Township of Atlas
Genesee County • Michigan

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

7386 S. GALE RD. GRAND BLANC, MI
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 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

Chairman Rembor called the Meeting to order at 7:00pm.

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 as presented.

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

Motion carries 6-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Approve September 16, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Motion to approve the September 16, 2026 with the following amendments; page 2, 2nd paragraph, line 4, after seating "compacity does not change". Line 5, "affected by the loss of 6 spaces" change the second to last sentence to say, "the original approval exceeded the minimum amount of parking spaces, so the loss of 6 spaces will not be an

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issue". Page 3, 1st line, "sample data center ordinance", a period after consider, then rewrite the next sentence "Township can use this as a template making additions and/or changes to accommodate Atlas Township requirements". Strike the last sentence in the 2nd paragraph and the 3 paragraph. 4th paragraph add "also" after would. Line 2 add a period after districts, and strike the remaining sentence. The last paragraph should read "Any and all septic and well issues are to be addressed". Item 6, after "need" the sentence should read "to be made, an updated document will be provided to the planning commissioners for review for the next meeting". Clean up the last paragraph on item 6. Item 3, the date should be "October 28, 2026".

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

Motion carries 5-0

PUBLIC HEARING

2. **Public Hearing: Conditional Use application for Top Hops Farm 9530 Ridge Road (02-27-300-021) for Agricultural Tourism.**

Rembor opened the public hearing at 7:07pm.

Young gave an overview; a request was received from Mark Trowbridge with Top Hops Farm. This property is located at 9530 Ridge Road. The 63-acre parcel is currently split zoned RA on western portion and RSA on the eastern portion. Property is currently used as a hops farm. Agricultural tourism business is allowed within RA and RSA districts with conditional use approval. Some planned events include community events, farm days, 5K runs, and/or private events. A public hearing is required for a conditional use application. The planning commission has final approval.

Sean Trowbridge spoke next. He runs the farm with his father Mark. He started the hops farm about 15 years ago. The goal is to remain an active farm while doing farm related events. The farm hires about 20 people every harvest season, many are the community's own youth. This gives an opportunity to educate our young residents about the importance of farming. Craft beer is down in sales and now they are looking for different ways to raise money to keep the farm active. They looked into many different agricultural ideas to collect revenue to keep the farm in business. There are not a lot of hops farms left in Michigan, and this could be a great opportunity to show off the positive side of farming hops. The events will be done within the hops growing and harvest seasons. Requesting events to be held May through August, this is the active growing season for hops. This farm is a family business, and he wants to welcome the community to be a part of it.

Rembor stated for the record that 10 letters have been received before today's public hearing.

Sophia Holt - Opposing request for large private events *(see letter attached)*

Monte Frick, 9293 Ridge Rd. - In support of request *(see letter attached)*

Lora Stevens, 9071 Horton Rd. - In support of request *(see letter attached)*

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Kathi Willoughby, 9286 Green Rd. - In support of request *(see letter attached)*

Sara Hunter, Hunter Glen Farms, 7341 Jordan Rd. - In support of request *(see letter attached)*

Tracy Butcher, 11189 Maple Shores Dr. - In support of request *(see letter attached)*

Joe Greene, 9521 Ridge Rd. - In support of request *(see letter attached)*

Jennie Milne, 9225 Ridge Rd. - In support of request *(see letter attached)*

Courtney Teague, Thickle Farms, 12438 Hill Rd. - In support of request *(see letter attached)*

David Martin, Michigan House State Representative - In support of request *(see letter attached)*

Shirley Kautman-Jones, 5425 Stimson Rd. - *Reported* she Is the lower half of the State resident expert on agritourism and agritainment. My business could not exist without small farms. Stated a document was handed out to the commissioners on the history of agritourism in the US. It first appeared in 1978. Reminded the Commissioners that Atlas Township promotes itself as a rural community with a focus on farms and agriculture. Conservative residential development has helped allow this theory to continue. Promoting expansion of agritourism and agritainment helps to support this agriculture zoning in our township. She stated she toured the US and the world, a couple of thousand farms, farmers have done whatever it takes to sustain their farms. Farms battle a lot of outside factors, like the craft beer industry plummeting. Atlas Township should consider the approval of this request with reasonable restrictions and zoning.

