CITY OF BUCHANAN PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 08, 2026 – 6:00 PM
CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

MINUTES

III. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Call to Order
The Public Hearings were called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Vice-Chair Garry.

B. Roll Call
Present: Vigansky, Brown, Pleasant, Lysy, Garry
Absent: Houser, Wregglesworth

C. Opening of Hearing and Statement of Purpose of the Hearing

The purpose of the public hearings is to receive public comments regarding the proposed amendments to the City of Buchanan Unified Development Code

Motion made by Brown, supported by Vigansky to open the public hearing at 6:02 p.m. Voice vote carried unanimously.

C. Announcement of the Rules of the Hearing
Garry announced the Rules of the hearing.

E. Proposed map amendment (rezoning) from N Natural to I Industrial for the property located at the northeast corner of East Third Street and Skyline Drive, now known as 805 E. Third Street.

1) Presentation by the Applicant/City Staff

Staff presented the proposed map amendment to rezone the property located at the northeast corner of East Third Street and Skyline Drive, now known as 805 E. Third Street, from N Natural to I Industrial.

Staff explained that the property is partially improved with the McCoy Creek Trail and a surface parking lot. The property had previously been zoned Industrial but was changed to Natural with adoption of the current zoning map. Staff explained that the property is subject to a due care agreement and needs to remain industrial to maintain compliance with that agreement. Recorded covenants and the McCoy Creek Trail easement also limit the use of the property. Pasted text

2) Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3) Applicant/City Staff Response, if necessary

F. Proposed amendments to the Unified Development Code allowing creation of Downtown Design Review Overlay District and standards for review – Amendments to Sections 71-5.A, 71-14.A, 71-16.H.12, 71-33.E and 71-34.G and Article V Definitions

1) Presentation by the Applicant/City Staff

Staff presented proposed amendments to the Unified Development Code relating to the Downtown Design Review Overlay District and the standards and procedures for design review.

Staff explained that when the Unified Development Code was adopted, the standards and processes for downtown design review were not fully incorporated into one section. The proposed

amendments consolidate and clarify the review standards and process, establish the Downtown Design Review Overlay District, provide for administrative review where appropriate, and designate the Planning Commission as the appeal body for decisions of the Downtown Design Review Committee.

2) Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3) Applicant/City Staff Response, if necessary

G. Proposed amendments Unified Development Code – New Section 71-28 Fencing, Lighting, Screening and Landscaping Standards and deletion of Sections 71-26 Buffering, 71-28 Tree preservation and landscape standards and 71-29 Fencing standards and changes to Article V Definitions

1) Presentation by the Applicant/City Staff

Staff presented proposed amendments pertaining to fencing, lighting, screening and landscaping standards.

Staff explained that several sections of the Unified Development Code were being consolidated and expanded. The amendments provide additional fencing standards, establish lighting regulations for commercial properties, expand screening requirements for refuse containers, outdoor storage, loading areas and mechanical equipment, and revise landscaping regulations.

The amendments also eliminate the existing tree-removal permit requirement, update the recommended tree species, and provide a modification process for fences that do not meet dimensional requirements. Chain-link fencing would again be permitted in side and rear yards but would remain prohibited in front yards.

2) Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3) Applicant/City Staff Response, if necessary

H. Proposed amendments to the Unified Development Code Section 71-30 Sign standards and Article V Definition.

1) Presentation by the Applicant/City Staff

Staff presented proposed amendments to Section 71-30, Sign Standards, and related Article V definitions.

Staff explained that the proposed regulations provide clearer standards for exempt and prohibited signs, permanent and temporary signage, illumination, sign measurement, changeable message signs, billboards, nonconforming signs, permitting and modifications.

The proposed regulations maintain a minimum clearance of 6 feet 8 inches for hanging attention devices in the Downtown District.

2) Public Comment

William Bielby, co-owner of Rivertown Gallery and Studio, 111 Main Street, addressed the Commission. Bielby stated that he supported the sign revisions overall but requested that the Commission consider allowing a hanging sign below the normal clearance when a fixed detectable barrier prevents pedestrians from walking beneath the sign. He stated that the barrier and sign

could be treated as one installation and, if the barrier were removed, the sign would also have to be removed or raised.

3) Applicant/City Staff Response, if necessary

I. Closing of Hearing

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Brown, to close the public hearing at 6:019 p.m. Voice vote carried unanimously.

IV. Regular Meeting - Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Buchanan Planning Commission was called to order at 6:19 p.m.

V. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

VI. Roll Call

Present: Vigansky, Brown, Pleasant, Lysy, Garry
Absent: Houser, Wregglesworth

City Staff: Kristen Gundersen, Planning and Community Development Director & Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk

VII. Public Comments - Agenda Items

No additional public comment.

VIII. Approve Agenda

Motion by Pleasant, supported by Lysy, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

IX. Approve Minutes

A. Consider approving the Regular Meeting Minutes from August 11, 2026.
Motion by Brown, supported by Vigansky, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 11, 2026, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

X. New Business

A. Public Hearing - Consideration of Map Amendment from N Natural to I Industrial for property at northeast corner of East Third Street and Skyline Drive - now known as 805 E Third Street

The Commission discussed the proposed rezoning and the due care agreement affecting the property. Staff explained that the agreement is expected to remain with the property and that changing the underlying zoning could require additional review with EGLE.

