

HARTLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 12, 2025– 7:00 PM

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Fox called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance:**

3. **Roll Call and Recognition of Visitors:**

Present – Commissioners Eckman, Fox, Grissim, Mayer, McMullen, Mitchell, and Murphy

Absent – None

4. **Approval of the Meeting Agenda:**

A Motion to approve the June 12, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Agenda was made by Commissioner McMullen and seconded by Commissioner Murphy. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

a. Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2025.

A Motion to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2025, was made by Commissioner Eckman and seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion carried unanimously.

6. **Call to the Public:**

None

7. **Public Hearing**

a. Site Plan/PD Application #25-004, Sawyer Ridge, Residential Planned Development (PD) – Preliminary Site Plan

Chair Fox explained the process and opened the Public Hearing at 7:03 PM stating all public notice requirements have been met.

Director Langer stated the following:

- Gave an overview of the location of the project.
- Single-family residential subdivision with a proposed 172 dwelling units.
- Road network connects south to the development to the west/south, north to M-59 and east to Pleasant Valley Road.
- Originally proposed a mixed development that included some apartments in the northern portion but returned with a revised Conceptual Plan with only single-family homes.
- Requesting a Planned Development (PD) which is a three-step process: Conceptual, Preliminary and Final. The proposed development appears before both the Planning Commission and the Township Board at each step. The Public Hearing occurs at the Planning Commission Preliminary phase, which is tonight, where the Planning Commission makes a recommendation and later the Township Board makes the decision. Once the Final PD is heard

before both entities with a recommendation from the Planning Commission and Final Approval by the Township Board, it is considered a rezoning of the property.

The Applicant, David Straub, M/I Homes of Michigan LLC, stated the following:

- Previously represented a developer for the same property for a project that did not move forward but he is excited to be back.
- M/I Homes was founded in 1976 based out of Ohio.
- In Metro-Detroit for the last six years.
- Publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange.
- Thirteenth largest builder in the United States building over 150,000 homes since its inception, in the top three in the Detroit area.
- Thoughtful community design is important to them emphasizing walkability, connectivity and activated open spaces, as well as preserving natural features and providing elegantly landscaped entrances, greenspace and open space. Also important are providing a housing mix for a range of buyer profiles and price points.
- Home sizes range from 1,957 to 2,600 square feet.
- Like to control the curb appeal with their streetscapes, designs, spacing and color palette.

[The Applicant displayed images of their other communities in Michigan.]

- Previously requested 167 homes.
- Entrance moved farther west due to feedback from Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).
- Current plan preserves more wetlands, natural features and open space.
- Density: permitted 282 units which is four (4) dwelling units per acre (dua) requesting 172 which is 2.42 dua.
- Open Space: required 25 percent, 17.09 acres; provided 38.2 percent, 26.08 acres.
- Preservation of Natural Features: Pleasant Valley Road Landmark Trees, and 93 percent of onsite regulated wetlands.
- Landscaping-Activated Open Space: Enhanced Greenbelts and Buffers, Walking Paths and Park Space.
- DPW Sewer REUs: 320 owned, 172 required.
- Engineering review: Conditionally approved.
- Landscaping Review: Pleasant Valley Greenbelt, southern property line evergreen screen provided.
- Met with the Gigler Farm and Levy Gravel Mining operations. They understand there is a trucking of aggregate that occurs from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and farm activities that are twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Need to be a good neighbor and fully open and transparent with the buyers of their product.

[The Applicant shared images of the home products.]

Call to the Public

Joe Riccardi, Hartland Township; expressed concern about traffic and needing Pleasant Valley Road paved. Asked what happens to the balance of REUs not used.

Chair Fox closed the Public Hearing at 7:26 PM.

Chair Fox referred to the staff memorandum dated June 5, 2025.

Eligibility Criteria (Section 3.1.18.B.)

Recognizable Benefits

Chair Fox stated the Applicant provided a list.

Minimum Size

Chair Fox stated the parcel meets the requirement of 20 acres as it is 70.1 acres in size.

Use of Public Services

Chair Fox stated the following:

- Highland Road is under the jurisdiction of MDOT.
- Pleasant Valley Road is under the jurisdiction of the Livingston County Road Commission (LCRC.)
- Density will be discussed later.

