Township of Atlas
Genesee County • Michigan

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

7386 S. GALE RD. GRAND BLANC, MI
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2026 AT 7:00 PM

MINUTES

IN PERSON MEETING

To Participate: Join Zoom Meeting by Videoconference or Telephone:
LOGIN OR DIAL: 1 312 626 6799 US
MEETING ID: 747 569 7662 PASSCODE: 007386

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7pm.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT
J. Michael Rembor
Jay TenBrink
June Amman
John Birkner
Pat Major
Greg Thurk

ABSENT
James Lusty - excused

STAFF PRESENT

Lexi Christner, Recording Secretary

Adam Young, Township Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by TenBrink, Seconded by Thurk.
Voting Yea: TenBrink, Amman, Birkner, Major, Thurk, Rembor

Motion carries 6-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Approve June 17, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Motion to approve June 17, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Amman, Seconded by Thurk.
Voting Yea: Rembor, TenBrink, Amman, Birkner, Major, Thurk

Motion carries 6-0

2. **Approve July 15, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Motion to amend the July 15, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes; page 2, 5th paragraph under Public Comments of Agenda Items, second and third sentence should read "Township's look at their own zoning ordinances and Master Plans to see what fits in their community. We'd rather not be first to set requirements, we need to be knowledgeable and robust in our ordinance". Page 3, item 5 addresses to "addressed".

Motion made by Major, Seconded by Birkner.
Voting Yea: Rembor, Amman, Birkner, Major
Voting Abstaining: TenBrink, Thurk

Motion carries 4-0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

3. **Public Hearing: PC26-04, Long/HL Lawn Service for a rezoning application for 7090 State Rd Goodrich, MI 48438 (02-15-100-030) to M-1.**

Opened at 7:04pm.

Young gave overview of the 8 acre parcel, currently split zoned M-1, C-2, and RSA. The request is to rezone the entire parcel to be M-1. The purpose is for a lawn care business office and equipment storage. If agreed upon, the Planning Commission makes a recommendation to the Township Board to approve the rezoning. If zoning approved, the applicant must apply for site plan approval.

Applicant, Hunter Long, was present and gave an overview of his application. He purchased the property with intentions of an Airbnb but then realized they are not permitted. He currently leases shop space on Sojourner Dr. and would like to have his own shop. His vision of the property is to turn the current house into an office and build buildings behind for equipment storage for his own business.

No comments from the public, no letters received.

Public hearing closed at 7:10pm.

4. **Public Hearing: PC26-03, Thickle Farms for a conditional use application, agriculture tourism, for 12438 Hill Rd (02-12-200-003).**

Public hearing opened at 7:11pm.

Young gave overview on the 38 acre parcel zoned RA on Hill Rd. Applicant is requesting agriculture tourism for their operating farmstead. Agricultural Tourism Business is allowed with conditional use approval. The request is to expand the farm to include private events. No new buildings are being proposed at this time therefore, this request is just for conditional use. The planning commission has the ultimate say for approval.

Courtney and Jim Teague, applicant and property owners were present. Courtney gave overview of their vision. She currently has the right to farm with Michigan. Would like to continue animal interactions with kids and the community. The main goal is to educate the community on farming and farm animals. She wants her small family farm open for

the community's benefit. The events will be scheduled and ticket based. Not interested in large weddings or large events. Would like to stick to the basics of animals and education.

Anonymous letter received August 17, 2026 in the township drop box. (*see attached*)

Allison and Chad Carson, 12292 Hill Rd. letter received August 19, 2026 during meeting, in favor of application. (*see attached*)

Phillip Goist, 12461 Hill Rd. letter received August 19, 2026 during meeting, in favor of application. (*see attached*)

David McClew, 6138 Washburn Rd. - Commented regarding traffic and noise.

Sean Trowbridge, 9490 Ridge Rd. - In support of application. Local farms are trying to make a living. The Master Plan states it supports more farms and green space, that's what this is. If the property was to be developed into a subdivision, the traffic and noise would be more substantial.

Public hearing closed at 7:19pm.

5. **Public Hearing: PC26-02, Porters Orchard Hard Cider Tasting Room for a conditional use application, agriculture tourism, for 12060 Hegel Rd (02-24-100-017).**

Public Hearing opened at 7:20pm.