Robert Hawley, 9477 Ridge Rd - Direct neighbor right across the street from the hops farm. 100% supports as a community member and a direct neighbor, I hope this goes through for them and the community.

Paulette Johnson, 10407 Hill Rd. - Short and sweet, we as a township need to support our small business farms.

Leslie Holt, 9564 Ridge Rd. - About 94 feet from the exit and entry of the driveway, highly impacted. The main concerns are traffic, noise, safety, and overall impact on neighboring properties in the community. First, the project was presented as agricultural tourism involving small groups of around 30 visitors during daylight hours. Now it appears to be something very different, a large-scale event venue capable of hosting 300 people with 140 vehicles coming and going through the entire summer. Plans include a wedding gazebo and hill, non-profit and business gatherings, 5K runs, tour buses, bands, food trucks and alcohol service. These are not small agriculture tours; these are large commercial events. Every weekend, from May through August, with increased traffic to Ridge, Green, and Horton Roads every week. 140 vehicles will be leaving around 11pm creating traffic, headlights, noise, increased wear on roads that were designed for residents not commercial operations. A residential neighborhood not a commercial district. This will alter the rural character of the neighborhood. Concerned about the impact on the surrounding wildlife animals and horses. Alcohol service creates additional concern about impaired driving, trespassing and general safety. Concern regarding property value with an event venue. Agricultural tourism should focus on agricultural products, education, and activities related to what is grown and produced on that property. The proposal centers on weddings and large events with 300 people for the summer. Other concerns are restrooms, waste removal, generator noise,

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security, emergency access, and traffic management. Questioned if the proposal meets the intent of agricultural tourism business.

Dave Latulippe, 10256 Horton Rd. - Ridge Road dead ends into property. Lived here for 42 years and is against the agritourism proposal. There does not need to be any more traffic on Horton as it is already a cut through road. Many people walk and ride bikes down Ridge Rd. Ditches have been dug deep and there are not a lot of room for cars and people, traffic does not need to increase. Moved here for the rural setting and this proposal will ruin that. Ridge Road is hidden from Horton Road causing road hazards and turn arounds. How many other agritourism proposals will be approved? He has apples trees and may want to have an orchard event. He recapped that he is against the current proposal.

Courtney Teague, 12466 Hill Rd. - Owner of Thickle Farms, an approved agritourism farm in this community. Agritourism allows farmers to expand their services, educational classes and events for the community. Also allowing farmers to generate revenue to keep farms going, which is becoming more challenging. When farms do not survive, they are sold and subdivisions come in that cause more traffic. Allowing agritourism in our community is allowing our community to enjoy these farm events and not go elsewhere. From personal experience, and with neighbors, events on the farm are not as drastic as it seems.

Rick Reickel, 9353 Ridge Rd. - Here to support the Trowbridge's at Hop Tops Farm, great neighbors, they work hard and would be a plus for the community. Understand the concerns but believe it would be a good thing.

Robert Slade, 10399 Lakeshore Drive - Lives directly across the street from Top Hops Farm. Mark and Sean Trowbridge have done an excellent job on that farm. Never see a problem over there and believe it would be great for the community.

Tim Farner, 9340 Ridge Rd. - Totally against this. What type of events will end up here, what time do they end, alcohol and live music? Proposed event area is 900 feet from the house with a clear view. Does not want to be looking at a circus tent 4 months out of the year. Multitude of problems will be created.

Rose Szwed, 9505 Ridge Rd. - Home is directly across from Top Hops Farm, front doors directly face each other. No other residence is positioned directly across from the farm in the same way. Experiences the effects of the operation firsthand, wouldn't have bought the house if had known the farm would be there. During harvesting season, endures the noise of drying equipment operating around the clock, vehicle headlights in home, and vehicle exhaust. Wants someone to buy her property, otherwise pursue other avenues similar to My Brothers Keeper. She is being asked to expect more noise, traffic, lighting and visitors. Substantial difference between occasional educational farm tours and an event venue accommodating hundreds of guests. Concern of enforcement on restrictions on noise, lighting, parking, event frequency and operating hours. Calls state troopers when cars are speeding down Ridge Rd. Does not want another fatality on Ridge Rd. Concern over protection of personal property and quality of life. Personal investment into property deserves same respect as Hop Tops. Homeowners should not sacrifice the peaceful enjoyment and value of property to rescue another person's struggling business.

Dar Nielson, Maintenance on 9505 Ridge Rd. - spoke and submitted letter. *(see letter attached)*

Ken Martin, 9245 Ridge Rd.- 100% in favor of this being approved. Agriculture is something that is not appreciated enough in this country. Anything we can do to promote agriculture and to educate people on what it takes to get products on their table. 100% support.

Amy Mackie, 9161 Shinanguag Dr. - In support of proposal, lives next to Mel and Mark Trowbridge. They are wonderful and gracious neighbors. The way they speak of the farm, there's a beauty in that you don't find other places. They seek to employ young people to work on the farm to teach them skills they will have the rest of their lives. Great opportunity to work on a working farm.

Closed public hearing at 7:45pm.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Consider Conditional Use application, Agricultural Tourism Business for Top Hops Farms 9530 Ridge Rd, (02-27-300-021).

Young gave overview of the Wade Trim review letter dated October 7, 2026. This letter laid out the 8 general standards for conditional land use.

i. Referencing the future land use map of the Master Plan. The agricultural tourism business proposal aligns with the Master Plan's goals and objectivities. Agricultural tourism maintains Atlas township's agriculture heritage and gives farmers opportunities to generate supplemental income.

ii. Master Plan does acknowledge agricultural tourism events may be appropriate within agricultural areas. Also acknowledges the impacts on surrounding properties. Should approval be considered, the planning commission should discuss and establish a plan with the applicants for conditions regarding event hours of operation, compacity, traffic, lighting, and noise. The planning commission has the ability to attach conditions as a part of any approval to ensure the general standard is met.

iii. In the Master Plan this district is designated to preserve productive farmland in Atlas Township and a vibrant community-based agricultural economy. A land use related to agriculture would be appropriate in this district with appropriate conditions.

iv. Agricultural tourism does give farmers the ability to generate income while preserving the farm and educating people about the agricultural heritage of the Township.

v. Noted this property does not have access to public infrastructure, no sewer or public water. Ridge road is an unpaved local road, consider traffic impacts to the road. Take into consideration emergency access throughout the site.

vi. This operation wouldn't create additional public costs but need to consider long-term impacts.

vii. The Planning Commission should seek additional information regarding events, music, weddings, alcohol service and consideration conditions. Some would be a part of the site plan approval process.

viii. Agricultural tourism is allowed in RSA and RA districts as a conditional use, needs to go through the planning commission process for appropriate vetting to meet these standards.

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Opened commissioner comments and questions.

TenBrink- Toured the site with Patrick. Toured through the buildings and back through the hop's fields, and the outback area. Very attractive area, beautiful when the hops are growing. Believe people will enjoy the agricultural beauty of the property for events. Quite a distance from neighbors, thinks the applicant has done their best to minimize the impact on neighbors. The township does have requirements for noise and light pollution. Traffic is always an issue with every proposed development; not sure if any proposal would have zero impact on traffic. Traffic impact would be concentrated on event days only. People would like things to stay the way they are, not a lot of people like change. Pushback is common and understandable. Consider all factors. Applicants talked about struggling to remain on a farm, this is becoming more common. This is our third agricultural tourism business application this year. Need to talk about what type of conditions will minimize impact on the neighbors and community. Questions to ask are: What happens if the farm goes under? What will the land become? Will a different type of development impact traffic all year long or have a larger impact on the community?

Rembor asked Sean, to explain in more detail regarding what the large events will look like and sound like.

Sean Trowbridge - In order to have the supplemental income for the farm the events will have to be worthwhile to generate the revenue. Not trying to have uncontrolled events or the general public, looking for a couple community events a year.

Rembor made the request to focus the answers on the large, potentially 300-person events, including how often, times, dance floor, band, just a ceremony?

Sean - Events will still be held in the rear portion of the property centered around the hops away from road and houses. Based on the size and area, ability to have vehicles out there at the site, and respects to setbacks and neighboring properties, a 300-person event would be feasible and something to generate the needed revenue. Wants events to be positive and make a difference. Wanting to adhere by all the township ordinances, not looking to request an extension on noise ordinance, big lights, etc. Wants to operate inside the current ordinances. Example of an event is a large tent, nice professional portable bathrooms and washing stations. All the rules and safeguards will be in the written agreements between owner and renter.