Commissioners discussed the McCoy Creek Trail easement, environmental restrictions on the site, the property's current use, and whether the Future Land Use Map could ultimately identify all or a portion of the property as open space even though the current zoning needs to remain Industrial. Pasted text

Motion by Vigansky, supported by Brown, to recommend approval of the map amendment (rezoning) from N Natural District to I Industrial District for the property located at the northeast corner of East Third Street and Skyline Drive, or 805 East Third Street, based on the application provided in the September 8, 2026 Planning Commission agenda packet, as the proposed amendment is consistent with the standards for text or map amendment changes as found in Section 71.36.B.2 of the Unified Development Code. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

B. Public Hearing - Consideration of Text Amendment Sections 71-5.Z, 71-14.A, 71-16.H.12, 71-33.E and 71.34G and Article V Definitions - related with creation of Downtown Design Overlay District and establishment of design standards

Motion by Brown, supported by Lysy, to recommend approval of the text amendment to modify and establish regulations pertaining to the creation of the Downtown Design Review Overlay District and review processes and standards in Sections 71.5.A, 71-14.A, 71-16.H.12, 71-33.E and 71-34.G, Article V Definitions, and any other sections of the Unified Development Code that may be necessary, as found in the September 8, 2026 Planning Commission agenda packet, as the proposed amendment is consistent with the standards for text or map amendment changes found in Section 71.36.B.2 of the Unified Development Code. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

C. Public Hearing - Consideration of Text amendment to modify and establish regulations pertaining to Fencing, Lighting, Screening and Landscape Standards found in Sections 71-26, 71-27F and H, 71-28, 71-29, 71-32 and Article V Definitions

The Commission considered the proposed amendments relating to fencing, lighting, screening, landscaping and related definitions.

Motion by Lysy, supported by Brown, to recommend approval of the proposed text amendments modifying and establishing regulations pertaining to fencing, lighting, screening and landscaping standards, related Zoning Board of Appeals provisions and Article V definitions, as presented in the September 8, 2026 Planning Commission agenda packet. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

D. Public Hearing - Consideration of Text Amendment Section 71-30 Signs and Article V Definitions - Relating to Sign Regulations

The Commission discussed the request made during the public hearing concerning lower hanging attention signs when a detectable barrier is placed underneath.

Discussion centered on accessibility, pedestrian travel, snow removal, private objects being placed in the public right-of-way, maintenance of the new downtown sidewalks, enforcement and potential liability.

Staff explained that allowing the lower signs now could create lawful nonconforming installations if the regulations were later changed. Staff also advised that the City intends to review regulations concerning sidewalk cafés and other items placed on public sidewalks and suggested that the issue could be considered further as part of that process.

The consensus was to move the current sign amendments forward without delaying the larger ordinance while continuing to study the hanging-sign issue.

Motion by Pleasant, supported by Brown, to recommend approval of the text amendment to Section 71-30 Sign Standards and Article V Definitions, including the deletion of existing language associated with signs or signage and replacement with the draft language contained in the September 8, 2026 Planning Commission agenda packet, as the proposed amendment is consistent with the standards for text or map amendment changes found in Section 71.36.B.2 of the Unified Development Code. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

E. Resignation Announcement, Vacancy and Appointment of Chairperson

Motion by Brown, supported by Pleasant, to accept the resignation of Tony Houser from the Planning Commission.

Commissioners thanked Houser for his service to the Planning Commission and his time serving as Chair.

Motion carried unanimously.

Staff advised that the resulting vacancy must be filled by a City resident, as the Planning Commission currently has the maximum number of permitted nonresident members. The City will advertise the vacancy.

Motion by Brown, supported by Pleasant, to appoint Jen Garry as Chairperson.
Motion carried unanimously.

Because Garry had previously served as Vice Chair, the Commission then considered appointment of a new Vice Chair.

Motion by Lysy, supported by Pleasant, to appoint Jake Brown as Vice Chairperson.
Motion carried unanimously.

XI. Old Business

A. Master Plan - Review Revised Future Land Use Map, Objectives-Goals and Tasks and Next Steps
Staff reviewed the revised Future Land Use Map and discussed work completed with the planning consultant.
Proposed changes included consolidating residential classifications, identifying the Redbud Trail corridor as Mixed Use, retaining commercial areas along Front Street, adjusting the Downtown boundary, reclassifying certain properties based upon their existing and anticipated future uses, and replacing the Natural designation with Open Space. The cemetery was also proposed for inclusion in the Open Space designation. Pasted text
Commissioners discussed the treatment of schools and other civic properties, industrial and environmentally restricted properties, downtown parking areas, and the property at East Third Street and Skyline Drive.
The Commission discussed whether portions of the East Third Street property associated with the McCoy Creek Trail could be shown as Open Space on the Future Land Use Map. Staff agreed to discuss the matter further with the planning consultant.
The Commission also discussed encouraging collaboration between the City, property owners and preservation organizations to pursue additional historic district designations where appropriate.
Staff advised that additional Master Plan work would continue and requested that the Commission meet in October to review further draft material, including potential Planned Unit Development and parking regulations. The Commission discussed potentially conducting a public hearing in November and avoiding a December meeting if possible.

XII. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only

None.

XIII. Zoning & Community Development Director Comments

Staff provided updates regarding upcoming Master Plan work and proposed zoning amendments.

XIV. Commissioner Comments

Commissioners thanked Tony Houser for his service and expressed appreciation for the discussion among the Commission, staff and members of the public.

Commissioners congratulated Jen Garry on her appointment as Chairperson and Jake Brown on his appointment as Vice Chairperson.

XV. Adjournment

Motion by Brown, supported by Lysy, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

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Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk