

The regular meeting of the Oceana County Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson McKeen on Thursday, October 2, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the Oceana County Board of Commissioners Room, 100 S. State St, Hart, Michigan 49420.

September 4, 2025, Meeting Cancelled by Chair.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair McKeen led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Garry McKeen, Secretary John Stivers, Bryan Broderick, Joel McCormick, Scott Rumsey, Phil Morse, and David Spitler.

Absent: Paul Cutter

Guest: None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

August 7, 2025, Minutes of the Oceana County Planning Commission meeting:

Motion to approve made by Broderick with second by Spitler. Motion was approved by voice vote.

There was no meeting of the Planning Commission in September 2025.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Additions: Blue Lake Township Development Plan prepared by West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC).

Motion to approve revised agenda by Morse with second by Broderick. Motion was approved by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

No public comments.

FINANCE REVIEW

Report for month ending September 30, 2025, was included in the commissioners' packet. The expenditures and account balance are as planned, per diems being the major item.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- A. Former Planning Commission member and Chair Vince Greiner died on September 17, 2025. The Commissioners noted his numerous contributions to our community; his wisdom and judgement will be missed.
- B. Marshville Dam Park Ribbon Cutting. On the afternoon of August 28th, the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) held the ribbon cutting marking the completion of the major project at Marshville Dam Park. Work included remnants of the former dam, replacement of culverts with a timber bridge, addition of a handicapped accessible walkway to the water's edge, plus stream and bank restoration both upstream and downstream of the park. McKee, as chair of OCPRC, spearheaded the project over the last several years. About 100 conservation-minded individuals from across the state were in attendance. Major project participants spoke.
- C. Submitted 2026 Planning Commission budget to County Administrator. Chair provided a copy of the 2025 OCPC budget to the commissioners during the meeting. The proposed budget amounts are slightly more than those in the prior year, with any additional funding ideally be used for training. McCormick reported that the County Commission has a few remaining steps remaining before final approval.
- D. Chair McKeen reported he had attended several board and commission meetings.
- E. Oceana Conservation District held its annual household hazardous waste drop-off day on August 16th, at the Hart Public Works Building. They collected over 14,000 pounds, of which 40 was mercury. McKeen noted that many new residents who have moved to the County dropped off waste left by former property owners.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- A. Mary Reilly, MSU Extension, training program update. Reilly contacted McKeen indicating MSU Extension has developed a three-hour training program on "Conflict Resolution" ideal suited for those conducting public meetings. Commissioners concurred there is a need. McKeen will report back on costs and possible dates.
- B. White River dams and sedimentation following White Cloud dam drawdown. Rumsey reported on Village of Hesperia progress following the award of an EGLE dam risk reduction grant in 2024. On September 16th, in the Hesperia High School cafeteria, the Village hosted a public project progress review event where attendees could pose their questions directly with representatives of the project team. The team includes the Villages, its consulting engineers, EGLE, DNR, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. The objective was to gather input before the Village Council makes its decision on what to do next. Continuing to control sea lamprey migration upstream of Hesperia is a primary objective of the

project. There is also strong support for adding fish passage for lake-run species that are also blocked by the current dam from 38% of the watershed area.

City of White Cloud, also using EGLE grant funds, learned once its feasibility study was completed this spring that the condition of its dam was so poor it warranted a special order requiring the drawdown of Lake White Cloud as it considers its future dispensation of the dam. The drawdown process resulted in considerable discharge of accumulated sediment, that blackened the river as far downstream as Hesperia. This EGLE's Special Order also set November 3, 2025, as the deadline for the city to develop its plan to either remove or repair/replace the current dam. The current engineering firm hired by the city indicates the decision-making process will not be completed by the EGLE deadline.

