

DRAFT
LIVINGSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Howell High School
Rod Bushey Performing Arts Center
Howell, Michigan
NOVEMBER 19, 2025
6:30 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSION			
COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Matt Ikle Bill Call Dennis Bowdoin Paul Funk </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Margaret Burkholder Kevin Galbraith Chuck Wright </td> </tr> </table>	Matt Ikle Bill Call Dennis Bowdoin Paul Funk	Margaret Burkholder Kevin Galbraith Chuck Wright
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COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:			
STAFF PRESENT:	Scott Barb Rob Stanford Martha Haglund Abby Carrigan		
OTHERS PRESENT:	Various members of the public spoke, and names have been attached on the sign in sheet.		

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting was called to order by Planning Commissioner Ikle at 6:30 PM.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**
3. **ROLL AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** None.
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Commissioner Action: IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER BOWDOIN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA, DATED NOVEMBER 19, 2025, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BURKHOLDER.

All in favor, motion passed 7-0

5. **APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:**

Commissioner Action: IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER FUNK TO APPROVE THE MINUTES DATED OCTOBER 15, 2025, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CALL.

Motion passed 6-0
(ABSTAIN: WRIGHT)

6. **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:** Mary Hayak from Howell Township spoke about a previous zoning case in Howell Township and supports the planning commission’s recommendation on that case. Charles Smith from Howell Township spoke in opposition to the data center project and said the data center should first use superfund sites. A resident said she would support renewable energy projects but not data centers.

7. ZONING REVIEWS:

A. Z-34-25: HOWELL TOWNSHIP TEXT AMENDMENTS SECTION 2.02 DEFINITIONS

The Howell Township Planning Commission is proposing to amend the definitions in the Township Ordinance with the addition of 'Data Processing'. Staff have reviewed the proposed amendments for accuracy and compatibility with the existing ordinance language.

Township Recommendation: Disapproval. The proposed definition was denied at the September 23, 2025, public hearing on the proposed amendment.

Staff Recommendation: The definition is incorrect as noted in staff comments. The Planning Commission should consider the error as stated in staff comments and offer their recommendation to the Howell Township Board.

Commissioner Discussion: None.

Public Comments: None.

Commission Action:

Commissioner Action: IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CALL TO RECOMMEND DISAPPROVAL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FUNK.

Motion passed: 7-0

B. Z-35-25: HOWELL TOWNSHIP CONDITIONAL REZONING AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL (AR), NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE COMMERCIAL (NSC), AND SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (SFR) TO RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY (RT) SECTIONS 7 & 18.

Current Zoning: Agricultural Residential (AR), Single Family Residential (SFR), and Neighborhood Service Commercial

Proposed Zoning: Research and Technology (RT)

Sections: 7 and 18

Township Recommendation: The proposed conditional rezoning was Denied at the September 23, 2025, public hearing. Minutes of the meeting demonstrate a few proponents of the project with an overwhelming majority of attendees voicing their opposition to the proposed data center conditional rezoning.

Staff Recommendation: The proposed rezoning from AR (Agricultural Residential), SFR (Single Family Residential), and NSC (Neighborhood Service Commercial) to RT (Research & Technology) is not consistent with the overall goals, objectives, and future land use intentions of the Howell Township Master Plan. The Planning Commission should review the facts presented in this review and offer their recommendation to the Howell Township Board.

Commissioner Discussion: None.

Public Comments: Various members of the public spoke, and names have been attached on the sign in sheet.

Commissioner Action: IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CALL TO RECOMMEND DISAPPROVAL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BOWDOIN.

ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED BY COMMISSIONER IKLE: BURKHOLDER: YES; BOWDOIN: YES; GALBRAITH: YES; CALL: YES; FUNK: YES; WRIGHT: YES; IKLE: YES

Motion passed: 7-0

Planning Commission Recessed for a break at 8:38 PM

Planning Commission Reconvened at 8:47 PM

**C. Z-36-25: OCEOLA TOWNSHIP TEXT AMENDMENTS
SECTION 12.31 WASTE RECEPTACLES AND MANAGEMENT**

The Oceola Township Planning Commission proposes to add an entirely new section to **Article 12 General Provisions** of the Oceola Township Zoning Ordinance dealing with screening of solid waste receptacle areas.

Township Recommendation: Approval. The Oceola Township Planning Commission recommended Approval of this zoning amendment at its October 14, 2025, public hearing. According to the meeting minutes supplied for this case, there were no public comments.

Staff Recommendation: Based on the information provided by Oceola Township for this case, the proposed new provisions related to the management of waste receptacles appear to be suitable and reasonable.

