



Olive Township Planning Commission Meeting

Date: Tuesday, May 7, 2026

Time: 7:00 PM

- 1) Call to Order
 - a. The meeting was called to order by Chair Dreyer at 7:00pm
- 2) Roll Call
 - a. Present: Chair Dreyer, Dan Raak, Adrian Meekhof, Jerry Geertman, Brian Raak, Zoning Administrator: Lori Castello
 - b. Absent: none
- 3) Approval of Agenda
 - a. Discussed the parcel ID on item 7, Public Hearing is incorrect. Will be corrected in the minutes.
 - b. Discussed the Public Hearing for Ken Koetsier and whether it needed to remain on the agenda. It was determined that tabling was unnecessary, as the request has been withdrawn and can be removed from the agenda. This will be communicated to Ken's son.
 - c. Discussed item 8 on the agenda being blank. Determined this is a typo.
 - d. **Motion:** D. Raak moved to approve the agenda.
 - e. **Second:** Geertman seconded the motion.
 - f. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried
- 4) Approval of Minutes (April 7, 2026)
 - a. **Motion:** Dreyer moved to approve the minutes of the April meeting.
 - b. **Second:** B. Raak seconded the motion.
 - c. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried
- 5) Declarations of potential conflict of interest
 - a. Geertman recused himself from voting on and discussing item 7 on the agenda (Home occupation at 11185 Stanton) due to a conflict of interest.
- 6) General Public Comments:
 - a. Al Nienhuis thanked the Planning Commission for their work and discussed the Hamstra property request.
 - b. Nienhuis stated he initially opposed the request but changed his position after further discussion and review of driveway easement and fire access concerns.
 - c. He noted fire department access and snow removal were discussed with Fire Chief Brian DeWitt, and the property has operated in its current configuration for many years.
 - d. Nienhuis stated support for maintaining the existing driveway easement.
 - e. Public comment was closed.
- 7) Public Hearings
 - a. Continued from 04/07/26--Public Hearing for a request from Francisco Gallardo Perez, property owner at 11185 Stanton St. also known as parcel number 70-12-02-100-027, to operate a home occupation pursuant to Section 21.19.H of the Olive Township Zoning Ordinance.

- i. Applicant presentation--Applicant was not present. Staff reported multiple attempts to contact the applicant were unsuccessful.
- ii. Zoning Administrator reviewed the request, noting complaints regarding noise, traffic, number of people on-site, litter, and outdoor storage related to the business activity. It was also noted the property meets the minimum acreage requirement for a home occupation.
- iii. Public comments were received from neighboring residents expressing concerns about:
 - (1) Daily commercial vehicle traffic and diesel trucks idling early in the morning.
 - (2) Noise from business operations and vehicles.
 - (3) Frequent employee and visitor traffic.
 - (4) Outdoor storage of equipment and materials.
 - (5) Impacts on the residential character of the neighborhood.
 - (6) The commission also received videos and pictures on a USB, from one neighbor showing their concerns.
 - (7) A copy of section 18.06 (1-5) was submitted by a neighbor in writing showing his comments for each section and why he believed the requirements were not being met and shared with the commission.
- iv. The Planning Commission reviewed the standards for Special Uses under Section 18.06 and discussed compliance with requirements for a home occupation in a residential district (Geertman recused himself from the public hearing at this time because of potential conflict of interest).
- v. Discussion of Section 18.06 standards included:
 - (1) **Section 18.06(1) – Consistency with the intent and purpose of the ordinance:**
 - (a) Commissioners discussed that the property is located in a residential district and determined the scale of the operation, including commercial vehicles and business activity, was inconsistent with the residential intent of the district.
 - (2) **Section 18.06(2) – Compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood:**
 - (a) Commissioners discussed concerns regarding commercial trucks, outdoor equipment storage, traffic, and noise. The Commission determined the operation was not compatible with the residential character of the surrounding area.
 - (3) **Section 18.06(3) – Adequate public facilities and services:**
 - (a) Commissioners discussed fire protection, refuse disposal, and access concerns. The Commission generally agreed the property could be adequately served by public services and determined this standard was met.
 - (4) **Section 18.06(4) – Impacts on neighboring properties:**
 - (a) Commissioners discussed testimony and evidence from neighboring residents regarding noise, truck traffic, early morning activity, and frequent business-related activity. The Commission determined the operation created disturbances to neighboring properties and did not meet this standard.
 - (5) **Section 18.06(5) – Excessive additional public costs:**
 - (a) Commissioners determined the request would not create excessive additional public costs for utilities or services and found this standard was met.

