



Olive Township Planning Commission Meeting

Date: Tuesday, June 02, 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. **Motion:** B. Raak moved to approve the agenda.
 - b. **Support:** Meekhof seconded the motion.
 - c. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried
- 4) Approval of Minutes (May 7, 2026)
 - a. **Motion:** D. Raak moved to approve the minutes of the April meeting.
 - b. **Support:** Geertman seconded the motion.
 - c. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried
- 5) Declarations of potential conflict of interest
 - a. No declarations of potential conflict of interest
- 6) General Public Comments:
 - a. No general public comments
- 7) Public Hearings
 - a. A request from Jason Mulder of Everett's Landscaping to amend an existing special use permit for a landscaping company within the Commercial Zoning District at the property addressed as 13670 Port Sheldon St., also known as parcel number 70-12-30-200-021 per Section 12.04 of the Olive Township Zoning Ordinance.
 - i. Zoning Administrator Comments
 - (1) Castello explained that the property was previously occupied by Top Cut Landscaping and has since been purchased by Everett's Landscaping. The applicant is proposing site improvements and requesting approval for outdoor storage, which requires Special Use Permit approval. Staff noted that the primary consideration is whether adequate screening is provided for the proposed outdoor storage areas.
 - (2) Castello also noted that while the site generated complaints under previous ownership dating back to 2016, no complaints have been received since Everett's Landscaping purchased the property.
 - ii. Applicant Presentation
 - (1) Jason Mulder introduced Everett's Landscaping, a family-owned business established in 1956. The company currently operates from Gaines Township and purchased the property on February 27 of the current year to establish a west-side satellite location.
 - (2) Representatives outlined proposed improvements, including:
 - (a) Installation of landscaping and screening along the frontage and property boundaries.

- (b) Construction of berms and planting of evergreen trees for visual screening.
 - (c) Replacement of existing signage.
 - (d) Installation of fencing around portions of the site.
 - (e) Construction of storage bins for mulch, stone, topsoil, and other landscape materials.
 - (f) Relocation and installation of a covered salt storage structure.
 - (g) Potential future building expansion to accommodate business growth.
 - (h) The applicant emphasized their intention to improve the appearance of the site and keep materials organized and screened from public view.
- iii. Public Hearing
 - (1) The public hearing was opened.
 - (2) No public comments were offered.
 - (3) The public hearing was closed.
- iv. Commission Discussion
 - (1) The Commission discussed:
 - (a) Adequacy of proposed screening and landscaping.
 - (b) Visibility of the proposed salt storage structure from US-31.
 - (c) Compliance with the US-31 Overlay District standards.
 - (d) Future growth and maintenance of screening vegetation.
 - (e) Use of chain-link fencing versus agricultural-style fencing.
 - (f) Placement and visibility of outdoor storage areas.
 - (g) Future expansion plans and site functionality.
 - (h) Several commissioners expressed concerns regarding visibility of the salt storage structure due to its proximity to US-31. The applicant explained that existing and proposed berms, along with transplanted mature spruce trees, would provide screening and continue to improve as vegetation matures.
 - (i) The Commission generally agreed that the proposed improvements would significantly improve the site's appearance compared to previous operations.
- v. Findings
 - (1) The Commission went through Section 18.06 the required standards and findings for making a decision and found that the proposal:
 - (a) Will be harmonious with and in accordance with the general objectives, intent and purposes of this Ordinance because the proposed expansion improves the overall aesthetics of the existing business and provides necessary activity expansion for successful operation while protecting the viewshed from other parcels and the US31 Corridor.
 - (b) Will be designed, constructed, operated, maintained and managed so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity as the property's appearance will be improved through installation and maintenance of complimentary landscaping, buffering and screening.
 - (c) Public facilities and services are adequate to serve the proposed use which is an expansion of the existing use.