Commissioner Discussion: Commissioner Call inquired if this is only for residential land uses.

Public Comments: None.

Commission Action:

Commissioner Action: IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER BOWDOIN TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BURKHOLDER

Motion passed: 7-0

**D. Z-37-25: OCEOLA TOWNSHIP TEXT AMENDMENTS
SECTION 15.02 (2) and (6) PROCEDURES FOR MAKING APPLICATION**

The Oceola Township Planning Commission proposes adding two entirely new sections to Article 15 Special Permits of the Oceola Township Zoning Ordinance dealing with the making of special use permit application.

Township Recommendation: Approval. The Oceola Township Planning Commission recommended Approval of this zoning amendment at its October 14, 2025, public hearing. According to the meeting minutes supplied for this case, there were no public comments.

Staff Recommendation: Based on the information provided by Oceola Township regarding this case, the proposed new provisions related to the administrative site plan approvals for special uses appear to be suitable and reasonable. The proposed provisions should help to streamline the administrative process when and where necessary for the township going forward.

Commissioner Discussion: Commissioner Bowdoin would like the Township to reconsider using sketch plans.

Public Comments: None.

Commission Action:

Commissioner Action: IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER BOWDOIN TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BURKHOLDER.

Motion passed: 7-0

**E. Z-38-25: OCEOLA TOWNSHIP TEXT AMENDMENTS
SECTION 16.11 SKETCH PLAN REVIEW STANDARDS**

The Oceola Township Planning Commission proposes to add an entirely new section to **Article 16 Site Plan Approval** of the Oceola Township Zoning Ordinance dealing with sketch plan review standards.

Township Recommendation: Approval. The Oceola Township Planning Commission recommended Approval of this zoning amendment at its October 14, 2025, public hearing. According to the meeting minutes supplied for this case, there were no public comments.

Staff Recommendation: Based on the information provided by Oceola Township regarding this case, the proposed new provisions related to the administrative site plan approvals and the allowance for sketch plan approval for certain special uses, appear to be straightforward, suitable and reasonable. The proposed provisions, connected appropriately with the newly proposed provisions in **Article 15 Special Permits, Section 15.02(6) Procedures for Making Application – Site Plan Approval** (County Case Z-37-25), should help to streamline the administrative process when and where necessary for the township going forward.

Commissioner Discussion: None.

Public Comments: None.

Commission Action:

Commissioner Action: IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CALL TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GALBRAITH.

Motion passed: 6-1, NAY BOWDOIN

**F. Z-39-25: COHOCTAH TOWNSHIP TEXT AMENDMENTS
SECTION 13.29 MORATORIUMS**

The Cohoctah Township Planning Commission is proposing to amend their Zoning Ordinance to include standards for Moratoriums including stating the purpose of the moratorium and adding language regarding deadline and extension guidelines.

Township Recommendation: APPROVAL. The Cohoctah Township Planning Commission recommended approval at their November 6, 2025, meeting. During the public hearing one person spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance.

Staff Recommendation: The proposed ordinance amendment has been thoroughly reviewed by staff and the Township Attorney. The proposed amendments are appropriate and consistent with zoning ordinance language.

Commissioner Discussion: None.

Public Comments: None.

Commission Action:

Commissioner Action: IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER BOWDOIN TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BURKHOLDER
Motion passed: 6-1, NAY IKLE

8. OLD BUSINESS:

9. NEW BUSINESS:

10. REPORTS:

A. Welcome New Planning Commissioner Chuck Wright

B. Annual Meeting to Follow Regular Meeting Adjournment.

11. COMMISSIONERS HEARD AND CALL TO THE PUBLIC: None.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Action: IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER BOWDOIN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:11 PM, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CALL.

Motion passed: 7-0

Call to the Public – Agenda Item #6		
Speaker Name	Township/ City/ Village of Residence	Comment
Mary Hayek	Howell Twp	Wants a follow-up from Scott on Johnathan’s Landing in Howell Twp
Charles Smith	Howell Twp	Opposition to the rezoning, preserve rural character and quality of life
Stephanie Booth	City of Howell	Opposition to the rezoning
Zoning Review – 7B Howell Twp. Rezoning		
Speaker Name	Township/City/ Village of Residence	Comment
Angela Barbash	Howell Twp	The rezoning should follow township and county Master Plans. Spoke about locating data centers in industrial zones.
Dan Wholihan	Handy Twp	Spoke in opposition to the rezoning, referenced rural character and data centers belonging in industrial areas
Mary Motto	Howell Twp	Spoke about following the Master Plan
Kristen Dennison	Village of Fowlerville	Spoke about following the Master Plan goals and is hopes that none of the new goals are related to the data center project
Jodi Fulton	Howell Twp	Spoke about following the Master Plan, says the Research and Technology zone is more suited for airports than data centers
Alissa Recker	Cohoctah Twp	Spoke about data centers belonging in heavy industrial, expressed the need for more independent studies on community impacts
Lauren Prebenda	Oceola Twp	Spoke in opposition to the project, and said the project conflicts with the Township and County Master Plans.