- vi. The Commission also discussed home occupation requirements related to employees and storage of materials and equipment. Concerns were raised regarding the number of individuals regularly working on-site and the outdoor storage of business-related equipment and vehicles.
- vii. Action
 - (1) **Motion** B. Raak moved to recommend that the Township Board deny the home occupation request based on failure to meet Sections 18.06(1), 18.06(2), and 18.06(4) of the ordinance.
 - (2) **Support:** seconded by Meekhof.
 - (3) **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously
 - (4) Matter will proceed to the Township Board meeting on May 21 at 7:00 p.m.
 - (5) Geertman returned to the meeting following his earlier recusal from the public hearing request.

8) Special Use Renewals/Temporary Seasonal Uses.

- a. Rhonda Hunt- Dog Kennel renewal: 11874 Fillmore St., parcel 70-12-03-100-019
 - i. Staff reported a site visit had been completed and no concerns were observed. The property appeared clean, orderly, and in compliance with prior approval conditions.
 - ii. Commissioners noted no complaints or concerns had been received from neighboring properties or the public since the original approval.
 - iii. Staff recommended extending the renewal period from one year to two years due to the lack of issues or complaints.
 - iv. Commissioners discussed the request and agreed the property remained in compliance and supported extending the renewal period to two years.
 - v. Vote
 - (1) **Motion:** Geertman moved to approve the Special Use renewal for Rhonda Hunt for a two-year period.
 - (2) **Support:** seconded by D. Raak.
 - (3) **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously
- b. Doug Sterk: T-shirt sales at Softspot- 9622 Port Sheldon, parcels 70-12-25-200-031 and 70-12-25-200-032
 - i. Applicant presentation--Applicant was not present.
 - ii. Staff reported the request was consistent with prior approvals and no major concerns had been identified.
 - iii. Commissioners discussed shared use of the property with the Soft Spot business, produce stand, and seasonal fireworks sales. Discussion included parking availability and coordination between vendors using the site.
 - iv. Commissioners noted they had not observed significant parking or traffic issues at the location, despite occasional busy periods.
 - v. The Commission discussed maintaining coordination between all vendors using the property to minimize parking and traffic conflicts.
 - vi. Vote:
 - (1) **Motion:** Dreyer moved to approve the one-year Special Use renewal with the condition that the vendors coordinate shared parking and site use.
 - (2) **Support:** Seconded by D. Raak.
 - (3) **Vote:** motion carried unanimously.

- (4) It was noted the approval remains seasonal from May 1 through November 1.

9) NEW BUSINESS

- a. BESS ordinance (listed on agenda under old business but should be new business)- review/discuss minor revisions for June public hearing
- i. Planning Commission discussed a potential Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) zoning ordinance amendment, prior to receiving any formal application.
 - ii. Staff noted the ordinance currently does not include specific provisions for BESS facilities, including stacking limitations or height restrictions.
 - iii. The Commission discussed the need for ordinance language addressing:
 - (1) Whether battery units should be limited to single stacking (no double or triple stacking).
 - (2) Whether a maximum height restriction should be established (examples discussed included 15, 20, or 22 feet).
 - iv. Staff noted that height limits may have limited impact due to existing zoning standards and the nature of equipment components, but supported adding a clear restriction on stacking configuration.
 - v. Commissioners discussed that stacking of battery units is becoming more common in the industry and should be addressed in ordinance language.
 - vi. Discussion was held regarding timing and process, with staff advising that if an application is submitted, it would be reviewed under the ordinance as it exists at that time, but amendments can be pursued concurrently.
 - vii. Commissioners briefly discussed the fire protection, decommissioning and the noise level requirements.
 - viii. Staff requested direction to prepare draft ordinance language and schedule a public hearing for consideration of amendments.
 - ix. Vote
 - (1) **Motion:** Meekhof motioned to direct staff to prepare ordinance amendments addressing BESS facilities, including provisions for single stacking and height limitations, and to proceed with scheduling a public hearing.
 - (2) **Support:** Seconded by D. Raak.
 - (3) **Vote:** motion carried unanimously.
 - x. Staff indicated they would prepare draft language for review, including coordination with the Township Attorney, and bring it forward for public hearing at a future meeting.

10) OLD BUSINESS

- a. Discussions
- i. The Planning Commission revisited the Hamstra Special Use Permit for a proposed land division involving an existing pole barn and associated property at 10283 Polk Street Parcel ID 70-12-12-300-021.
 - (1) The request had previously been recommended for approval by the Planning Commission but was returned by the Township Board for further discussion.

