



**THE CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS
PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2025 AT 6:00 PM
86 W CENTER ST., DOUGLAS MI**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER at 6:00pm by Chair Balmer

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Chair Matt Balmer

Commissioner Laura Peterson

Commissioner Steven Merouse

Commissioner Paul Buszka

Commissioner Patty Hanson

Commissioner Jennifer Ludwick

Commissioner Neal Seabert

Also Present

Planning and Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen

A. Approval of Agenda - November 13, 2025 (additions/changes/deletions)

Motion by Seabert, seconded by Hickey to approve the November 13, 2025 agenda – Motion carried unanimously

B. Approval of Minutes - October 9, 2025 (additions/changes/deletions)

Motion by Seabert, seconded by Hanson to approve the October 9, 2025 regular meeting minutes – Hicky requested to abstain from voting due to not being present at the meeting. Members were ok with it. - Motion carried unanimously

3. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION - VERBAL (LIMIT OF 3 MINUTES) - None

4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION – WRITTEN - None

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Wildwood Lane. - PUD Amendment (Public Hearing)

Motion by Seabert, seconded by Buszka to open the public hearing

a. Planning and Zoning Administrators Report

Planning & Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen provided background information and a summary of the request to the Planning Commission.

b. Applicant Presentation

Mark Lauterbach, of Lauterbach Architecture, explained the request to permit a monument sign within the Wildwood Lane PUD. He outlined the due diligence undertaken prior to submitting the request, including review of ordinance requirements and existing conditions. Lauterbach noted that the development is nearing completion and that the association is seeking a monument sign consistent with other condominium developments in the area. He stated that, if approved, the association would amend the Master Deed accordingly. Lauterbach also reviewed the proposed sign's location, landscaping, and design details.

c. Public Comments - None

d. Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Buszka expressed concern regarding the proposed landscaping, specifically grass height and potential impacts to the clear vision corner. He suggested that landscaping be maintained to comply with clear vision requirements. Lauterbach indicated willingness to ensure landscaping does not obstruct visibility. It was also noted that residents value privacy within the development.

Commissioner Hickey asked whether the condominium association would be responsible for maintaining the sign and surrounding area. Lauterbach responded that the association intends to amend the bylaws to assume maintenance responsibility.

Commissioner Peterson asked whether the sign would be visible from both directions of travel. Lauterbach confirmed that the sign would be visible to vehicles traveling toward the lakeshore. Peterson also asked about the sign's edges and whether they would be sharp. Lauterbach stated that design options are being reviewed with the sign fabricator to ensure smooth edges.

Motion by Hickey, seconded by Seabert to close the public hearing

Motion by Buszka, seconded by Ludwick, to recommend approval of the request by Mark Lauterbach of Lauterbach Architecture on behalf of the Wildwood Lane Association to amend the Wildwood Lane PUD to permit installation of a monument sign under Section 27.12 of the City of the Village of Douglas Zoning Ordinance, based on the findings and recommendations in the staff report dated November 5, 2025, subject to the following conditions:

1. The proposed sign shall comply with all applicable provisions of Article 22 (Signs), except as modified under Section 27.04(5) through this amendment.
2. The Wildwood Lane Association shall remain responsible for maintenance and repair of the sign, landscaping around it, and any related illumination, as indicated in the amended Master Deed.
3. Any proposed illumination shall be downcast, shielded, and reviewed by staff prior to installation to ensure compliance with Article 22.

4. Prior to issuance of a Sign permit, the Association shall record an amendment to the Master Deed incorporating the approved sign location and design, and provide a recorded copy to the City.
5. The applicant shall obtain a Sign Permit and any applicable electrical permit prior to installation.
6. Demonstrate compliance for both sides of Wildwood Ln intersection with Center St with the clear vision corner criteria as defined in zoning ordinance 16.31, including proposed sign and existing vegetation on opposite side of the street.

Buszka made an amendment to the motion, seconded by Hickey to include condition number 6. The commissioners all agreed.

Motion carried unanimously

B. 100 E Wiley Rd (Interurban). - Site Plan Review

a. Planning and Zoning Administrators Report

Planning & Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen provided background information and a summary of the site plan request.

b. Applicant Presentation

Derek Eade, of Midwest Construction Group, presented the proposal to construct an addition to the existing Interurban building.

c. Public Comments - None

d. Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Hickey asked whether any changes to exterior lighting were proposed. The applicant stated that no lighting changes are proposed. No additional questions were raised by the Commission.

