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Supervisor Pat Hohl Clerk Mike Dolan Treasurer Jason Negri Trustees Bill Hahn, Patricia Hughes, Chuck Menzies, Cindy Michniewicz

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 6:00 PM
Hamburg Township Hall Board Room

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Muck called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL OF THE BOARD:

1) PRESENT:

John Hamlin
Patricia Hughes, Trustee
Victor Leabu Jr
Deborah Mariani
Ron Muir, Vice Chair
Jeff Muck, Chair
Mark Venuto

2) ABSENT:

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA for tonight.

Approval Motion made by Trustee Hughes, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin, to approve the agenda with an additional conversation on non-motorized transportation in Hamburg Township by Commissioner Hamlin under new business.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

Approval Motion made by Commissioner Mariani, seconded by Commissioner Venuto, to approve May 20, 2026, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes with corrections as noted by Commissioner Mariani.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CALL TO THE PUBLIC- No public response

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Annual election of Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair.

Chair Muck opened the meeting to David Rohr. David explained that according to the Planning Commission bylaws, the PC board members are required to annually reelect a chair and vice chair to their board. Someone would need to nominate a person to be the chair and another for vice chair, then the PC would need a second for that nomination. Then the PC would allow a discussion about the nomination. Then there could be counter nominations. Commissioner Hamlin **nominated** Jeff Muck as the PC chair and Commissioner Muir as the PC Vice Chair. Trustee Hughes seconded this nomination. Chair Muck asked if there was any discussion from the board. Commissioner Muir said he was good. Muck said thanked the board for this honor to lead the PC board again and serve the residents of Hamburg Township.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Discussion of Zoning Text Amendment: Crematoriums.

Chair Muck opened the meeting to a guest speaker, Todd Borek. He came up to the podium to talk on this topic. Todd explained that he had come before the PC board 34 years ago to propose their funeral home in an industrial district as a special use. He is proposing that a crematorium unit be placed inside their funeral home building. Todd said he felt it was consistent with the master plan since their building was in the light industrial zone. 80 % of Hamburg's residents are requesting cremation today, so this is a large portion of their business. The Borek funeral home has five locations and currently they bid out cremations to two businesses; one in Livonia and the other in Mason. Todd would like to offer all funeral services at their business locations. Todd said he will need an EGLE permit for air quality and a license from the state since they regulate these units.

Chair Muck asked David to explain the procedure for the PC to approve this use. David said it could be an accessory use of the funeral home, a special use, or it could be a text amendment that allows this use in certain zoning districts if it meets certain requirements. David said he provided an example of what the City of Cadillac had done to allow a crematorium in their community. Chair Muck asked David if the PC could approve this use as an amendment to the Borek funeral home's special land use, so they don't open this use to all the light industrial parcels in that zoning district. David said that the PC could only permit this certain use to an existing funeral home in that certain zoning district in Hamburg Township. Commissioner Hamlin asked if any business could have a crematorium under our current rules. David

said that this is not a permitted use and it is not similar enough to any other special or light industrial use. David explained that this use would need to be written as a standalone or an accessory use to an existing funeral home as a text amendment. Commissioner Mariani asked Todd if they were already working on getting a crematorium approved with Handy Township. He said no. He said he is currently negotiating with Handy Township as he is doing with Hamburg Township PC board members tonight.

