

Hope Township Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2026

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, Larry Heslinga, Christine Zuzga, Jr Homister, Drew Chapple.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Township Planner/Zoning Administrator Nathan Mehmed and one other person 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 Zuzga, to approve the August 11, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. All ayes. Motion carried.

General Public Comment: None.

Public Hearing: 2026 Master Land Use Plan Update

- a. Introductory comments. Mehmed explained that the public hearing and adoption of the Master Land Use Plan are the last steps the Planning Commission takes in the update process. The Commission has been working on the Plan for many years, and considerable effort has been taken to update the document.
- b. Acknowledge written comments received. Norton asked Mehmed about written comments. Mehmed noted that as shared previously, there was correspondence regarding the change in EMS services. That has since been corrected. There no other written comments were 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 reiterated that the Planning Commission has spent a lot of time on updating the Plan. Heslinga stated that he appreciates the thoughtful consideration put into the protection of water resources in the Township, and additional information added to the Plan to strengthen it. A brief discussion took place regarding the work completed and the willingness to move forward by Commissioners. Mehmed reminded the Commission that they must take action on the provided resolution in accordance with the Planning Enabling Act. After the Planning Commission, the Township Board takes final action to adopt the Plan.

Motion by Zuzga, supported by Homister to adopt Resolution No. 2026-14, recommending approval of the 2026 Hope Township Master Land Use Plan to the Township Board and constituting Planning Commission approval of such master land use plan. All ayes. Motion carried. Resolution adopted.

Public Hearing: Text Amendment – Accessory Buildings and Shipping Containers

- a. Introductory comments. Mehmed explained that the draft is the latest version of what the Commission has been working on the past several months. The changes include modifying and adding definitions, moving regulations from definitions to appropriate sections, clarifying that shipping containers can be used as accessory buildings, moving boat house standards to the accessory buildings section, and housekeeping changes related to the synonymous use of manufactured home and mobile home throughout the Ordinance.
- 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.

(unclear name, no address given): Wanted to come to the meeting to confirm what is or isn't an accessory building to ensure that a family member can do what they are looking to do. Curious about shipping container use and if this will prohibit them. The Commission confirmed that amendment this would allow the use of shipping containers.

- d. Close public hearing. Hearing no further comments, Norton closed the public hearing.
- e. Deliberation and motion. Heslinga stated that he wanted to clarify that shipping containers could be used as boat houses by the water. Mehmed responded that as written, shipping containers could be used as boat houses. A brief discussion took place regarding the use of shipping containers as boat houses, and their unique use in this context. Mehmed explained that design standards could be placed on them to ensure that they match the principal building somewhat. It was determined by the Commission that this was unnecessary.

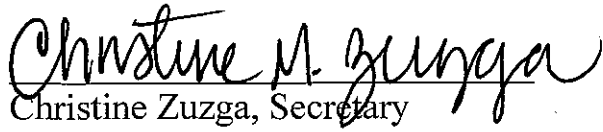
Motion by Homister, supported by Heslinga, to recommend Ordinance No. 101 to the Township Board. All ayes. Motion carried.

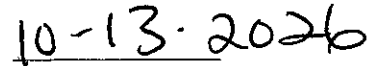
Data Center Discussion: Mehmed presented the updated draft of the temporary and data moratorium ordinance with the changes as requested by the Commission regarding generalizing the findings language. Mehmed also modified the ordinance format to match what the Township typically uses. The Commission responded that they liked this version better. Zuzga expressed concern about the findings language being squishy and not specific enough. The Commission modified it slightly to clarify the intent, which is to allow temporary moratoriums for other uses that the current Zoning Ordinance does not adequately address. Mehmed agreed that this was better and that he would update the draft.

Norton asked the Commission if they would like this on the next meeting agenda. The Commission agreed that this made sense and asked Mehmed about the six-month timeline. Mehmed clarified that six months is a typical moratorium length, usually with extensions in six-month increments. He would clarify that the six months would start upon the effective date of the Ordinance instead of picking a date as specified in the draft. The Commission directed Mehmed to make edits and schedule a public hearing for the October meeting.

Zoning Administrator: Mehmed shared that there will be two variance requests before the Zoning Board of Appeals in October. One for a height variance and one for a front yard setback on a lakefront lot. Norton asked about the number of permits and things were still busy. Mehmed explained that permit activity had been busy in August and September, with a lot of calls about more projects.

Adjournment: Motion by Homister, supported by Zuzga, to adjourn the meeting.
All ayes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.


Christine Zuzga, Secretary


Date