

Hope Township Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Chair Norton at 6:30 pm at the Hope Township Hall, 5463 S. M-43, Hastings, MI 49058. Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Members present: Bob Norton, Junior Homister, Christine Zuzga, Larry Heslinga, Drew Chapple.

Drew Chapple was welcomed to the Planning Commission.

Members absent: None.

Others Present: Township Planner/Zoning Administrator Nathan Mehmed and three others at the Township Hall.

Agenda: Motion by Homister, supported by Chapple, to approve the agenda as presented. All ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting minutes: Motion by Homister, supported by Heslinga, to approve the September 9, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. All ayes. Motion carried.

General Public Comment: None.

Public Hearing: Bayerl SEU Accessory Dwelling Application:

- a. **Introductory comments.** Mehmed gave an overview of the request. Tim and Marilyn Bayerl have submitted an application for site plan review and special exception use approval for the construction of an accessory dwelling located at 6632 Gurd Road. The subject property has an area of approximately 23 acres and is zoned AR, Agricultural/Residential. The property currently contains a primary residence and an accessory building. Mehmed noted that the proposed location of the accessory dwelling is intentionally general as they are working to determine a specific location due to topography and septic siting.

Norton invited the applicant to provide any additional comments regarding the application. Tim and Marilyn Bayerl were present with their son, Robert, who owns the property. They explained that they are moving to Michigan from Minnesota and are looking to build a home on the property. They are looking to site the house so that it fits in well with the landscape. It will be

smaller than the primary house and have an attached garage. The exact location will be worked out, but the area they are planning on exceeds setback requirements.

- b. Acknowledge written comments received. Norton acknowledged that there were no written comments received.
- c. Open public hearing to receive comments. Norton opened the public hearing.
- d. Close public hearing. Hearing no comments, Norton closed the public hearing.
- e. Deliberation and motion. Norton stated that Mehmed had provided a staff report outlining all of the standards that are required for review. Mehmed shared that there weren't any outstanding concerns regarding the request. He has provided recommended conditions if the Planning Commission chooses to approve the application.

Heslinga asked about the protection of the pond and wetlands located on the property. The Planning Commission discussed the addition of a condition that further addresses soil erosion beyond the permit requirement to protect surface water during construction.

The Planning Commission briefly discussed the site plan review, special exception use, and specific use standards for accessory dwellings and determined that they appear to have been met, subject to the presented conditions.

Motion by Homister, supported by Chapple to approve the special exception use and site plan review request for an accessory dwelling located at 6632 Gurd Road, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall obtain all necessary local, county, state, or federal permits and approvals. Copies of all applicable permits should be provided to the Township.
2. Any stipulations of the Barry County Health Department and any other approvals shall be met.
3. In addition to any soil erosion and sedimentation control permit from Barry County, if required, the applicant shall utilize best practices to

ensure that construction will not disturb or negatively impact the pond and wetland near the site.

4. The applicant shall produce and sign a Statement of Conditions in compliance with Section 10.13, B, 9 for review and approval by the Township Zoning Administrator.
5. The applicant shall submit final detailed designs, including elevations, setbacks, driveway locations, etc., for review and approval by the Township Planner/Zoning Administrator before the issuance of a zoning compliance permit.

Horse Rescue Discussion: Homister shared that the neighbors of an animal rescue had expressed concern regarding the location of new buildings, manure piles, and the number of animals on the property. He wanted to bring it to the attention of the Planning Commission and get input from Mehmed.

Mehmed shared that he had talked to a neighbor of this property several years prior regarding the disposal of deceased animals. The property is located in the AR, Agricultural/Residential district and Section 10.10 of the Zoning Ordinance notes that “in the AR and RR districts, non-household animals may be kept without restriction, except that: a) All such land areas used by said non-household animals shall be properly fenced in such a manner to prevent the animals from leaving the property and all such animals shall be maintained and accommodated in a fashion that prevents them from becoming a nuisance to adjoining property or a hazard to public health, safety and welfare; and b) any building or other structure sheltering or housing non-household animals shall meet setbacks required for the district in which it is located.”

The Planning Commission discussed the issues and decided to have Ordinance Enforcement Officer Dekema visit the property and discuss some of the concerns with the owner and/or operator.

Master Land Use Discussion: Mehmed gave an overview of the last meeting and the first half of workshop #2, which focused on land use. Ellen Holste from the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute and Scott Monroe from the Southwest Barry County Sewer Authority were both present to discuss utility access and watershed management. Mehmed continued that this half of the workshop should focus on the future land use map and any changes to future land use descriptions. He noted that

he has a series of large-format maps, including future land use, to review and sketch on.

The Planning Commission had considerable discussion regarding the planned commercial areas, industrial areas, and surface water protection buffers. Edits to the future land use map were made to address changes in conditions and concerns. The Planning Commission also discussed the future land use descriptions and the number of commercial districts that exist in the Zoning Ordinance.

Mehmed explained the next steps and indicated that, in addition to assembling a complete draft, he would be drafting an implementation chapter for the Planning Commission to review at a future meeting.

Zoning Administrator: Mehmed shared that he expected Joe Zalokar to submit an amendment to his site plan before the next meeting and that there would likely be several variance requests on the November ZBA agenda. There was a brief discussion regarding the siting of RVs.

Adjournment: Motion by Homister, supported by Heslinga, to adjourn the meeting. All ayes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Christine Zuzga, Secretary

Date