Commissioner Leabu asked Todd how far his funeral home was from the residential zone districts in Hamburg Township. He said he is well over the 300 ft which is required by the crematorium unit specifications that they are considering purchasing. Commissioner Leabu said he liked the idea of keeping the body remains of Hamburg residents local, instead of sending them out of the community for this type of service. Trustee Hughes asked Todd what building he was proposing to place the crematorium unit in. He said that their current funeral home was located inside what used to be the old Hamburg Screw Products building. He purchased this empty building and remodeled it into the funeral home. Next, she asked Todd about the environmental impact of the crematorium. Todd explained that the crematoriums of today are technologically advanced to reduce their environmental impact on the surrounding community. They have triple-chambered systems that are heavily regulated by the state through a licensing via EGLE. Trustee Hughes asked Todd questions about their final funeral service process. Todd explained that Borek Jennings is a full-service provider. He said they also own a low-cost provider, which is called Livingston Cremation and Funeral Care. That business is housed in an old funeral home in Howell located at 312 S. Michigan in Howell, across from Howell Post Office. The low-cost provider charges \$1500 less than the full-service business since their customers never come to the building. The low-cost customers do everything online. It is a different type of service. Commissioner Muir said that Borek Jennings full-service is a one-stop shop that takes care of all the family needs for the death of a loved one. Their family used their full-service funeral arrangements.

Commissioner Hamlin asked Todd if they could fit the whole crematorium unit inside their existing funeral home in Hamburg Township. Todd said yes. Hamlin asked if they do about 450 cremations per year with all five of their facilities. Todd said yes. Hamlin read that if the ordinance said that crematoriums may accept bodies from multiple funeral home clients, would they do this practice? Todd said he could. Hamlin asked if the cremation of bodies would happen both day and night for this newly purchased unit? Todd said it is a daytime business, which would run between 6am to 6pm as a workday. Todd explained that there is a lot of preparation to get the cremation unit ready for cremations. Currently, the funeral home is operating 24/7, 365 days per year. Hamlin asked Todd to clarify what a "small crematory unit" is defined as. Todd said he wasn't sure how to clarify that. Todd said they would not be a pet crematorium. David explained that he wrote *small unit* in his memo to ensure that the PC members didn't define this unit as a large crematorium with a huge smokestack. It is smaller unit that can fit inside the current existing funeral home facility. The unit's smokestack is 42 inches diameter for the outer stack, and the inner stack will protrude outside the roof line about 32 inches. The roofline units will block the stack from view at the road.

Commissioner Leabu asked Todd how long a cremation takes. He said it could take around 55 minutes to cremate a smaller body. Todd said it depends on the type of unit that is installed, as well as the weight of the deceased person. The average cremation takes about 2-3 hours, depending on the technology and scope of heat produced by the unit. The unit can get up to 1800 degrees, and you must wait till the unit cools down (900 degrees) before you open the unit to retrieve the remains.

Chair Muck stated that the PC board had consensus to support this text amendment. He asked David what their next steps would be for him to draft this zoning text amendment. David said that he needed the PC board to direct his office with some draft language for this ordinance. David then could bring this back to the PC for review and edits, then potentially vote for a recommendation. He would then need to send it to Livingston County Planning Commission for their review/comments, and then he would present it to the township board for approval. Trustee Hughes said that there were many things in this example ordinance that she didn't approve. David said he could draft up a text amendment and bring it back to the PC so they could make edits to the language at next month's meeting. Chair Muck said he didn't want to delay this amendment too long or make it a lengthy process. He said that the PC members could send David some comments about what they like or didn't like before he brings it to them at next month's meeting.

Commissioner Hamlin asked David if this would be an amendment to their special land use permit. David said that was a good question. It depended on how they write the language up. Special uses are usually reserved for things that have additional requirements. Hamlin said that this would either be a permitted use or a special use. David said, "Correct." David said that this would be more of a permitted use, but within the ordinance it would still require certain requirements. He said that these would not necessarily be permitted in all general industrial locations would narrow this type of use. He recommended adding that a crematorium needs to be housed within an existing funeral home. Hamlin said if it is a permitted use, then there will not be a public hearing for the text amendment. David said with any text amendment, it must be held as a public hearing. When Mr. Borek comes back to us for the planning approval to place the crematory unit, and it is permitted, and he satisfies the ordinance, then it's not administrative. Trustee Hughes asked David if he could check with Michigan Township Association (MTA) to see if they have any template for this type of use.