Compatibility with Comprehensive Plan

Chair Fox stated this parcel is designated as a Special Planning Area (SPA) and it appears they are following the requirements for a SPA in the Ordinance.

Unified Control

Chair Fox stated the property will be owned by a single entity.

Planned Development Design Standards (Section 3.1.18.C.)

Permitted Uses

Chair Fox stated housing is a Permitted Use in the SPA and is desirable.

Residential Density

Director Langer stated the following:

- Density is calculated using the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
- In this case, a SPA allows up to 4 du. Permitted to have 282 units.
- Bonus density of 40 percent if awarded would allow an additional 114 for a total of 395 units.
- Requesting 172.

Chair Fox added the Planning Commission has seen plans for that kind of density. The way it is accomplished is they go up and they are rented. The Planning Commission is thankful they have another option before them tonight.

Design Details

Director Langer stated they are all single-family homes as shown previously by the Applicant. They have submitted a Pattern Book with five different home designs. The Applicant stated earlier they try to avoid having the same design repeated several times in a row, they vary the facades, rooflines, and building material colors to add interest to the streetscape. The Applicant concurred.

Minimum Yard Requirements

Director Langer stated the following:

- Comply on the north with M-59, 50 feet required, 80 feet proposed.
- Closer on the Pleasant Valley side, 50 feet required, 30 feet proposed.

- Along the perimeter but not adjacent to a road they are proposing a 20-foot setback rather than 40 feet.
- Along a road inside the development is typically 40 feet, they are proposing 25 feet. Theoretically, there is enough room in the proposed driveway to park a vehicle and not cover the sidewalk.

Distances Between Buildings

Director Langer stated the Applicant has proposed a three-stall garage option, when that option is deployed, that home might be as close as five feet to a property line. If two neighbors opt for that design, it is possible the two homes could be as close as ten feet apart. If that were to occur, the Applicant has offered to require those two homes to have upgraded building materials on that side for better fire protection.

Commissioner Mitchell asked if the entire development is capable of requesting three-stall garage options. The Applicant stated it is an option if the home site chosen can accommodate that option. They have not designated certain lots for this use. In his experience it may occur on 25 to 30 percent of the homes.

Commissioner Mitchell clarified if he were a buyer and opted for the three-stall garage option, but no house had yet been built next to his, would he be required to install the upgraded building materials? The Applicant stated he understands his point and will make a note that all three-car-garage options within five feet of the property line install the Class I materials at the time of construction.

Commissioner Murphy asked what portion of the structure would have the Class I materials. The Applicant stated only the adjacent garage walls would be required to have the Class I materials.

Building Height

Chair Fox stated it is highly unlikely a two-story residential building would be higher than 35 feet height limit.

Parking and Loading

Chair Fox stated it was just discussed.

Landscaping

Chair Fox stated this will be covered in detail later.

Open Space

Director Langer stated the following:

- PDs are required to provide 25 percent of the site as Open Space. The Applicant stated they are proposing 38.2 percent.
- In addition, 10 percent is required to be Usable Open Space. They are proposing 17.09 percent.

Natural Features

Director Langer stated the following:

- Six wetlands are present on the site, three are regulated by the State of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy EGLE, and three are not.
- Plan also identifies significant trees on the site.

Sidewalks and Pedestrian Access

Chair Fox stated the Applicant mentioned walkability is important. There is a proposed 5-foot-wide concrete sidewalk is shown along the frontage of the PD site on Highland Road and along the frontage of Pleasant Valley Road. The Applicant clarified a sidewalk is planned along the frontage of Highland Road and a sidewalk on the partial frontage of Pleasant Valley Road. Also, sidewalks are planned on both sides of the interior streets and a pathway that will meander through the Open Space.

Commissioner Murphy asked if the sidewalk would end at the eastern edge of the parcel where the seven acres commercial site is located. The Applicant confirmed.

Commissioner Mayer asked about the pathway. The Applicant stated it will be a mowed natural pathway.

Requirements for Preliminary Review (Section 3.1.18.E.ii)

Sewer and Water

Chair Fox stated The Applicant has been in contact with the Department of Public Works; sewer and water will be available to serve the site.