Major Feels confident that the applicants understand the township ordinances and they must be followed. Questioned an alternate route for the headlights shining into the neighbor's house directly across the street.

Sean stated there is a 4-foot privacy fence currently lined along the front parking area to block the view of cars or headlights that they installed previously to help accommodate neighbors. Mark stood and added that they would be willing to remove the 4-foot privacy fence and install a taller fence. Sean stated there will be a row of privacy trees added on the south side along the property line to block the view from the adjacent neighbor.

Rembor redirected to frequency of large events, hours, and anticipated number.

Sean replied that a large event would be a single day on a weekend for a wedding in June, July and August. These events are still based around the hops out in the fields. If there are no hops to view, the event has no value. Shutting down events will coincide with the

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township ordinance. Does not intend to be just a wedding venue or private event venue, wants community engagement events. A wedding would be booked for 1 whole weekend for the family, 1 large event day a weekend. Mark offered that 2 events a year would be community event weekends and one could be a fundraiser event. Mark adamantly stated they do not want 12 weddings a year, want to have 2 events where the community is invited, and other events are privately rented, for example a business conference.

Amman asked the applicant how they determine 300 people for large event capacity.

Mark stated it's all outdoor events; there are no indoor buildings for the events. Wants to offer something that not everyone has. A 63-acre farm should be easy to accommodate 300 people. There will not be 300 people at the farm every week, 300 people request would be the maximum event capacity.

Major asked if the farm goes out of business and sells the property, the buyer could develop a subdivision with 20 homes and that's 60 cars in and out every day or a farmer could purchase for livestock. Consider alternatives that can happen with this property. Stated he represents all the residents in Atlas. While the event location feels tough for some, alternatives may be worse. There have been many surveys done through the Township Board and the Planning Commission asking what the community wants. Atlas Township has always been farms and rural character. The Master Plan was designed that way, and the Master Plan encourages agricultural tourism. Believe this proposal is good thing for this community with the correct conditions attached. Beautiful spot when the hops are nice and green. Summer months only are already a limitation, and in support of the proper guidelines assigned.

Major also made note regarding the intersection of Ridge Road and Horton Road and will look into getting the greenery cut back and cleaned up so visibility is better. Amman mentioned maybe some signage to improve the safety situation.

Rembor questioned if alcohol is served at an event, will it be served by a caterer that is licensed. Mark agreed, he has no intention of obtaining a liquor license. He has consulted with an attorney regarding alcohol services and County Health Department regarding food services. The applicants decided that all food and alcohol services will be served by licensed caterers. The farm will have liability coverage, and the renter must have their own liability coverage. Wants to protect the community, not opening a bar or restaurant.

Rembor noted that if ordinances are violated the police and our code enforcer will get involved. If a continuing problem happens where the Townships ordinances are violated, court could be an option.

Commissioners began to create a list of potential conditions, these included:

Frequency (date range) - May, June, July, and August with 2 weekends being a community event, and the maximum of 1 event per weekend.

Hours of operation - Within the township ordinances, 11pm being quiet time.

Lighting and headlights- needs to be downward lighted and in compliance with Atlas Township light ordinance.

Noise - needs to be in compliance with Atlas Township Ordinance.

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Attendance (maximum capacity) - No more than 300 people at the farm at one time and events will be ticketed. For private events there will be contracts that state the number to be followed by the renter.

Alcohol and food service - caterer only.

Fire Department letter of approval.

**Note as a part of the record. The Planning Commission recommends that the Township Board or Supervisor address the intersection of Ridge Road and Horton Roads, the greenery needs to be cleaned up and add signage for safety.

These conditions are focused on numbers 2, 3, and 7 of the conditional use standards addressed in the zoning ordinance.

Motion to approve the Conditional Use application for Agricultural Tourism Business at the Top Hops Farm on 9530 Ridge Rd, (02-27-300-021) based compliance with ordinance standards as outlined in Wade Trims letter dated October 7, 2026, with the following conditions;

- **Operations of events are to be held May through August with no more than 1 large event per weekend.**
- **The hours of events not to go past the Atlas Township General Ordinances of 11p.m.**
- **All lighting needs to be faced downward, and light maintained within property lines to be in compliance with Atlas Township light ordinance.**
- **Noise to be consistent with Atlas Township Noise Ordinance.**
- **Maximum capacity is not to exceed 300 people, with events being ticketed or contracted.**
- **Alcohol and prepared food services are only to be served by licensed caterers.**
- **Letter of approval from the Atlas Fire Chief.**

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

Motion carries 6-0

4. **Consider Site Plan application, Agricultural Tourism Business for Top Hops Farms 9530 Ridge Rd, (02-27-300-021).**

Young stated that what the commissioners just approved with conditions is the ability to conduct an agricultural tourism business within the parameters that were established. Now the commissioners will look into the details of the site plan of the Top Hops Farm, this includes parking, fencing, landscaping and signage. There are 140 parking spaces shown in the proposed site plan, matching the peak of 300 people where there at 2 people per vehicle. Lighting was addressed in the conditional use and does not need to be mentioned again. Any signage would require a permit approved by the township building official. Emergency circulation should be known, which is the letter from the fire chief.

Rembor brought up the current structure on the property now, it was known that the building official is aware and this structure needs to follow the building code. When

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correct building permits are obtained, the building official will sign off on this structure approving that it is in fact compliant with the building code and is allowed within the ordinances.

The fence in the front near the roadway needs to be approved by the Building Inspector and of sufficient height to ensure headlights in the front parking area do not shine into neighboring homes. There was discussion for a privacy fence and or trees on the property line to the neighbor on the south side. Sean expressed a preference for evergreen trees for all year coverage for the screening.

Young added that screening could be a fence or trees, the planning commission can request either, suggested a complete screening option. Can put a size limitation to the screening, example, a 6ft tree must be planted. June added trees can die; there needs to be continuing maintenance to insure trees do not die off and not be replaced or addressed.

Commissioners agreed screening needs to be added near the south property near the residence. There is a horse barn, home, and pasture that the neighbor would like the public vision blocked from. An open area is seen in that area that in fact needs additional screening. This will help with headlights and people trespassing on adjacent properties. Mark and Sean agreed to add complete screening with evergreen trees 90-100ft in that said open area.

Concerning the grass parking regarding weather. The ordinance does state natural parking areas are allowed within the site plan.

Mr. Trowbridge stated a decision on building a gazebo has not been made. A building permit will be necessary if one is to be constructed.

The fence screening is regarding Ridge Road. There needs to be a taller fence along between the parking area and the road.

TenBrink questioned where the portable restrooms and garbage collection be located. Mark showed on the site plan, and noted these will be as needed per event, will not be out on the property all summer.

Motion to approve the site plan application, Agricultural Tourism Business for Top Hops Farms on 9530 Ridge Rd, (02-27-300-021) with the following conditions:

- **2 locations of complete screening need to be completed.**
  - **First location, the southern property line 90 to 100 feet of lineal trees is sufficient to block traffic lights end of the tree line going east. This includes a minimum requirement of 6 feet in height per tree.**
  - **The second location of complete screening is between the front parking area and Ridge Road. A solid 6-foot fence from the playground to the end of the driveway.**

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

Motion carries 6-0

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5. **Data Center Ordinance Discussion.**

Motion to table items 5 and 6 due to time.

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

Motion carries 6-0

6. **Zoning Ordinance Amendments to non residential districts.**

See item number 5 above.

REPORTS

7. **Township Report**

Still working on ADA compliance with the township website. AI Policy has been removed from the agenda. Renewed Decker Insurance. Planning for the 2030 Census for Atlas Township. Approved the fire department to purchase a fan ventilator for $7,000. CDBG is working towards the next funds for 2 years. Still working on the township parking lot engineering. Library ramp needs to be replaced.

8. **ZBA Report**

Washburn Road was approved for a front yard accessory building. 3 variances request this month. 1 is a front yard accessory building on a corner lot. The other 2 applications are variances for the size of the accessory building to the lot size and house footprint.

Should discuss recurring cases if the ordinance should be looked at.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

BOARD COMMENTS

Amman - Found a general ordinance from Mansfield Township in New Jersey. A small community like ours and prohibited data centers completely. Handed out a sample to commissioners.

TenBrink – Will not be available next month.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:36p.m.

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

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.

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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 October 21, 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that a quorum was present.

