



Planning Commission Minutes

Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 7:00 PM
27400 Southfield Road, Lathrup Village, Michigan 48076

1. **Call to Order** at 7:01pm by City Clerk Emanuel

2. **Roll Call**

Present: Commissioner Hillman, Commissioner Hammond, Commissioner Robinson, Commissioner Clarke, Commissioner Abraham, Commissioner Scussel

Others Present: DDA Director Colson, Community Economic Development/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy, Attorney Baker, Planning Consultant Pietsch of Giffels Webster, City Clerk Emanuel

Motion by Commissioner Hammond, seconded by Commissioner Hillman, to excuse Commissioner Nordmoe.

Yes: Hammond, Robinson, Hillman, Abraham, Clarke, Scussel

No: N/A

Motion carried.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Hammond, seconded by Commissioner Hillman to approve the agenda with the revision of moving item 7.A Officer Elections to item 3.A.

Yes: Hammond, Robinson, Hillman, Abraham, Clarke, Scussel

No: N/A

Motion carried.

A. **Officer Elections**

DDA Director Colson and Commissioner Hammond explained the job descriptions of the open positions. Commissioner Hillman and Attorney Baker, discussed electing Officers now, and then per the by-laws re-electing officers in January of 2026, which also allows new members to get a chance to learn more about the positions. Commissioner Hillman relayed that Commissioner Nordmoe was not interested in Chairing the Commission and Commissioner Scussel said that Commissioner Nordmoe said he wasn't interested in the other two openings on the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Hillman, volunteered to be the Chairperson, Commissioner Scussel volunteered to be the Vice Chairperson, and Commissioner Clarke volunteered to be the Secretary.

Motion by Commissioner Hammond, seconded by Commissioner Robinson to appoint Commissioner Hillman to the Chairperson position.

Yes: Hammond, Robinson, Hillman, Abraham, Clarke, Scussel

No: N/A

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Robinson, seconded by Commissioner Hammond to appoint Commissioner Scussel as Vice Chairperson.

Yes: Hammond, Robinson, Hillman, Abraham, Clarke, Scussel

No: N/A

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Hillman, seconded by Commissioner Abraham, to install Commissioner Clarke as Secretary.

Yes: Hammond, Robinson, Hillman, Abraham, Clarke, Scussel

No: N/A

Motion carried.

Attorney Baker recommended that Commissioner Hillman take over the meeting.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A. August Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Robinson, seconded by Commissioner Hammond to approve the August 19, 2025 Planning Commission meetings with the amendment of adding that Commissioner Scussel was absent.

5. Public Comment

Jonathan Tara, asked If the Planning Commission and/or City Council has passed a Resolution regarding money servicing businesses, and Chairperson Hillman responded that is correct. Mr. Tara also mentioned the recent lawsuit filed by the District of Columbia v Athena Bitcoin, related to excessive fees, and a study indicating only about 6% are legitimate and that he found this very concerning and asked if we have banned Bitcoin (machines).

Diane Anderson, commented in part: about the Minutes of the last meeting stating that “she expressed her belief that the DDA can control property that is privately owned”, what she said was “through our ordinances and zoning and code enforcement you very definitely can control what is done”, mentioned businesses that used to be along Southfield Road and maintaining architectural heritage, that she mentioned Demolition by Neglect at the Council last night, and about the mural on the side of City Hall.

6. **Old Business and Tabled Items**

Commissioner Hillman, to Mr. Tara, that yes, they have moved on the money services businesses, but there is a separate Bitcoin/ATM's discussion that is set for a Public Hearing for November. Councilmember Hammond mentioned that with the October meeting they will have time for the language for the Public Hearing in November.

7. **New Business**

A. Officer Elections – moved to 3.A.

B. Public Hearing – Solar and Battery Storage System Ordinance

CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy summarized the work so far on and the wording for the proposed Solar and Battery Storage System Ordinance, and the reasons that it was created: to add a regulation system to protect residents from scammers that are in this industry, to complete best practice for Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation that Lathrup Village did have and are trying to reclaim, by fulfilling Best Practice 2.6 Renewable Energy Efficiency.

Commissioner Robinson's Solar Panel emission question from the prior meeting, was addressed with a presentation. Commissioner Robinson thanked CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy. Commissioner Hillman mentioned CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy's follow up on questions they have asked and his hard work.

