

**AUGUST 6, 2025**  
**Huron County Planning Commission Minutes**

A meeting of the Huron County Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, August 6, 2025, in the Huron County Meeting Room 305, 250 E. Huron Avenue, Bad Axe, MI 48413.

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Renn at 7:01 p.m. with the Pledge to the United States of America. Secretary Richard Swartzendruber called the roll of members: Roll call – Members present: Bernie Creguer, Deborah Knarian, Richard Swartzendruber, Jeremy Polega, Bill Renn, J. Dean Smith, and Julie Epperson. Absent: George Lauinger. Approximately twelve guests were in attendance.

Member Renn made a motion and seconded by Member Smith to amend the Planning Commission agenda as follows:

**Section 5. Communications add:**

E. Email from Matthew Werle, EGLE Bay City District Office, regarding oil/grease leaking from various wind turbines, advising people to call the Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS) Hotline at 1-800-292-4706.

**New Business Section 8A. PA 116 Enrollment Applications add:**

4. Dekoski, Calvin & Janice & Dekoski, Kevin: Sec 22 Paris Twp., 117.86 acres (117.86 cultivated) 0 bldgs., 90 yrs.
5. Dekoski, Calvin & Dekoski, Kevin: Sec 22 Paris Twp., 40 acres (39.57 cultivated) 2 bldgs., 90 yrs.

**New Business Section 8B. add:**

1. Commissioner Steve Vaughan e-mail dated August 6, 2025, requesting time to discuss/clarify the proper process for Daniel Kempf to construct a sawmill at the residence of his daughter and son-in-law, located at 3736 Hartsell Road, in Section 15 Grant Twp.

Motion carried.

Member Smith made a motion and seconded by Member Epperson to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Member Polega made a motion, seconded by Member Creguer, to approve July 2, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**3. Public Comment (Open Meeting Act.):**

Jeff Smith, Zoning Administrator, provided an update on the cost of the wind turbine taxation litigation. Huron County's portion of the attorney bill was \$652,457.55 for the 287 turbines under County zoning. There are 208 turbines under self-zoned townships plus other jurisdictions in Michigan that were part of the MREC lawsuit to settle the taxation appeal.

**4. Public Hearing(s) (Open Meeting Act – 3 minutes per speaker): None**

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### **5. Communications:**

- A. Michigan Township Focus, an MTA publication, dated July 2025, pages 10-11, MTA Legal Counsel Robert E. Thall provides questions/answers titled "hello, MTA...?".
- B. E-mail from James Leonard dated July 8, 2025, resigning from the Huron County Planning Commission.
- C. St. Clair County Circuit Court Case No. 25-001332-CZ, DTE Electric Company v. St. Clair County, St. Clair County Board of Commissioners, and St. Clair County Health Department pertaining to siting and permitting of solar and energy storage projects.
- D. The East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG), Huron County Economic Development Corporation, and the Michigan Coastal Management Program (MCMP) invitation to participate in the upcoming Huron County Coastal Leadership Academy workshop to take place on September 22, 2025 at the North Park Pavillion, 836 Huron Avenue, Harbor Beach, MI, 48441 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- E. Email from Matthew Werle, EGLE Bay City District Office, regarding oil/grease leaking from various wind turbines, advising people to call the Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS) Hotline at 1-800-292-4706.

### **6. Reports of Committees:** Campground, Mobile Home Park, and RV Park committee.

Waiting for EGLE to provide updated rules and/or clarifications to campground regulations.

Brandon Moore left a voicemail for Jeff Smith. People are contacting Brandon about housing opportunities in the mobile home park due to being kicked out of where they were living. The ordinance really does not have provisions to accommodate doing anything at this point because it is licensed as a mobile home park. If he wants campers and temporary housing units that would be different.

Regarding Duggan's Campground, EGLE and the building department will allow open decks, not attached to the campers.

### **7. Unfinished Business:** None

### **8. New Business:**

#### **A. PA 116 Enrollment Applications:**

- 1. Rutkowski, David M.: Sec 24 Bingham Twp., 120 acres (73.87 cultivated) 2 bldgs., 90 yrs.
- 2. TL Bushey Farms Inc.: Sec 25 Lake Twp., 35.54 acres (33.54 cultivated) 0 bldgs., 40 yrs.
- 3. TL Bushey Farms Inc.: Sec 36 Lake Twp., 80 acres (76 cultivated) 0 bldgs., 40 yrs.
- 4. Dekoski, Calvin & Janice & Dekoski, Kevin: Sec 22 Paris Twp, 117.86 acres (117.86 cultivated) 0 buildings, 90 years.
- 5. Dekoski, Calvin & Dekoski, Kevin: Sec 22 Paris Twp, 40 acres (39.57 cultivated) 2 buildings, 90 years.

Member Smith made a motion and seconded by Member Creguer to recommend approval of the PA 116 enrollment applications. Motion carried.

#### **B. Zoning Process Clarification:**

Commissioner Steve Vaughan e-mail dated August 6, 2025, requesting time to discuss/clarify the proper process for Daniel Kempf to construct a sawmill at the residence of this daughter and son-in-law, located at 3736 Hartsell Road, in Section 15 Grant Township.

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Jeff Smith provided overview of the process for applying for a Special Approval Use Permit with the County Planning Commission and the requirements outlined in the zoning ordinance, which requires 15-day notice published in the local newspaper and mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the property line. Once approved by the Planning Commission, Mr. Kempf will then need to apply for a dimensional variance to be less than the required one thousand feet set back from the nearest dwelling as required by the zoning ordinance.

Members discussed the process.

**9. Final Public Comment:** Public input protocol (3 minutes per speaker):

Steve Vaughan, HC Commissioner, thanked the Planning Commission for the robust discussion. We just need to make sure that everything we do is fair and equitable.

Keith Iseler, Huron Township, has questions on PILT's.

Member Renn stated that PILT's only apply to solar farms and is up to the local board if they will accept the PILT or Ad Valorem values. Payments are supposed to be close to the same. The PILT payment is based upon the MW capacity of each project.

Jeff Smith suggested Keith Iseler talk to his assessor about PILTs.

Member Renn stated if a landowner signs up their farmland for solar or BESS development, the assessment will change from AG to Industrial/Commercial.

Jeff Smith stated the farmer will not be able to take any PA 116 credits for land used for solar and BESS projects, the land taxable values may uncap, and a substantial real property tax increase will occur.

**10. Final Planning Commission Comment:** None

**Adjournment:**

Being there was no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Member Polega made a motion, seconded by Member Epperson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Adjournment was at 8:25 p.m.

**Notice of Upcoming Meetings:**

- Next **Regular PC Meeting** scheduled for **Wednesday, September 3, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m., Location: Room 305.**

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Bill Renn, Chairman

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Richard Swartzendruber, Secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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