

The regular meeting of the Oceana County Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson McKeen on Thursday, June 5, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the Oceana County Board of Commissioners Room, 100 S. State St, Hart, Michigan 49420.

May 1st, 2025, Meeting Cancelled by the 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, Paul Cutter, Phil Morse, Pete Roskam, and David Spitler.

Absent: Joel McCormick, and Scott Rumsey

Guest: Keith Edwards, Pentwater Township Zoning Administrator

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

April 3, 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.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Additions: Natural Rivers Zoning Review Boards, White River and Pere Marquette

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

The report for month ending May 31, 2025, was included in the commissioners' packet. The statement included anticipated payments to MSU Extension for training program and annual Michigan Planning Association membership payment.

Motion to accept Financial Report by Spitler with second by Broderick. Motion was approved by roll call vote, all in the affirmative.

CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Claybanks Township notification of Master Plan initiation from Sara Bizon, Zoning/Planning Administrator. Work is underway but yet no product is available for public review.

PRESENTATION

Keith Edwards, on the invitation of the Chair, conducted a dialogue with planning commissioners on how to improve discussions between the municipalities and the County. He began by stating that as a transplant, he finds Oceana County to have a wonderfully diverse landscape.

In 2023 Pentwater Township and Village developed a joint master plan, done by citizens without outside consultants. Those involved recognized the Pentwater area as a shoreline (resort) community, different from the agricultural and forested areas in the county, even different from other shoreline areas. Their plan addresses the desires of not only full-time residents but also seasonal residents and visitors.

Affordable housing was found to be a critical need. Because of the high valuation of their housing inventory, securing grant funding for low-income residential projects by organizations such as Dogwood Community Development is at a disadvantage. Seasonal employment patterns makes the situation even more difficult.

Edwards sees potential for Oceana County and the municipalities to incorporating “open space preservation” into their master plans. He recommends the approach covered in Randall Arendt’s *Rural by Design: Planning for Town and Country*, where housing is clustered in order to keep natural areas intact. He feels that the Oceana County Planning Commission should introduce the concepts outline in the book. The County should be the catalyst for conversation, communication and advising.

Edwards suggested that renewable energy ordinances are the next major issue for the county to address.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

- A. Attended County Commissioners’ meetings and Oceana County Road Commission.
- B. Attended MSU Extension training on Michigan’s Open Meeting Act conducted by Mary Reilly. Twenty-six attended.
- C. Attended two-day annual meeting of the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association. Mary Reilly presented a program on Lake Zoning.

D. Review of assigned representations from the April 3, 2025, meeting. No changes to the assignments made previously.

1. Agriculture and forestry – John Stivers
2. Educations – Scott Rumsey
3. Recreation and tourism – Garry McKeen
4. Industrial and economic – Pete Roskam
5. Transportation and roads – Bryan Broderick
6. Housing, health and human services – David Spilter
7. County Board of Commissioners – Joel McCormick
8. Environmental and water quality – Paul Cutter
9. Municipal Government – Phil Morse

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- A. Future speakers under consideration include Sherriff Mast, who would like for us to tour the jail; Ed VanderVries, equalization director for Oceana County; and Curtis Burdette, executive director, Oceana County Economic Alliance. Other speakers who might be considered are zoning administrators, such as Sara Bizon who serves Claybanks, Benona, and Shelby Townships and Steve Miklin of Newfield Township.
- B. From the correspondence from Claybanks Township concerning the update of their master plan, it may now be an opportune time to have Bizon meet with the Oceana County Planning Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Stivers indicated that the County has two positions on both the Pere Marquette and White Natural Rivers Zoning Review Boards. Stivers is currently on both, with Cutter the alternate. The county commission will need to make the appointments. Chair McKeen will review with the County Administrator.
- B. Chair McKeen brought up the recently passed Grand Traverse County septic ordinance that requires inspection at point of sale.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

- A. Spitler reported on actions underway at the Brownfield Redevelopment Commission. At its last meeting, held on the second Tuesday of the month, the commissioners reviewed twelve existing projects. Not all the current grant funding they have available has been used with a portion still to be allocated. On the advice of their engineering consultant, they are looking to identify uses for this balance prior to the end of the year, otherwise it will be lost.

- B. Broderick reported that Consumers Energy will take questions on their solar installation at a public meeting scheduled for 6:00 p.m., June 25, at the Weare Township Hall.

Road improvements on portions of N 96th Ave and Hogan Rd using slag have proven successful. Slag compacts very well and requires less brining for dust control. Plans are to use slag on more Township roads in future years.

- C. Cutter suggested that lime stabilizations should also be considered for unpaved roads. Cutter reported that solar panels have arrived for installation. Access roads are being improved. Corn is being planted between the panels and the roadway, providing a visual barrier.

Hart BioPure completed over 7000 well-drinking-water tests last year. Very few had contamination from septic fields. Of the total 2000 were tested for nitrates with results acceptable throughout. Marginally higher are test of wells with clay soils, common in (where else) Claybanks Township.

- D. McKeen reported that the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission has purchased a used 2012 van from the Oceana County Council on Aging. It will be modified for use for hauling tools and material to park projects, first up the Black Lake trail.

At Marshville Dam Parks, Parks commissioner Joel Mikkelsen spotted free materials for the 300-foot walkway to the creek side. Already planted are 1500 trees with parking lot paving scheduled. (Following the meeting the dedication was set for August 28 at 3:00 p.m.)

- E. Morse reported on the Village of Shelby activities.
 - a. Code enforcement with increased emphasis on education.
 - b. Safe Walk to School grant funding in the amount of \$900,000 is being sought to improve cross walks to the Shelby School complex.
 - c. Chainsaw Art Festival is scheduled for July 11 and 12, all day.
 - d. Getty Park dedication is set for June 21.

PUBLIC COMMENT

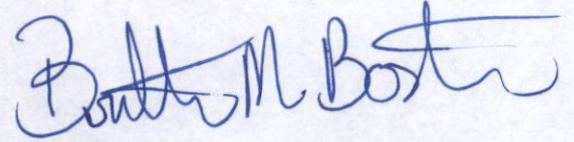
None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion from Broderick with second from Spitler, Chair McKeen adjourned the meeting at 2:15 pm.

There will be no meeting in July, with the next meeting is scheduled for August 7, 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