Young gave overview, the conditional use request is for 30 acres zoned RA on Hegel Rd, currently operating over 100 years under agriculture and agriculture tourism activities, like pumpkin picking, apple picking, hayrides, etc. The apple orchard would like to expand its use for a hard cider tasting room, including an outdoor patio, to sell their hard cider. This requires 2 separate approvals: conditional use and site plan.

Mike Beard, applicant, stated they have been licensed with the State of Michigan for wines and & ciders only. The only current option is to purchase cider wholesale. The addition of the tasting room will be the only space to consume the alcohol, and retail sales will be available.

No comments or letters received.

Public hearing closed at 7:23pm.

NEW BUSINESS

6. **Consider PC26-04, Long/HL Lawn Service for a rezoning application for 7090 State Rd Goodrich, MI 48438 (02-15-100-030) to M-1.**

Young stated the following, the property is located on M15 which is a state highway. There is no water or sewer available, there is a well and a septic system on the property. The property is split zoned with M-1, C-2, and RSA. The applicant is proposing a lawncare business office and equipment storage. Changing the zoning of the property stays with the property, therefore the owner could sell, and any business permitted in the M-1 zoning would be allowable with site plan approval. The Master Plans future land use map does designate this property as Industrial.

Commissioners went over standards (a-f) on the letter from Wade Trim dated July 30, 2026. The findings (a-f) are consistent with the Master Plan.

Board discussion opened:

Commissioners asked the following questions: if the business would be open to the public, like a landscape supply yard? Asked about how many vehicles would be coming and going between work and personal vehicles? What is the plan for the tree buffer towards the back half of the property? If zoning change approved, what is the proposed timeline of site plan?

Long stated the business was not open to the public, just the employees will be on the property. There will be roughly 30 vehicles between the company and employee vehicles. The tree buffer is staying. There is no need for to disturb the land on the rear property. The goal for the property is to update the house as an office building and to have 2 shop/storage building behind the office.

Commissioners agreed the rezoning request follows the intent of the Master Plan. This would be an improvement to the existing site, and be a benefit to the community.

Motion to recommend the Township Board to approve PC26-04, Long/HL Lawn Service for a rezoning application for 7090 State Rd Goodrich, MI 48438 (02-15-100-030) from multi-zoned M-1, C-2, and RSA to entirely M-1. The findings are consistent with the 6 review standards from Wade Trim's letter dated 7/30/26.

Motion made by Amman, Seconded by Major.
Roll Call Voting: TenBrink yes, Amman yes, Birkner yes, Major yes, Thurk yes, Rembor yes

Motion carries 6-0

7. **Consider PC26-03, Thickle Farms for a conditional use application, agriculture tourism, for 12438 Hill Rd (02-12-200-003).**

Young went over the Wade Trim letter dated July 30, 2026. RA can be appropriate for agricultural tourism. For this case, a conditional use application is all that's required. If applicant decided to modify the site based on the agricultural tourism business, then they would need site plan review and approval. Some questions that came up were concerns over trash and bathroom facilities, outdoor lighting, hours of operation, food/drinks, and number of guests at a time.

Courtney answered the questions that were discussed. There will be regular trash cans set out per event and current trash pick-up services will continue. She has a vendor for portable restrooms when necessary. Lighting is not necessary currently due to no late-night events. There is a light near the animals for safety reasons. There are no current hours of operation, the farm is not fully open to the public. Entry is based on a purchased ticket. Every event held requires a ticket to attend. This controls the amount of people on the property. This is a small family farm not looking for huge events. Would like a multi-vendor event to where more people could attend but would still require a ticket.

Light snacks and refreshments would like to be offered at events. There was discussion between applicant and commissioners over the Genesee County Health Department rules and permit processing for serving food. Interested in food trucks being at events, will look into what it will take to have food served at events.

Motion to approve the Conditional Use Application for PC26-03, Thickle Farms 12438 Hill Rd (02-12-200-003) based on compliance with the conditional use standards Section 22.50(3) and to ensure the capacity of each event are limited to 90 tickets sold.

Motion made by Amman, Seconded by Thurk.
Voting Yea: TenBrink yes, Amman yes, Birkner yes, Major yes, Thurk yes, Rembor yes

Motion carries 6-0

8. **Consider PC26-02, Porters Orchard Hard Cider Tasting Room for a conditional use application, agriculture tourism, for 12060 Hegel Rd (02-24-100-017).**

Young gave overview, the property has been operating as a orchard and cider mill for over 100 years. There is an orchard store and servals structures on the property. They are now seeking approval for renovating an existing building to add a tasting room for the Porters Hard Cider Company. There are some paved parking spaces available along with a grass lot to accommodate many vehicles. Hegel Road is identified as a major road in the Master Plan.