Commissioner Leabu asked if they will allow family to watch the cremation process? Todd said that some traditions require that the family is a part of the cremation process so he will have to play it by ear. Some units can push the body into and out of the combustion chamber. Hamlin had mentioned that in some communities a crematorium portion of a funeral home doesn't have to pay taxes. Todd said he didn't hear that, but he said he would do some research. Todd said that a pet crematorium is expensive to acquire. Muir asked if they could perform both pets and human cremations in their crematorium. Todd said no, you couldn't commingle the two.

Approval motion by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Muir, to direct township staff to prepare a draft text amendment.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Chair Muck asked David if Mr. Borek needed to be at their PC meeting next month. He told Borek he was welcome to attend if he wanted to. David and Hamlin said that the discussion meeting would not be a public meeting, but David would send him an email, so he was aware of when they would have the discussion meeting. Todd said he would like to attend this meeting in case anyone has any questions.

3. Discussion of non-motorized traffic.

Commissioner Hamlin said we talk about having a Village and a walkable community, but he can't ride his bike to Kroger unless he uses the road. He asked if it would be the PC who would work on a mission or goal to make Hamburg a bikeable community? He said it would make Hamburg Township a nice place to live if they had a bike/walking path. Commissioner Leabu said that there was a greenways plan on Chilson but today you take your life into your own hands. Commissioner Muir said that the PC was making businesses connect sidewalks along M-36, so they have a walking path. Commissioner Venuto said he drives his bike to Kroger and then he can access the trail to different spots such as the Hamburg Pub from the trail. Venuto reminded Hamlin that building such a bike/walking path would take 40 years and a lot of funding. You would have to put it into the ordinance and raise taxes to fund such a vision. Leabu said that there are grants that the City of Ann Arbor gets to pay for some of this expense.

Trustee Hughes said that when the township surveyed residents about parks and other amenities that they stated that they didn't want to have to drive their bikes to the park and then access the trails from a park to get around. The township residents are not responsible for the cost of our roads. Livingston County would need to form a complete streets ordinance to develop a bike lane when they redo the roads in Hamburg Township. That cost would trickle back to each of us in the township. She said we have Lakeland Trail and we pay for the maintenance on it. Past township supervisors said when they wanted to connect Dexter trails to McGregor Road, it was going to be costly for them to gain easements from the property owners along the way to connect them. Hamlin said he used to work in Ann Arbor township, and he knows it is costly, but it can be done. Trustee Hughes said that some board members were talking about connecting Hamburg Township to Brighton State Park, but she can't remember if they had come up with a cost estimate or not. Chair Muck reminded Hamlin that the Parks and Recreation's 5-year master plan was due soon. We must have this on file with the MDNR to be eligible for any kind of grants. The best way to get funding for trails is through MDNR grant programs. Hamburg Township has benefited from such grants with the West Park kayak launch, the playgrounds and walking paths. Muck said that the Parks and Recreation Committee would like to know that the PC would like to see a big push for more trails and pathways throughout the community. Muck said he is the Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Novi, and they have what is called their Active Mobility Committee. It is made up of two city council members, two planning commission members, and two park commission members. The task force works on looking at sidewalk gaps, trail connections, e-bikes and other updates to their ordinance. Muck said that this might be something that David would want to present to the Township Supervisor and see if he wants to form a small task force committee. Muck said that Metro Parks had looked at a county wide plan to connect local communities to their park system. Hamburg Township had been excluded since that had to either get over or under US 23.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

1. He has been working with the new Blue Water Party Store owners for a proposed restaurant / golf simulator. Very similar to what the PC approved three years ago. David said he is working diligently to get the owners on the August 19 agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Approval motion by Commissioner Venuto, seconded by Commissioner Leabu, to adjourn at 6:55 pm.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Perschke

Planning/Zoning Coordinator & Recording Secretary

David Rohr

Planning & Zoning Director

The minutes were approved as presented/corrected: _____

Commissioner Jeff Muck, Chairperson