		Referenced a petition in opposition with 3000 signatures and a petition for a moratorium on data centers with 400 signatures
Mark Freude	Howell Twp	Stated that he supported previous comments and agreed with the staff recommendation, discussed the background of the Howell Twp Master Plan
Dan Bonello	Howell Twp	Talked about a previous article about the Van Gilders and the importance of preserving farmland. Read letter from Jane Carter about Dodge Farm and the importance of preserving historical structures.
Wyatt Tucker	Genoa Twp	Posed questions about the applicant's website and available information. Voiced concerns about impacts to residents near data centers.
Laurie Goethe	Marion Twp	Spoke about rural preservation goals and a lack of transparency with the project
Lyle Devine	City of Howell	Concerned about impacts on his family and water quality
Robert Hill	Iosco Twp	Questioned how the project would benefit the community, concerned about water, contamination, and cost of utility bills
Patricia Murphy	Oceola Twp	Concerned about the speed of the project and tax breaks given to data center projects.
Emma Sova	Howell Twp	Spoke in opposition to the project; concerned about transparency from the township

Steven Weiss	Conway Twp	Stated that the attorney representing the developer was the representative also representing Ranger Power with a renewable energy project in his community. Concerned about transparency
Gary Burtka	Conway Twp	Believes that data centers belong in industrial areas. Referenced other areas available in Michigan, claimed those should be utilized first
William Lawrence	City of Lansing	Referenced a data center project in his community. Skeptical about AI and potential future market failures.
Allen Romaine	Howell Twp	Spoke about preservation, concerned about transparency and disclosures.
Jeanette Freeland	City of Howell	Questioned where the need for these data centers are coming from, challenged the necessity of AI
Evelyn Redwine	City of Howell	Spoke about impacts to the surrounding landowners and expressed concerns about AI impacts on employment
Kirk Starin	Cohoctah Twp	Concerned about AI taking jobs and decreasing the workforce
Dave Richardson	Village of Fowlerville	Concerned with sprawl and the development of the data centers. Voiced issue with site plan requirements and setbacks.
Michelle Vecheta	Howell Twp	Concerned about the new conditions presented from the applicant. Said the PC should uphold the 2018 Master Plan.

Paula Murphy	Howell Twp	Concerned about tax breaks to data centers and concerned about the impact AI may have on the workforce. Also concerned about extra pressure on local fire department.
Dave O.	Howell Twp	Expressed concern regarding AI and voiced the need for regulations
Breanne Green	Marion Twp	Stated that the project is inconsistent with goals and objectives of the Master Plan, concerned about water usage and utility rates
Charles Smith	Howell Twp	Read letter he submitted to Public Service Commission and AG Office in opposition to data center project
Victoria Steele	Oceola Twp	Concerned about AI usage and the impact on human creativity and productivity
Richard Kaminski	Howell Twp	Concerned about water retention, asked questions about DTE and transparency
Steve Smith	Conway Twp	Discussed his background in working with an applicant for a renewable energy project in Conway Township and expressed concern about decreasing property values in his community.
Clark Thompson	Howell Twp	Concerned about regulations and transparency of the project.
Valerie Malafouris	Howell Twp	Spoke about past contamination experience and concerns with contamination from the project. Questioned the benefits to the community.
Corey Alchin	Howell Twp	Concerned about project transparency. Expressed the

		need for a moratorium on data center projects in Howell Twp. Concerned about too many data centers drawing on water from the same aquifer.
???	???	Concerned about precedent being set and uncertainty about suggested cooling systems in the proposed data center.
Zoning Review – 7C Oceola Twp. Text Amendment		
Speaker Name	Township of Residence	Comment
Zoning Review – 7D Oceola Twp. Text Amendment		
Speaker Name	Township of Residence	Comment
Zoning Review – 7E Oceola Twp. Text Amendment		
Speaker Name	Township of Residence	Comment
Zoning Review – 7E Cohoctah Twp. Text Amendment		
Speaker Name	Township of Residence	Comment
Call to the Public (Final)		
Speaker Name	Township of Residence	Comment