- (d) Will not be hazardous or disturbing to existing or future neighboring uses, as the nature of the use will not change.
 - (e) Will not create excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities, utilities and services as it is already adequately served by existing public facilities along with the proposed private improvements per the site plan.
 - vi. **Motion:** Based on the above findings, Geertman moved to approve the Special Use Permit amendment and site plan subject to the following conditions:
 - (1) Installation of a Knox Box for emergency access.
 - (2) Extension of chain-link fencing:
 - (a) 25 feet southward from the front fence line on the east side.
 - (b) 50 feet southward from the front fence line on the west side.
 - (3) Maintenance of screening around the salt storage area.
 - (4) Landscaping and site improvements shall be installed and maintained substantially as shown on the submitted site plan dated March 3, 2026, including adding the three items above.
 - vii. **Support:** Dreyer seconded the motion
 - viii. **Vote:** Motion carried (Ayes 4, Nays 1)
 - ix. Recommendation
 - (1) The application was recommended for approval by the Township Board, subject to the stated conditions. The applicant was encouraged to attend the Township Board meeting for final consideration and to answer any questions.
- b. An amendment to Section 16A, Battery Energy Storage Systems, of the Olive Township Zoning Ordinance
- i. Zoning Administrator comments
 - (1) Castello reviewed proposed amendments to Section 16A of the Battery Energy Storage Systems ordinance. The review was initiated due to concerns regarding the lack of height limitations and other operational standards within the existing ordinance.
 - ii. Planning Commission Discussion
 - (1) Maximum Height
 - (a) Existing draft proposed a maximum BESS structure height of 12 feet.
 - (b) Discussion occurred regarding increasing the height limit to 14–18 feet.
 - (c) Consensus of the Commission was to retain the 12-foot height limit.
 - (2) Emergency Response Plan
 - (a) Castello recommended adding an emergency response plan requirement in addition to the existing fire protection requirements.
 - (b) Commissioners expressed support for exploring additional language.
 - (3) Development Agreement
 - (a) Castello recommended requiring a formal development agreement between the Township and any future developer outlining responsibilities and conditions of approval.
 - (b) Commissioners supported reviewing draft language.
 - (4) Lighting Standards

- (a) Discussion occurred regarding requiring "Dark Sky" lighting standards.
 - (b) Commissioners generally supported adding language and/or definitions related to Dark Sky technology.
- (5) Building Height Standards
 - (a) Discussion included regulating accessory buildings such as operations and maintenance sheds.
- (6) Drain Tile and Fire Protection Language
 - (a) Minor corrections and renumbering issues were identified.
- (7) Decommissioning Requirements
 - (a) Discussion occurred regarding requiring removal of both above-ground and below-ground infrastructure during decommissioning.
 - (b) Commission supported including below-ground facilities in reclamation requirements.
- (8) Financial Assurance
 - (a) Castello recommended requiring the holder of any financial guarantee or bond to maintain a minimum A+ bond rating.
 - (b) Commissioners expressed support.
- (9) Complaint Resolution Process
 - (a) Castello recommended adding a formal complaint resolution process requiring operators to notify the Township of complaints and responses.
 - (b) Commissioners supported reviewing language.
- (10) Transferability/Bonding
 - (a) Discussion occurred regarding requiring proof of replacement financial security before cancellation of any existing bond or guarantee.
- (11) Special Use Permit Revocation Language
 - (a) Castello advised that revocation provisions may no longer be legally enforceable under recent zoning practices.
 - (b) Consensus was to leave the language in the ordinance for now, understanding enforcement may be limited.
- (12) Additional Suggestions from Commissioners
 - (a) Require two access entrances for emergency response.
 - (b) Evaluate third-party inspections of electrical systems and construction.
 - (c) Consider groundwater protection measures and secondary containment.
 - (d) Review fire suppression and fire-response requirements.
 - (e) Review decommissioning calculations without considering salvage value.
 - (f) Consider reducing the noise limit from 50 decibels to 45 decibels.
- (13) Noise Standard Discussion
 - (a) Commissioners discussed changing the maximum noise level from 50 dBA to 45 dBA.
 - (b) Informal consensus favored 45 dBA, subject to legal review and risk assessment by the Township attorney.