Following the failure of the Edenville and Sanford Dams in 2020, the governor commissioned the Michigan Dam Safety Task Force. It identified 2600 aging dams licensed by the state where the owners are having difficulty funding needed maintenance, most completely unable to pass bonds for replacement. Many of these dams were used for hydro-electricity generation follow lumber sawmills. The State legislature balked at the Task Force's \$500M recommended, instead allocating \$50M that has been competitively awarded by EGLE on three occasions. The grantees have used the funds for a few small dam removals, deferred maintenance work and major engineering reports called Disposition Feasibility Studies. The Hesperia and White Cloud grant-funded feasibility studies found that the gate structures at both dams were not adequately sized to pass the design storm flow.

Both communities face considerable challenges to fund the decision they chose, but both have come to recognize that including fish passage in their project scope to be to their advantage.

- C. Position open on Planning Commission. With the most recent appointment of Pete Roskam now open with his resignation, McKeen encouraged commissioners to share the word that applications are welcomed. Forms should be available on the County's website or may be obtained by contacting the chair. The chair feels individual experience with township planning and zoning should be asked if interested.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Oceana County Economic Alliance. Morse, who is chair of the Alliance, has been actively involved with organizing the Annual Breakfast scheduled for October 10th, at

the MSU AgBio Research Center. The event will celebrate the Alliance's 45th birthday and recognize Earl and Linda Peterson and Peterson Farms for their contributions to the community: Planning Commissioner Rumsey serves as treasurer of the Alliance.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

- A. Spitler reported that the Brownfield Redevelopment Commission (OCBRC), executive director Curtis Burdette, is working to avoid loss of unused funds by getting them transferred into the next fiscal year.
- B. Spitler reported on the developer bus tour held every other year by the OCBRC this year started in Rothbury where the OCBRC is helping fund a community center project at the former foundry site. In New Era the tour stopped at a former elementary school, then to Shelby, where a former church and vacant land are available. The bus stopped at Shelby Township Park where the new 62,000 SF recreation facility is under construction. In Hart the former Gale's store that is housing the West Shore Community College annex will also host a food coop and potentially other functions. Next to Pentwater, then finally to Walkerville, where the planned replacement Kwik Mart is having difficulties with the permit for a well because of former underground gasoline tanks. Morse added to the discussion that Purdue Farms' corporate board keeps re-evaluating which pet-food product line will go into the facility it purchased in Shelby.
- C. Spitler indicated that property in Oceana County is sell at much higher prices than previously, some being sold sight unseen. McKeen indicates that one local builder has a two-year backlog of work.
- D. McKeen reported that the Little Point Suable community is drilling a 700 gallon/minute well for fire protection. The area is served by the Shelby-Benona Fire Department.
- E. McKeen reported that Oceana County Parks and Rec are on target for October completion of improvements at Cedar Point Park. Also, the County has budgeted funds for OCPR to hire its first seasonal employee.
- F. Morse indicates the Veterans (VFW) have scheduled the Oceana County Vet Day 5k run, Saturday, November 8, at Getty Park in Shelby.
- G. Broderick reported Weare Township is still working on its solar ordinance.
- H. Rumsey reported that Hesperia is still under construction on the \$23M water utility project. Completion in 2026, but some of the streets have already been repaved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

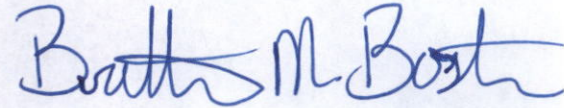
McKeen reported that OCPC received a letter from Stephen Carlson of WMSRDC on behalf of Blue Lake Township Planning Commission, that indicates the Township Board adopted their Comprehensive Development Plan on June 9, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion from Broderick with second from Spitler, Chair McKeen adjourned the meeting at 2:03 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 6, 2025, at 1:00 p.m., in the Oceana County Board of Commissioners Room, 100 S State Street, Hart, Michigan.

Respectfully submitted,



Brittany M. Bostrom

On behalf of Mr. Stivers, Secretary, Oceana County Planning Commission