- (2) Staff explained the proposal includes:
- (a) Splitting the existing parcel to separate the pole barn and associated improvements from the remaining acreage.
 - (b) Creating a revised parcel configuration, including an L-shaped/rectangular lot arrangement.
 - (c) Maintaining access to the pole barn parcel via an existing ingress/egress easement rather than creating a new driveway onto 104th Avenue.
- (3) The Commission discussed concerns including:
- (a) Whether access should remain via the existing easement or require a new driveway onto 104th Avenue.
 - (b) Property access, safety, privacy, and reported unauthorized traffic on the property.
 - (c) The appropriateness of adding conditions related to future development and land use.
 - (d) Whether conditions should be included regarding future residential development requiring direct road access.
- (4) Staff clarified:
- (a) Easements are private legal agreements and cannot be directly mandated or altered by the Township.
 - (b) The Township may impose conditions related to future development, including driveway requirements.
 - (c) A deed restriction can be used to limit land use and provide notice of conditions tied to future permitting.
- (5) Public comment was received from the property owner, who:
- (a) Expressed concern regarding increased traffic and trespassing following public discussion of the proposal.
 - (b) Opposed the requirement of an additional driveway due to privacy and security concerns.
 - (c) Preferred maintaining the existing access arrangement via easement.
- (6) Additional discussion included:
- (a) Whether conditions should require an improved driveway from 104th Avenue if a dwelling is constructed in the future.
 - (b) Whether limiting use to personal storage (no commercial use) should be included as a deed restriction.
 - (c) The complexity of existing access patterns and whether the proposed split improves or complicates parcel layout.
- (7) Vote:
- (a) **Motion:** Geertman moved to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Hamstra Special Use Permit land division, with the following conditions:
 - (i) A deed restriction shall be recorded stating the parcel shall be used for personal storage only, with no commercial use permitted unless otherwise allowed by ordinance or approved through proper review.
 - (ii) If a dwelling is constructed in the future, an improved driveway shall be required off 104th Avenue to provide direct access to the parcel.
 - (b) **Support:** Seconded by B. Raak.
 - (c) **Vote:** Motion carried (Ayes 4, Nays 1)

ii. Continued discussion data centers

- (1) The Planning Commission continued discussion on **data centers** and potential ordinance considerations.
- (2) Staff (Lori) reported that:
 - (a) An informational seminar will be held featuring **Sarah Mills**, recognized as a leading expert on data center planning in Michigan.
 - (b) The Township will receive and distribute an official invitation once finalized.
 - (c) The meeting will be hosted in coordination with Door Township, which will serve as the formal host for the event.
- (3) Staff recommended that:
 - (a) The Planning Commission may begin reviewing and discussing potential ordinance concepts related to data centers.
 - (b) However, no formal ordinance amendments should be adopted prior to the informational seminar in order to incorporate any new guidance or best practices presented.
- (4) Commission members expressed agreement that attending the seminar would be beneficial before making any formal zoning changes.
- (5) Staff noted additional professional development involvement, including a presentation on housing-related planning topics and the use of the **National Zoning Atlas**, a tool that allows jurisdictions to review permitted housing types, zoning allowances, and density patterns across communities.
- (6) The National Zoning Atlas was described as a resource that may assist in evaluating:
 - (a) Areas suitable for increased density without impacting rural character.
 - (b) Opportunities for smaller lot sizes or adjusted setbacks.
 - (c) Zoning flexibility for housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, and accessory dwelling units.
- (7) Discussion included general acknowledgment of balancing:
 - (a) Preservation of rural character, and
 - (b) Limited, targeted increases in housing density where appropriate.
- (8) No formal action was taken on data centers at this time.

iii. Municode update

- (1) Castello reported the Municode codification review shows no substantive zoning ordinance changes during recodification.
- (2) Chairperson noted the new format is initially confusing due to renumbering the existing zoning ordinance layout but becomes easier to navigate with continued review. Requested an electronic version of the codified ordinance for easier review.
- (3) Castello stated the format will differ from prior versions and staff will complete a detailed review to determine if a public hearing is needed, potentially at the next meeting and noted Township Board approval will also be required due to full ordinance recodification.

- (4) Commission discussed reviewing the full ordinance and aligning provisions with current administrative practices and modern mapping tools.
- (5) Castello noted some ordinance requirements (e.g., site visits/surveys) may be outdated and create unnecessary burden compared to current GIS and site plan practices.
- (6) Concerns were raised regarding property line accuracy and liability when relying on non-survey data.
- (7) No formal action taken; item will return if a public hearing is required.
- iv. Zoning Ordinance Overhaul work: Private Roads- Draft Review
 - (1) Tabled for the time being

11) PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENT & CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Building Permits Report
 - i. Castello was locked out of the system due to an update and will email it out tomorrow.
- b. Splits report
 - i. Lori handed out a copy of the current 2026 splits.

12) ADJOURNMENT

- a. **Motion:** D. Raak moved to adjourn.
- b. **Second:** Meekhof seconded.
- c. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm

13) NEXT MEETING DATE

- a. Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 2, 2026