Motion by Buszka, seconded by Seabert to approve with conditions the request made by Matt Boonstra of Midwest Construction Group on behalf of the Interurban for site plan approval under Article 24 of the City of the Village of Douglas Zoning Ordinance, based on the findings outlined in the staff report dated November 5, 2025, on the parcel identified as P.P. 59-016-101-00, located at 100 E Wiley Rd., subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall revise the site plan and provide the missing data as noted from the Site Plan Review Checklist, and the height of the building.
2. The applicant shall obtain a Zoning Permit.
3. The applicant shall obtain a building permit and any other required permits from Michigan Township Services.
4. The applicant shall obtain approval from the KLSWA if required
5. The applicant shall obtain all other federal, state, and local permits if required

6. Any proposed exterior lighting must comply with Zoning Ordinance Sections 19.05(6) and 24.03(9).

Motion carried by unanimous vote.

C. 13 S. Union St - Site Plan Review

a. Planning and Zoning Administrators Report

Planning & Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen provided background information regarding the applicant's proposal.

b. Applicant Presentation

Daniel Boggs, of Boggs Architecture, explained that the existing structure would be relocated rather than demolished. He described the proposed development, which includes two to four ground-floor retail spaces and four residential units on the second floor, and reviewed the submitted plans.

c. Public Comments

Darin Reiling (33 S. Union Street), a resident south of the subject property, provided comments regarding the proposal. His concerns included fencing materials, dumpster location and noise, lighting, water service impacts, trees and landscaping, construction noise, and construction timing. He recommended a wooden fence in lieu of vinyl fencing.

d. Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Buszka asked whether the corner unit would be retail, food service, or a combination, noting the proposed patio area. He questioned whether the existing water service could support the proposed uses and agreed with the City Engineer's concern regarding paving of the parking lot.

Commissioner Hickey asked whether the Fire Department had reviewed the plans and expressed concerns regarding water capacity, tree removal, and issues raised during public comment.

Commissioner Peterson expressed a preference for a wooden fence rather than vinyl and asked whether the residential units would be used as short-term rentals.

Commissioner Hansen echoed concerns regarding water capacity and short-term rentals.

Commissioner Seabert raised concerns about pedestrian circulation near the northern property line, particularly the placement of trees near the entrance and sidewalk.

Chair Balmer emphasized the need for Fire Department review, noted concerns with the incomplete grading plan, and agreed with the City Engineer's recommendation that the parking lot be paved. He also questioned the patio configuration, referencing Section 10.03(10)(j), and stated that if the patio is proposed for public use, it should remain accessible to the public.

Commissioner Buszka requested clarification on which trees would be removed or added per the landscaping plan and expressed concern that the building design appeared significantly more modern than surrounding structures along Center Street. He suggested incorporating architectural elements reflective of the existing character.

Commissioner Seabert asked whether short-term rentals would be permitted. Planning & Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen responded that short-term rentals would require separate Special Land Use approval.

Motion by Hicky, seconded by Seabert to table the request made by Daniel Boggs of Daniel Boggs Architect, on behalf of AMK Properties, for Site Plan Approval under Article 24 of the City of the Village of Douglas Zoning Ordinance, based on the findings outlined in the staff report dated November 5, 2025, for the parcel identified as P.P. 59-150-001-00, located at 13 S. Union Street, to allow the applicant additional time to address outstanding items identified in the staff and agency reviews prior to further consideration by the Planning Commission.

Motion carried unanimously, with Commissioner Buszka abstaining.

D. Westshore Association (Golfview Dr.) - Request for Acceptance of Private Road as Public (Public Hearing)

Buszka asked if he can exclude himself from the agenda item due to it being a conflict of interest. Commissioners agreed.