_____

Toni A. Yaklin Date
Atlas Township Clerk

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Dear planning commission,

My name is Sophia Holt. I've lived on Ridge Road for 24 of my 26 years of life. Although, I now live elsewhere in Goodrich, I still visit Ridge Road and my parents (top hop farm neighbors) almost everyday. Ridge Road is quiet, secluded, and peaceful, which I bet most of us who have lived on ridge or currently live on ridge road, enjoy those qualities the most.

The proposal Top Hops has submitted, would have the potential to be highly disruptive, not only to the residents of ridge road, but the pets and wildlife. As this proposal requests parking spots for 150 cars, 300 attendees and events like music events, weddings, 5k running events, and food truck events etc. in my opinion this is anything but "agricultural tourism". The road itself is not going to be able to withstand the traffic and poses a safety hazard to not only to the residents, but the attendees of these events.

I understand a small group of people for general tour of the hops, machines, and tasting during day light hours, which seems fair, doable and would support agricultural tourism. 150 cars, 300 people, events every weekend May-August is a different story. Quite frankly, after the sun goes down, there is not much to see on an "agricultural tour".

People work hard to be able to enjoy this rural quiet life Ridge Road and Goodrich has to offer. Mark and Sean of Top Hop Farms did not approach neighbors to discuss their plans, instead most of the residents found out by letter. The letter was quite vague and did not mention the depth and volume of the 100 page proposal found on the township website. It's unfortunate they did not consider discussing details with neighbors in person.

I believe most of us understand financial hardships and the stress they can create. I would consider small group tours of their farm, but like I said above a venue and event center is a hard pill to swallow. The potential for noise, traffic, trespassing, light pollution is a bit frightening and frustrating. My parents and I enjoy caring and riding our horses, and they happen to live about 200 oft from top hop's property. I'm unsure how they may react to not only these high volume events, but the construction and prep to maintain their property.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sophia

Hi Lexi,

My name is Monte Frick, 9293 Ridge Rd, Goodrich.
I want to express my support for Top Hops Farms.
The Trowbridges have done many amazing things on that farm, as a neighbor and supporter, I hope they are
allowed to grow their business by adding Agrotourism.

Sincerely Monte Frick
[redacted]

Atlas Township Planning Commission:

My name is Lora Stevens, I am a resident of Atlas Township and I would like to express my support for Top Hops Farm. I have three kids who have all worked at Top Hops throughout their teen years, my youngest still works for them on a seasonal basis. Sean Trowbridge has been excellent to work with, he always prioritizes hiring local teens to provide them an opportunity to gain experience, earn extra money, and learn new skills. He always made sure to thank my kids for their work and paid them a fair and competitive wage to show he valued their help.

Sean is a very hard worker himself and is extremely knowledgeable and passionate about hops plants and the hops industry. He enjoys sharing his expertise and teaching others about the hops growing process. I am confident that he will be a superb host of agriculture tourism tours at his farm and that it will be a great benefit to our community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Lora Stevens

10/20/2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing as a local resident to express my support for Top Hops Farm and their request to utilize their property for seasonal agritourism and community events throughout the year. Granting this approval is an investment in the long-term preservation of our community's rural identity, agricultural heritage, and quality of life.

Our community loves protecting open space, supporting working lands, and maintaining the small-town atmosphere that draws families to Goodrich and Atlas Township. So, let's support our local Hops Farm and allow them to keep their business intact.

Support our local working farms through reasonable agritourism, or risk losing that land forever to residential development. When agricultural land becomes unsustainable, our farms are forced to sell to developers, causing our rural community to lose its rural character.

Permanent traffic is the alternative to periodic events being held. Our community would benefit greatly by offering another space for family events and fun, while keeping our local farms from disappearing.

Allowing Top Hops Farm to host events is a fantastic decision for our community. It empowers a respected local business to remain active, while maintaining the agricultural roots of Atlas Township.

I respectfully ask you to approve this request.

Sincerely,

Kathi Willoughby
9286 Green Rd.
Goodrich, MI 48438
[redacted]

October 20, 2026

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing in support of Top Hops Farm's request to offer agritourism activities at its farm. As an Atlas Township resident and owner of Hunter Glen Farms, I appreciate the work involved in maintaining a farm and the importance of finding sustainable ways to keep agriculture part of our community.

