



# Jackson County Planning Commission

Staffed by the Region 2 Planning Commission (R2PC)

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## MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2023

5<sup>th</sup> Floor Commission Chambers • Jackson County Tower Building • Jackson, Michigan

**Members Present:** Ms. Nancy Hawley, At Large; Mr. Ted Hilleary, Education; Mr. Corey Kennedy, Jackson County Board of Commissioners; Ms. Pat Gallagher, At Large; Mr. Curt Cole; Ms. Mary Wolcott; Mr. Jim Minnick, Jr.; Mr. Jim Videto, Agriculture.

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Mr. Zack Smith, R2PC.

**Others Present:** None

Item 1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.** Chair Hawley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Those in attendance rose and joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 2. **Public Comment.** None.

Item 3. **Approval of Minutes.** Comm. Kennedy made a motion, seconded by Comm. Hilleary, to **approve** the August 10, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. *The motion was approved unanimously.*

Item 4. **Approval of the Agenda.** Comm. Videto made a motion, seconded by Comm. Minnick, to **approve** the September 14, 2023, meeting agenda as presented. *The motion was approved unanimously.*

Item 5. **Request(s) for Review, Comment, and Recommendation.**

a. **Consideration of Township Zoning Amendment(s).**

(1) **CZ | #23-13 | Sandstone Charter Township**

Staff referred to a report regarding text addition to the Sandstone Charter Township's zoning ordinance; they seek to add a section on private roads. Staff recommended approval of the addition application.

Discussion: Comm. Hawley noted that the ordinance has 3 classes of roads, and includes getting clearance from MDOT/JDOT. Comm. Cole noted that it is has

nothing for tree trimming to maintain ingress and egress. He also pointed out that for violations in section 12, it says person and he believed verbiage for specifics on citing violations would be useful additions.

Comm. Kennedy made a motion to recommend **approval with comments**, particularly on the addition of language around tree trimming and more clearly stating who is at fault for violations, seconded by Comm. Cole. *Commissioners approved the motion unanimously.*

(2) **CZ | #23-14 | Sandstone Charter Township**

Staff referred to a report regarding a proposed text amendment to Section 2.1 Definitions and 5.17 Wind Energy Systems of the to the Sandstone Charter Township's zoning ordinances. Staff recommended approval of the text amendment.

Discussion: Comm. Wolcott had concerns about end of useful life, but noted that there is a paragraph dealing with it. Comm. Hawley said townships often require a performance guarantee or bond, and said a line of credit usually works more efficiently. She also pointed out that trying to prove something abandoned may end up in court for Townships, but that the ordinance has an excellent definition. Comm. Minnick worried that the ordinance doesn't have teeth and was concerned about how long it could take to get action to repair the land. Mr. Hilleary asked about who pays if it is abandoned. Mr. Cole said that section 5 is on decommissioning. Comm. Hawley opined comments should be noted and sent to them

Comm. Kennedy made a motion to recommend **approval** the text amendments, seconded by Comm. Minnick. Comm. Hawley makes a motion to amend Comm. Kennedy's motion with a motion to recommend **approval with comments**, citing concerns with the term under of useful life. *Commissioners approved the motion 7-1.*

(3) **CZ | #23-15 | Sandstone Charter Township**

Staff referred to a report regarding a proposed text amendment to Section 5.19 Solar Energy Systems of the to the Sandstone Charter Township's zoning ordinances. Staff recommended approval of the text amendment.

Comm. Hawley observed that for medium and large solar installations the ordinance necessitated berms and setbacks. She had concerns about sound – that the 45dBA is not enforceable. She stated that it would work better to find out what the sound level is before and then say dBA will not exceed 5-10dBA higher than that number, rather than just stating a sound level. She also said that 5.19.4.6 needs a definition for what constitutes prime farm land. She noted the USDA has classification for that. Comm. Wolcott expressed concerns about operation cessation, how to remove the equipment when done, and noted that the ordinance calls for a bond. Comm. Cole voiced support for an environmental assessment before construction so that there is a baseline for returning to original condition. The board did not know what

sections where amended text and so only looked at the ordinance as a whole, and commented on the whole ordinance.

Comm. Kennedy made a motion to ***take no action*** on the text amendments as the board did not know what was new or old, seconded by Comm. Videto.  
*Commissioners approved the motion unanimously.*

- b. **Consideration of Master Plan(s).** None.
- c. **Farmland & Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116) application(s).** None.

Item 6. **Other Business.**

- a. **Unfinished Business.** None.
- b. **New Business.** None.
- c. **Notices.** Comm. Hawley reminded the board, particularly the new members, about the MSU Extension citizen planner class.

Item 7. **Public Comment.** None.

Item 8. **Commissioner Comment.** Comm. Kennedy informed the board that Comm. Burns has resigned. He said the resignation was abrupt and there were not yet any applicants, but that if someone is interested they can apply.

Comm. Hilleary stated his a reservations about solar farms and wind farms fearing land will be useless after their useful life.

Comm. Videto welcomed the new members. He said that he believes all on the board have some concerns about solar and wind farms and worries about what will happen after their useful life. He also wanted comments to stay on track to deal with the issues before the board. He would also like to see an option for disapproval with comments. Comm. Hawley said that she sees no reason why there couldn't be an option for disapproval with comments

Item 9. **Adjournment.** Chair Hawley adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ZS' with a stylized flourish.

Zack Smith, R2PC