Motion to open the public hearing

Motion by Seabert, seconded by Hickey to open the public hearing

a. Planning and Zoning Administrators Report

Planning & Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen provided background information regarding the request to dedicate Golfview Drive as a public road.

b. Applicant Presentation

Karen Pulick (554 Artisan Row Court) presented an overview of the request, including prior discussions within the HOA and coordination with City staff. She explained the history of the roadway, removal of the turnaround, and challenges associated with maintenance and public use of the private cul-de-sac. Pulick stated that City Engineer guidance indicated the road could be accepted as public if coordination occurred with the Allegan County Drain Commission regarding private drains. She noted that the HOA has discussed procedures, costs, and agreements with the Drain Commission and that, if approved by the Planning Commission and City Council, the Master Deed would be amended accordingly.

c. Public Comments

A resident asked whether property taxes would be reduced due to the lack of City services. Chair Balmer explained that private roads are typically constructed and maintained privately, and purchasers assume maintenance responsibility when buying property on a private road.

d. Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Hickey asked whether the City would assume maintenance responsibilities if the road were accepted as public and inquired about right-of-way and easement issues. Planning & Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen responded that utilities would be transferred to the City, while drains would be transferred to the Drain Commission.

Commissioner Peterson asked who removed the previous turnaround. It was stated that the exact party responsible is unknown, but the turnaround existed on the original plans.

Commissioner Hansen asked whether there are other private roads in the area. Staff responded that approximately 25–26 private roads exist.

Pulick noted that the situation is unique because the private road extends from a public road.

Joy McClendon (699 Golfview Drive) commented that gravel added by the City does not adequately accommodate larger vehicles with trailers, requiring use of the private turnaround.

Motion to close the public hearing

Motion by Seabert seconded by Peterson to close the public hearing

Motion by Hickey, seconded by Seabert to recommend of the request by the Westshore Association to dedicate Golfview Drive as a public road, pursuant to Division 2 – Acceptance of Private Roads of the City of the Village of Douglas Code of Ordinances, based on the findings and recommendations outlined in the City Engineer’s report dated September 3, 2025.

Commissioner Peterson questioned how truck traffic would be addressed if trucks are already causing issues in the area and expressed concern that approval could set a precedent for other private roads seeking public dedication.

Commissioner Seabert stated that the length of roadway proposed for public acceptance would not pose a significant burden to the City. He noted that the road has been constructed to road commission standards, unlike many other private roads in the community. Seabert added that the prior turnaround may have been removed by the developer or during earlier work, though he did not believe it was removed by the City. He also asked whether the drainage would be part of the Warnock Drain.

Planning & Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen responded that portions of the drainage system would be incorporated into the Warnock Drain, while drainage serving the eastern portion would remain separate.

Chair Balmer stated that he agreed with Commissioner Peterson’s concerns.

Motion carried by a 4–2 vote, with Commissioner Buszka abstaining due to a conflict of interest.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

7. REPORTS

A. Planning and Zoning Administrator Report

Planning & Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen stated that this would be the last Planning Commission meeting held at City Hall, and that future meetings would take place at the new City Hall. He also noted that upcoming meetings would include the Steering Committee for the Zoning Ordinance update.

Homyen provided an update regarding a Code Enforcement matter related to signage that had been discussed at previous meetings. He explained that City Council extended the compliance deadline and recommended that the Planning Commission advise the Steering Committee to consider whether the Zoning Ordinance should be amended to allow house signs.

The Commissioners expressed their concerns that the Steering Committee should not pursue changes to the sign ordinance at this time.

B. Planning Commissioner Remarks (limit 3 minutes each, please)

8. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION – VERBAL (LIMIT OF 3 MINUTES)

Commissioner Hickey commended Commissioner Buszka for recusing himself due to a conflict of interest. Hickey noted that the Commission was divided on the issue and stated that his motion was intended to begin discussion. He added that it was valuable to hear a range of perspectives.

Chair Balmer informed the Commissioners that he would relay the discussion and outcomes to City Council.

Commissioner Peterson agreed with Hickey, stating that it was important for the public to see that decisions are not predetermined and that discussion occurs before votes are taken.

Commissioner Hansen expressed that she would miss the old City Hall building but was looking forward to the move to the new City Hall. She raised concerns regarding the Union Street development, noting known issues, and asked whether the Fire Department would review the proposal before it returned to the Planning Commission. The Planning & Zoning Administrator responded that Fire Department reviews are typically completed prior to Planning Commission consideration, although staff has been particularly busy.

The Commissioners generally agreed that, given the number of unresolved questions, the proposal should not have advanced to the Planning Commission at this stage, consistent with the Planning & Zoning Administrator's earlier recommendation.

Commissioner Seabert asked what items would come forth to the Planning Commission in the coming months. Planning & Zoning Administrator Sean Homyen responded that the Commission may see a revised proposal for 13 S. Union Street and the final phase of the Westshore Development.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Seabert, seconded by Peterson to adjourn the meeting.