I have visited farms throughout Michigan, and those visits have brought me to communities I might otherwise never have explored. Farms give people a reason to visit, discover the surrounding area, and potentially support nearby restaurants, shops, and other small businesses.

Michigan actively promotes farm visits and agricultural experiences as part of its tourism offerings. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development also recognizes agritourism as an opportunity for farms to diversify their income and strengthen their businesses. Supporting thoughtfully managed agritourism at Top Hops Farm would give Goodrich and Atlas Township an opportunity to participate in that broader effort while showcasing our own agricultural community.

Top Hops has described plans for activities centered around the hop-growing area, including a farm open house, and wedding functions. These activities offer an opportunity to introduce visitors to hop farming and the connection between Michigan agriculture and the products they enjoy. They also create opportunities for people to gather and celebrate in a setting that reflects our community's agricultural character.

I recognize the importance of considering neighboring residents, including parking, traffic, noise, and operating hours. I support approval with reasonable conditions that address those concerns while providing a practical opportunity for Top Hops Farm to succeed.

Supporting local farms means supporting both the land and the people working to sustain it. I encourage the Planning Commission to approve Top Hops Farm's agritourism request and welcome the value it can bring to our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please include this letter in the public record for the application.

Sincerely,

Sara Hunter
Hunter Glen Farms
Atlas Township

October 21, 2026

Atlas Township Planning Commission

Re: Case PC 26-05 — Conditional Use and Site Plan Application for an Agricultural Tourism Business, Top Hops Farm, 9530 Ridge Road, Goodrich (Parcel 02-27-300-021)

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning Commission:

I'm writing as a resident of Atlas Township to say I support the conditional use request for an agricultural tourism business at Top Hops Farm on Ridge Road.

This is a real working farm, and a good one. The Trowbridge family has been at it for years, a 20-acre hop-yard, with the harvesting and processing done right there on the property. Their hops go to more than 140 breweries around the country, the farm is MAEAP certified, and it's a state-licensed food processor. This isn't a venue pretending to be a farm. It's a farm asking to add things that actually fit the farm: tours, including the picking and drying barns, and community and private events held on the property.

That's the part that matters to me. Farming doesn't pay the same every year, and a farm that can bring in some income from farm-related activities has a fighting chance of staying a farm. I would much rather see that than watch another farm get sold off because the numbers stopped working.

I think it's worth being honest about what the alternative looks like. A development doesn't mean traffic on a handful of event days. It means traffic every single day, every household coming and going, school runs, deliveries, commuters, plus months of construction traffic before anyone even moves in: dump trucks, heavy equipment, torn-up roads. Compare that to what's being proposed here: larger events on roughly 18 days a year, mostly in the summer, during set hours, and then it's quiet farmland again. If traffic is the concern, a subdivision is the bigger traffic problem by a long shot, and it's permanent.

I'm not asking for a blank check for the farm, either. Reasonable conditions on hours, how often events happen, noise, lighting, parking, and traffic make sense, and I support the Commission setting them. I think this is the kind of use we should want on farmland, one that keeps the land in farming and keeps our township looking like itself.

Thank you for considering my comments.
Respectfully,

Tracy Butcher

Tracy Butcher
Atlas Township resident

Lexi,

I have no issues with the Hop farm adding Agrotourism. I live on 9521 Ridge Rd.

Thanks,

Joe

Ms Lexi Christner,

I'm writing to inform The Atlas Township Planning Commission of my support for the Top Hops Farm's request for a permit to allow for Agrotourism on their farm.

I live on Ridge Rd and am in support of the Trowbridge Family building their family business as long as land zoning codes are not changed.

Thank you for your time and service to our community.

Jennie Milne

9225 Rdige Rd.

Goodrich MI

48438

THICKLE FARMS, LLC

12438 Hill Road, Goodrich, MI 48438

Web: www.thicklefarms.com | **Email:** thebuzz@thicklefarms.com

Organically Grown • Family Owned • Community Driven

October 21, 2026

Dear Members of the Atlas Township Planning Commission,

My name is Courtney Teague, I am the owner of Thickle Farms, a local farm located at 12438 Hill Road in Goodrich. Our farm has an approved special land use permit for agritourism.

I am writing in support of Top Hops Farm's application for a special land use permit to allow agritourism at its farm on Ridge Road.