Stormwater and Drainage Systems

Director Langer stated the following:

- Stormwater is designed to be collected and conveyed to one (1) detention area.
- The Township's Engineering Consultant raised a question about whether or not this design is sufficient; if a larger detention area is required, some of the lots may be lost.
- The Applicant confirmed with their Engineer the plan will work as designed.
- Typically, if the site plan changes, the Applicant must return to the Planning Commission for an Amendment; however, the Planning Commission can decide now, if a redesign is warranted and some lots are eliminated but the street layout is unchanged, and the sidewalk plan is unchanged, will the Applicant have to return for an Amendment or can those changes be made on the Construction Plans and approved by staff.

The Planning Commission stated if a redesign occurs, and lots are lost, but the streets and sidewalks are unchanged, the Applicant will not have to return for an Amendment. Staff may approve those changes in the Construction Plan Set of drawings.

The Applicant stated he appreciates the flexibility of the Planning Commission in this area.

Chair Fox asked to go back and address a question about what happens to the extra REUs. Director Langer stated currently the Applicant is in negotiations to purchase the property and REUs. The remaining REUs would be at the discretion of the owner. What happens to them would be up to the owner probably before this project proceeds. In general, those REUs stay with the property and cannot be transferred to adjacent properties unless that person has at least a 25 percent interest in that property along with other parameters; however, there is a settlement agreement with the owner for this property that permits the owner to sell the REUs beyond the adjacent properties.

Traffic Impacts

Director Langer stated the following:

- The Applicant provided a Traffic Impact Study.
- Emails from MDOT and LCRC, including a Driveway Permit were also included in the packet.
- The Applicant has been working with MDOT to meet their requirements. MDOT suggested they relocate the M-59 access for Aspen Trail to location shown on this plan.
- LCRC has no objection to the access to Pleasant Valley Road.
- Both entities have stated there may be improvements required in the rights-of-way that this Applicant will need to add before they will issue permits and can physically build those roads.
- The intersection of M-59/Highland Road and Pleasant Valley/Fenton Road functions at a certain Level of Service. The Applicant would be required to maintain that Level of Service or make road improvements to ensure that Level of Service is maintained. This is something the Applicant will need to work out with MDOT and LCRC.

Chair Fox added the Township passed a Road Milage and both Pleasant Valley Road and Bergin Road will be paved at some point in the near future as part of that millage. The Chair suggested people contact the Township Manager for that timeline.

Vehicular Circulation

Chair Fox stated this was discussed earlier.

Fiscal Impacts

Chair Fox stated the Applicant provided a letter dated May 21, 2025, that is included in the packet.

Landscaping (Section 5.11)

Commissioner Grissim stated the following:

- Plans need better labeling to clarify where lawn is planned versus different ground cover.
- Question regarding Divider Medians, want to ensure everything is covered and irrigated. Staff suggested lawn rather than mulch.
- Irrigation system is to be provided in all landscape areas per Maintenance Notes on Sheet L-6. The “landscape areas” are not defined in the notes. Staff assumes this will be provided in the buffer areas/common areas. The Township wants to ensure that areas that are not irrigated are planted with items that can survive. The Applicant stated they would like to meet with their Landscape Architect and the Township to work out those details.
- South Buffer: appreciates the Applicant’s desire to save the large trees and use some existing vegetation; however, there is gap near where the cul-de-sac tips in that does not have any trees, just scrub vegetation. The road is approximately three feet higher than the property line, could add additional screening to block the headlights and be a good neighbor. The Applicant suggested some additional evergreen trees at that location.
- Detention Pond: good instruction about how you intend to bring the vegetation back around the large detention pond with a seed mix and maintenance. Suggested a thin straw blanket after seeding to protect the seed from the geese in this area.
- Street Trees: great plan for Street Trees. Do not need more but would like to shift some of them to get them closer to the road for traffic calming purposes. Be aware of the sight line around some of the corners.

- Berm near northeast corner is very severe and would be better served with a more naturalistic design, maybe some canopy trees.
- This design meets the Ordinance requirements, just asking for a better design.