Open Public Hearing at 7:33pm

Jonathan Tara, commented in part: Can you give Tom (Kennedy) a raise, thanked Commissioner Nordmoe for his in home presentation about Solar and Energy savings, commented about batteries and battery systems that are portable and whole home and different qualities of them, and asked if there will be a limit on them, and asked if there can be research and a dividing line, adding that they do real time switch over and people have them in basements.

Commissioner Clarke, read questions that were written and given to her by resident Lillian Kyser Lowery, asking: Is there an architect involved in developing the ordinance, How will you determine the best location for the Solar Panels (Architect or Contractor), Can we get a set of Solar Panels for the City like there is in Detroit, like the Solar Panel Farms Detroit has on Euclid Ave. and Greenfield.

Jonathan Tara, suggested the 2 lots that the Village is trying to get rid of or find a use for, maybe used for Solar Panels.

Close Public Hearing at 7:38pm

Motion by Commissioner Robinson, seconded by Commissioner Scussel to approve the Solar and Battery Storage System Ordinance for City Council approval.

Planning Commission members, DDA Director Colson, CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy, and Attorney Baker discussed:

- That Mr. Tara bought up a good point regarding portable versus permanent, and if it restricts portable we should look at it
- Clarified that the (basement) ban is on anything that is Solar Power, you can still have a (portable) battery in the basement, that is referenced in the ordinance, section 5.2.0.4 Permitted Systems, Section D. battery energy storage systems
- Addressed Ms. Kyser Lowery's questions
- If the Ordinance precludes the City itself from installing Solar Panels, and noted that it allows it
- It allows residential and commercial
- Historic Buildings would require Historic District Commission approval
- Worthwhile to amend the definition that these systems are permanently installed and that they are charged from the Solar Panels, before Council considers this
- That the wording should be clear and the language to clarify it
- EV Chargers are in a separate ordinance that has already been approved
- Emphasizing that these are permanently installed battery systems
- Specific placement of batteries are due to safety concerns, and fires in basements that take 10 times more water to put out and can reignite days later
- Clarification of permanent versus mobile concerns

Motion by Commissioner Robinson, seconded by Commissioner Hammond to amend the motion to include the amended definition of battery energy storage systems to reflect permanent installation, permanently installed systems and systems charged by a SES or Solar Energy System.

Yes: Hammond, Robinson, Hillman, Abraham, Clarke, Scussel

No: N/A

Motion carried.

8. Other Matters for Discussion

Commissioner Hillman, commented in part:

- Considering effective use of the Commissions time when there are not any site plans to review
- The City considering bids for use of the Triangular lots in the City and how the Planning Commission should be involved in that process, he recommended that the Planning Commission review the plans and provide a recommendation before any plans are finalized, make sure there is consistency with the Master Plan and provide a transparent forum for residents to weigh in
- Mentioned other Communities that already involve the Planning Commissions in the process
- Recommended that the Planning Commission recommend that Council does this by setting time at the next Planning Commission meeting to discuss this
- Welcomed New Commissioner Clarke and Commissioner Abraham
- Considering a Universal attendance policy for the Planning Commission and other Committees with language that the City Council could adopt

Commissioner Robinson, asked for clarification on the truancy subject and Commissioner Hammond responded as well as Attorney Baker, cautioned against coming together for all meetings and the Open Meetings Act.

DDA Director Colson, mentioned volunteering himself, and that there is a lot of time effort and energy preparing for the meetings, and when not lived up to, it can be discouraging for City staff and other board members and derail goals that are trying to be achieved.

DDA Director Colson, asked for a brief introduction and Commissioner Clarke and Commissioner Abraham responded.

CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy, mentioned that he will be giving the new Commissioners orientation documents.

Commissioner Hammond, suggested that since the City doesn't provide emails, the Planning Commission members should create one for the Planning Commission related emails, mentioning the Open Meetings Act and FOIAs.

9. General Communication

A. Site Development Update Report

DDA Director Colson, gave updates on the status of development projects.

Commissioner Hillman thanked DDA Director Colson for adding the applicant's name and brief description to the report.

DDA Director Colson, mentioned that it was Clerk Emanuel's idea to add the façade images.

10. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Scussel, seconded by Commissioner Robinson to adjourn the meeting at 8:14pm.