iii. Public Hearing

- (1) The Public Hearing was opened
 - (a) Ron Baumann

- (i) Expressed concerns regarding fire safety and proximity of potential battery storage facilities to residences.
 - (ii) Suggested locating such facilities in less populated industrial areas.
 - (b) Terry Van Dyke
 - (i) Asked about moratoriums and ordinance updates related to battery storage systems.
 - (ii) Participated in discussion regarding emergency access, fire suppression, inspections, and groundwater protection.
 - (c) Ken Boeve
 - (i) Asked questions regarding land availability and whether battery storage facilities would be pursued if no suitable property were available.
 - (ii) Commented on the importance of proactive ordinance planning.
 - (iii) Additional public comments included concerns regarding:
 - (iv) Fire suppression capabilities.
 - (v) Groundwater contamination.
 - (vi) Water runoff during fire events.
 - (vii) Long-term ownership and maintenance responsibilities.
 - (2) The Public Hearing was closed.
 - iv. **Motion:** Meekhoff moved to table consideration of the proposed amendments to Section 16A, Battery Energy Storage Systems Ordinance, until the next Planning Commission meeting to allow staff to prepare additional draft language and obtain legal review.
 - v. **Support:** D. Raak seconded the motion
 - vi. **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously
- 8) Special Use Renewals/Temporary Seasonal Uses.
- a. The Planning Commission reviewed the request for renewal of the temporary seasonal use permit for the operation of a TNT Fireworks sales tent at 13714 Port Sheldon Street Parcel 70-12-30-200-012.
 - i. Castello reported that the site has operated in previous years without issue. The Commission briefly discussed the location of the portable restroom and general site conditions.
 - ii. The Commission discussed the applicant's proposed operating schedule and confirmed that all required Township, Fire Chief, and state approvals must be obtained prior to commencement of sales.
 - iii. Commission members reviewed the applicant's submitted operational plan, including:
 - (1) Hours of operation from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
 - (2) Fire extinguishers and no-smoking requirements.
 - (3) Exit signage.
 - (4) Overnight security provisions.
 - (5) Site cleanliness and maintenance measures.
 - (6) Liability insurance coverage.
 - (7) Portable restroom facilities.
 - (8) Planning staff reported that the company has operated at multiple locations within their jurisdictions and that no complaints have been received regarding its operations.

- iv. Motion: Meekhof moved to approve the temporary seasonal use permit application for TNT Fireworks as presented.
- v. Support: B. Raak supported the motion.
- vi. Discussion: Commissioners noted that the request was consistent with previous years' operations and that the application materials adequately addressed operational and safety measures.
- vii. Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

9) NEW BUSINESS

- a. None

10) OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussions

i. Data Centers

- (1) Upon recommendation from Planning Consultant Lori Castello, discussion of data centers was postponed to allow for additional research and seminar attendance.

ii. Municode Update

- (1) Castello reported that work on the Municode codification update is ongoing. A public hearing notice and ordinance amendment for adoption and incorporation into the Township Code will be presented at the July 7 meeting.

iii. Zoning Ordinance Overhaul Work – Private Roads (Draft Review)

- (1) Discussion postponed until the next meeting.

iv. Zoning Ordinance Overhaul Work – Section 26-46: Zoning Administrator Duties

- (1) Discussion postponed until the next meeting.

- b. **Motion:** D. Raak moved to postpone Agenda Items 10(a)(i), (iii), and (iv) until the next meeting.

- c. **Support:** Geertman supported the motion.

- d. **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously.

11) PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENT & CORRESPONDENCE

a. Building Permits Report

- i. Planning and Zoning Administrator Castello reported that the Building Permits Report was not included in the meeting materials and would be distributed to Commission members via email.

b. Splits Report

- i. Castello reported that the Splits Report was also omitted from the meeting materials and would be provided to Commission members via email.

c. Additional Discussion

- i. The Commission discussed updating Township application forms to include applicant authorization for Township officials and Commission members to access property for site visits related to zoning and land use applications. Members agreed that applicants should also be notified as a courtesy prior to any site visit.

- (1) Motion: Dreyer moved to direct staff to revise applicable Planning Commission, ZBA, and Township Board application forms, including special land use, variance, planned unit development, rezoning, etc. to include applicant authorization for property access and inspection.

- (2) Support: D. Raak supported the motion

- (3) Vote: Motion carried, 4-1.
- ii. Castello agreed to review and update the Township's annual special use renewal tracking list and follow up on several expired or inactive special use approvals.
 - iii. Castello reminded members of a planned data center informational forum scheduled for August 31, 2026, at Dorr Township Hall, in preparation for future Planning Commission discussions.

12) Adjournment

- a. **Motion:** D. Raak moved to adjourn the meeting.
- b. **Support:** Meekhof supported the motion.
- c. **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:13pm.

13) Next Meeting Date

- a. The next regular Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 7, 2026.