Director Langer added the 7.5-acre piece at the actual corner of M-59 and Pleasant Valley Road is not included in this application. It was included in earlier plans and shown as commercial. The property has been sold. It will be a future development at some point; there have been discussions with the owners. Typically, the commercial development is responsible for adding the buffer for an abutting residential development. The Applicant here has voluntarily added a buffer to their project. It is not listed as a Recognizable Benefit, but it is something they are truly doing voluntarily, it is a feature that is not technically required. Commissioner Grissim stated it will not cost more money; it just needs a more natural design for both the berm and the plantings. The Applicant agreed.

Lighting

Director Langer stated for commercial projects, photometric plans are required. Those standards are not typically required for a residential development. The Applicant is proposing a few streetlights at the intersections and at the entrance. The homes may have some outdoor lighting as well, but the Township does not regulate those items.

Architecture/Building Materials (Sec. 5.24)

Chair Fox stated this was discussed earlier.

Commissioner Mayer asked about the conversation with the neighbors and business owners to the south and if they were taking any additional steps as a result. The Applicant stated the farm to the south wanted to remind the developers of their harvest schedule and routine, including the rather loud grain dryers. The additional evergreen trees may help mitigate the sound a small amount but the onus will be on M/I Homes to inform their buyers of the existing conditions. They have a disclosure statement that is issued with every purchase agreement. They try to do their best to educate their future homeowners well in advance of the purchase of the home and reeducate if complaints arise.

Commissioner Mayer asked if there are measurements for the sound, how loud is it? The Applicant stated he cannot answer that question. Commissioner Mayer asked if they had considered using upgraded materials for sound blocking on the houses closest to the noise. The Applicant stated they have not.

The Planning Commission briefly discussed the noise issue. The Applicant stated he hears the concerns and will look into the decibel levels.

Director Langer explained how a complaint regarding noise from a farming operation would be handled stating under the Right to Farm Act, that farm can operate, the Township would have no authority to limit their farming practices as long as they are following the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMP) set in place by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). If there were other activities occurring, such as an auto repair shop, something not related to farming, the Township could address those issues.

Commissioner Murphy asked about the building envelopes. The Applicant explained each lot is approximately sixty (60) feet, the building envelope is approximately fifty (50) feet, there is five (5) feet to each property line or at least ten (10) feet between any kind of structure as all structures must be contained within the building envelope. Commissioner Murphy asked if that is measured wall to wall or does it include soffits and gutters. Director Langer explained these are setbacks measured from the wall of the structure; the overhang is permitted to encroach 18 inches into the setback.

The Planning Commission briefly discussed how building envelopes are used in residential construction.

Commissioner Eckman offered the following Motion:

Move to recommend approval of Site Plan/PD #25-004, the Preliminary Planned Development Site Plan for Sawyer Ridge Planned Development as outlined in the staff memorandum dated June 5, 2025.

Approval is subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The Preliminary Planned Development Site Plan for Sawyer Ridge Planned Development, SP/PD #25-004, is subject to the approval of the Township Board.**
- 2. The applicant shall adequately address the outstanding items noted in the Planning Department's memorandum, dated June 5, 2025, on the Construction Plan set, subject to an administrative review by Planning staff prior to the issuance of a land use permit.**
- 3. As part of the Final Plan Review, the applicant shall provide a Planned Development (PD) Agreement that includes any access and maintenance agreements. The documents shall be in a recordable format and shall comply with the requirements of the Township Attorney.**
- 4. Applicant complies with any requirements of the Township Engineering Consultant, Department of Public Works Director, applicable Fire Code requirements, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Livingston County Road Commission (LCRC), Livingston County Drain Commission (LCDC), and all other government agencies, as applicable.**
- 5. Applicant shall obtain applicable approvals and permits from Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Livingston County Road Commission (LCRC).**
- 6. Applicant shall obtain any necessary approvals and permits from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).**
- 7. The Applicant does not need to come back for a revised Preliminary Plan if some of the lots are eliminated due to an increase in the retention pond provided there are no changes to the walkways or roads.**

Seconded by Commissioner Michell. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Call to the Public:

Dick Krueger, Hartland Township; asked how existing residents benefit from development. He sees the negative impacts.

9. Planner Report:

Director Langer reported the Ordinance Review Committee is looking at the keeping of poultry, an issue raised by a resident.

10. Committee Reports:

None

11. Adjournment:

A Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mitchell and seconded by Commissioner Murphy. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:25 PM.

Submitted by.



Tom Murphy
Planning Commission Secretary