Mike Beard, applicant, stated the hard cider company would like to be open all year round. Final determination will be based on customer response. Beard stated there will be no extra noise on the property. The tasting room has indoor and outdoor seating. He does not too plan to have live bands outside, just a place to enjoy the hard cider. No food will be prepared or served from the tasting room, considering allowing food products from the Orchard store. A new septic system will be installed for the tasting room facilities.

The Commissioners agreed the request falls in line with agriculture tourism and will be a good addition to the community.

Motion to approve PC26-02, Porters Orchard Hard Cider Tasting Room for a conditional use application, agriculture tourism, for 12060 Hegel Rd (02-24-100-017) based compliance with ordinance standards as outlined in Wade Trims letter dated July 30, 2026.

Motion made by TenBrink, Seconded by Birkner.
Roll Call Voting: TenBrink yes, Amman yes, Birkner yes, Major yes, Thurk yes, Rembor yes

Motion carries 6-0

9. **Consider PC26-02, Porters Orchard Hard Cider Tasting Room, limited site plan application, agriculture tourism, for 12060 Hegel Rd (02-24-100-017).**

Beard confirmed lighting is being updated around the building and towards the parking lot. The existing sign will be updated to add the tasting room sign. The building will be updated along with the peak roof, a patio constructed, and the grass parking will be revamped to accommodate more cars. The proposed hours are 11am to 8pm Thursday thru Sunday, will just need to see how it goes. The grass parking will be maintained during the winter months due to the shipping and receiving trucks using the same route.

The commissioners would like to see the interior architectural drawings for the tasting room. This is to ensure there are enough exit doors for safety. The improved septic system requires Health Department approval.

Motion to approve the site plan application, for case PC26-02, Porters Orchard Hard Cider Tasting Room, 12060 Hegel Rd (02-24-100-017), contingent on the building officials approval on the architectural drawings and signage, outdoor lighting to be shielded.

Motion made by Major, Seconded by Thurk.
Roll Call Voting: TenBrink yes, Amman yes, Birkner yes, Major yes, Thurk yes, Rembor yes

Motion carries 6-0

REPORTS

10. Township Report

Still working on the ADA compliance for website and meeting software. Researching AI polices for municipalities. Promoted and hired firefighters.

11. ZBA Report

Meeting next week for a front yard accessory building variance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mark Trowbridge, 9167 Shinangaug Drive - Own Top Hops Property, LLC on Ridge Rd. Welcoming commissioners to tour the farm to see what they have to offer. Currently working on a request for agricultural tourism. Also inviting the commissioners to visit the website.

BOARD COMMENTS

Rembor - Will be gone next month, TenBrink will chair the meeting.

Amman - Questioned how records are being tracked and maintained with these involved cases. Would like the Township board to actively upload past property records into BS&A. Employee or volunteers can scan the documents into the correct property record.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:35pm.

Motion made by TenBrink, Seconded by Thurk.
Voting Yea: TenBrink, Amman, Birkner, Major, Thurk, Rembor

Motion carries 6-0

For Public Comments:
1) Each person addressing the board is asked to voluntarily state their name and address for the record.
2) Three (3) minutes will be allowed for an individual addressing the board. Each individual present will be allowed an opportunity to address the board.
3) Please refrain from being redundant.
4) All comments are to be directed to the chair.

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED PERSONS NEEDING ASSISTANCE OR AID AT ANY PUBLIC MEETING OR PUBLIC HEARING SHOULD CONTACT THE ATLAS TOWNSHIP CLERK AT 810-636-2548 DURING REGULAR OFFICE HOURS, NOT LESS THAN SEVENTY-TWO (72) HOURS PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC MEETING OR PUBLIC HEARING.

Recording Secretary: Lexi Christner, MiPMC

CLERK'S CERTIFICATION

I, Toni A. Yaklin, the duly elected, qualified and acting clerk of the Township of Atlas, Genesee County, Michigan do herby certify that the foregoing Minutes are a true and accurate accounting of the actions of the Atlas Township Planning Commission during the regular meeting held on August 19, 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that a quorum was present.

Toni A. Yaklin 9/24/26

Toni A. Yaklin Date
Atlas Township Clerk