Agritourism permits allow farm owners to offer classes, events, and tours that bring the community together and provide educational, engaging, and affordable activities for residents and visitors. In my experience, these opportunities can strengthen connections between farms and the communities they serve.

Approving Top Hops Farm's application would build on the farm's existing strengths and give more people the opportunity to experience and enjoy what it has to offer. I believe this would be a positive addition for Top Hops Farm and the surrounding community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Courtney Teague

68TH DISTRICT
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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DAVID W. MARTIN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

COMMITTEES:
NATURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM (CHAIR)
ENERGY
FINANCE
RULES

October 21, 2026

Atlas Township Planning Commission
7386 S. Gale Road
Goodrich, MI 48438

Dear Members of the Atlas Township Planning Commission:

I am writing in support of Top Hops Farm and owner Sean Trowbridge's request to offer seasonal tours of his hops farm on Ridge Road in Atlas Township.

As Chair of the Michigan House Committee on Natural Resources and Tourism, I know the important role that agriculture, outdoor recreation, and unique local destinations can play in strengthening Michigan's tourism economy. Farm tours offer visitors an opportunity to experience Michigan agriculture firsthand while also creating another reason for people to visit Goodrich and Atlas Township.

Agritourism can provide benefits that extend beyond an individual farm. Visitors to a local attraction may also support nearby restaurants, shops, and other small businesses, helping keep economic activity within the community. At the same time, tours can provide an educational opportunity for families and visitors to learn more about agriculture and the work that goes into producing Michigan-grown products.

Top Hops Farm is an established local agricultural operation, and I believe allowing the farm to responsibly welcome visitors during the summer months would be a positive addition to the community. I respectfully encourage the Planning Commission to give Mr. Trowbridge's request favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

David W. Martin
State Representative
68th District
Chair, Natural Resources and Tourism

Ridge Road Paving — Three-Minute Public Statement

Atlas Township — October 21, 2026

Good evening, members of the Planning Commission.

My name is Dar Nielsen. I am speaking today both as someone personally opposed to the proposed paving of Ridge Road and on behalf of ~~a homeowner~~ Rose Szwed who lives directly across from Top Hops Farm.

I believe this paving proposal raises serious questions about fairness, financial responsibility, and the future character of Ridge Road.

Approximately eight years ago, a petition was circulated to pave Ridge Road. The estimated construction cost was $913,600, divided among 54 parcels. Each parcel would have been assessed approximately $17,000, excluding administrative costs and interest.

The project did not proceed. One homeowner whom I represent today submitted a written objection at that time.

Now the paving proposal has resurfaced, with Top Hops Farm having initiated the current request.

~~But something significant has changed.~~ We can't discuss the proposal for Top Hops agritourism without mentioning paving

Top Hops is proposing an agricultural tourism operation involving large gatherings, music events, alcohol service, and increased vehicle traffic. How is that agritourism?

According to its own application, certain events could attract 300 people, generating between 120 and 150 vehicles, most arriving within a single hour.

The application also references tour buses and semi-trucks. Do you know what kind of pollution will be in our neighborhood?

This raises an important question:

Are homeowners being asked to finance a road improvement that will also provide substantial benefits to an expanding commercial operation? It looks that way.

I recognize that asphalt paving can benefit residential properties. But those benefits must be weighed against the costs and the potential consequences.

A paved road may encourage higher driving speeds. Additional event traffic could affect safety, noise levels, and the rural character of this neighborhood.

Many residents chose to live on Ridge Road knowing it was a gravel road.

They should have a meaningful opportunity to question whether this expensive improvement is necessary and whether the financial burden is being distributed fairly. To date it is not.

I respectfully request answers to four questions.

First, what is the current engineering estimate, including all financing expenses?

Second, what portion of the costs will be paid by Top Hops, the township, the county, or other funding sources?

Third, how will the township determine the relative benefits received by residential properties compared with the proposed commercial operation?

Fourth, has anyone evaluated the combined effects of paving and additional event traffic on Ridge Road?

I oppose moving forward with paving until these questions have been fully answered and affected homeowners have had an opportunity to review the evidence.

A business may expand, but its expansion should not automatically create a financial obligation for neighboring homeowners. Right now it is as we protect ourselves with the increased costs of insurance.

The interests of existing residents deserve equal consideration.

Thank you.

Please include this in the paperwork