and the sub-committee was asked to provide new language for a new moratorium. That new moratorium was brought before the Board of Trustees which was passed. The new moratorium now includes everything that is big and consumes, generates, or controls large amounts of power with the exception of things that the Township already regulates.

O'Jack noted that there are now lawsuits being filed against Data Center Moratoriums in other local communities.

Meiners summarized that the sub-committee is looking at data centers, other computational centers, generating facilities like power plants, and substations and is concerned about water usage, electrical usage, natural gas and oil usage, other resource usage, noise, microclimate and ground heating. Meiners is also looking at lawsuit documentation to figure out how to best protect the Township and make ordinances that are defensible. The size of facilities is being considered as well while creating regulations and categories.

Strader moved to change the name and scope of the Sub-Committee created June 23, 2026 from Data Center Ordinance to High-Power Facilities Ordinance. Second by Rogers. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

c. Lodi Township Master Plan update

Proposed changes to Part 7 Agricultural Land Use of the Master Plan were provided by Firlit. Questions were asked by Planning Commission members and answered to the best of Firlit's ability. Suggestions and edits were also requested and recommended by Planning Commission members.

8. New Business:

a. Frontier Club Special Use Application & Preliminary Site Plan Application – Set a Public Hearing

Firlit stated that an initial review of the plans was completed and additional information is still needed in order for the plan to be ready for a public hearing. With the scale of the project and the information still needed, it is unlikely that the information would be able to be received in time to be reviewed before the next meeting. Firlit also stated that elements of the proposal, specifically the lodging of members, do not fit under the umbrella of a golf course. The definition of hotels in the Zoning Ordinance does not mention members versus non-members and accessory structures say that they cannot be used as sleeping quarters so those

buildings need to be principal buildings and a part of the principal use. The easiest path forward would be a Zoning Ordinance amendment.

Strader asked if it could be considered a Bed and Breakfast. Firlit does not believe so because that usually requires the owner to reside in the structure.

Firlit feels that the easiest path forward would be a Zoning Ordinance amendment that adds a new type of golf course listed under the definition of golf course. That amendment would need to apply to the whole Township with the understanding that there is already an application received that would fall under that definition. In that case, the Zoning Ordinance amendment would need to be in process before the application could be categorized under that definition. In order to set the public hearing for the Zoning Ordinance amendment, draft language would need to be drafted already.

Strader asked if the public hearing for the application and Zoning Ordinance amendment could be held concurrently. Firlit was unsure on that. O'Jack stated that he would prefer both public hearings at least at the same time, but not the application public hearing before the Zoning Ordinance amendment public hearing.

Strader moved to postpone the setting of a public hearing for the Frontier Club Special Use Application & Preliminary Site Plan Application until the September meeting. Second by Rogers. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

b. Accept Froberg's resignation from the Data Center Sub-Committee

Froberg requested to resign from the Data Center (now High-Power Facilities) Ordinance Sub-Committee effective 8/25/2026 due to lack of time.

Stevenson moved to accept Froberg's resignation from the High-Power Facilities Ordinance Sub-Committee effective 8/25/2026. Second by Meiners. A voice vote was taken. Aye=6, Nay=Sweetland. Motion carried.

c. Appoint a Commissioner to the High-Power Facilities (Data Center) Sub-Committee

Strader moved to appoint Sweetland to the High-Power Facilities Ordinance Sub-Committee. Second by Meiners. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

9. Public Comment

Public comment began at 10:36 pm. Public comment was received from 2 members of the public. Public comment ended at 10:39 pm.

10. Reports

- A. Board of Trustees: Rentschler reviewed the most recent Board of Trustees meeting held on August 11, 2026.
- B. Commissioners: Strader asked Commissioners to send any questions or concerns regarding the Frontier Club application to the Township Clerk who will pass them on to the applicable Township Consultants.
- C. Planning Consultant: Hannah Firlit introduced Julia Upfal, also from OHM, who has been helping out.
- D. Engineering Consultant: None

11. Adjournment

Stevenson moved to adjourn at 10:43 pm. Second by Sweetland. A voice vote was taken.
Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2026 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brian Sweetland,
Planning Commission Secretary



Michelle Joppeck,
Recording Secretary