

Helena Township Planning Commission Minutes---Draft

Meeting of June 04, 2026

Call to order: 5:01 p.m. by Chairman, Dave Hunstad

Approval of Agenda: The chair informed with apologies that this evening's agenda will be irregular as a result of a mis-understanding about the production of a regular agenda—meeting will proceed normally.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Roll Call: One member absent while in transit—will attend. All others in attendance.

Approval of Agenda: None presented in advance. Meeting will proceed as typically as possible.

Note: In-transit PC member DW joined at 5:15.

Necessity of amending by-laws in this meeting.

Appointment of single year term Planning Commission members.

Supervisor Peebles explained two current single year members had provided letters of interest. One will be re-appointed, the other's term will expire June 30—appointment to ensue.

Amendment of by-laws: The following amendments will go to Helena Township Board of Trustees at their July meeting:

Meetings will return to full year, first Thursday of month schedule.

Meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Meetings will be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order.

Clarification of acronym MAT to read MTA.

Motion made by FV, seconded by JS, no further discussion—approved unanimously.

Considering current term of Vice-chair will expire June 30, motion made by JG to elect FV vice-chair, seconded by JS, no further discussion—approved unanimously.

Communications: Supervisor has received concerns about commercial trailers used as off-premise signs.

Clerk OL reports township website email service still suffers from glitches—remedy in works.

Citizen Planner sessions enjoyed maximum attendance. Clerk discussing with MSU Extension having Mary Reilly available for a single day Helena Township specific training in the Fall

Chair attended Harbor Springs MTA Planning and Zoning Primer.

Chair suggested recurrent training by PC members might secure financial benefit to Township. Township officials already pursuing financial process matters.

Public comment: Supervisor BP reports he has been queried whether the township has "quiet hour"

Language—discussion ensued--Public property, Yes. Private property, No.

Public Comment cont.: Citizen GM reminded PC of historic parking dispute on Wiscasset Lane.

Approval of minutes of April 04, 2026. PC meeting:

Motion to approve by JG, seconded JS, no further discussion, approved unanimously.

Zoning Administrator's Report:

Report received. ZA brought to PC attention query from owner of Alden Highway concrete service property regarding status under ZO.

JS addressed clean-up status of cleared Franklin Street property, lawn-mowing concerns in commercial district. Chair recognized Alden Volunteer similar concerns for property adjacent to Village Center.

New Business:

Chair suggested following Citizen Planner advice about the desirability of PC members taking of an oath of office and following MTA's guidelines for "on-boarding" new members.

Old Business:

Definitions: Member FV updated PC on efforts to identify and address issues with concern to PC definitions. Using a spreadsheet approach with identified definitions and their broader application with State and Federal standards with goal of the following: Define the issues, implementation of approach, and arriving at action. Clerk OL suggested ad hoc committee approach might be used.

Complaint form: Suggestion for website reporting, concerns expressed regarding anonymity and FOIA conformity.

Chair reported Township Board of Trustees had approved, at their May meeting, the shoreline language amendments—5.02.02, and definitions, and had publicly published their decision. The effective date of the amendments and definitions is June 19, 2026.

A motion was made by JG and seconded by JS that a final definition of Data Centers be approved. After no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously. The definition and associated language will continue through PC deliberation going forward for final approval.

Citizen GM wondered about broad "industrial uses" found in ZO.

Chair advised doing research about the various contending forces in ongoing Data Center debate.

Further Business: From JS, speed signs next week, "Creek Bridge" by the Fourth of July.

Adjourned 6:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted. Secretary Jim Gurr, Helena Township Planning Commission

Recorded at Helena Township Clerk's office on 2026-06-08 / O. Leffew