

**PAW PAW TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Regular Meeting – July 15, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Kerby called the Paw Paw Township Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

PRESENT: Chairman Kip Kerby, Chad Learned, Phillip Arbanas, Jim DeGroff, Ken Bowditch, Chuck Felcyn

ABSENT: Phil Hover

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed meeting agenda.

- Learned offered a motion *to approve the agenda with a change to move item 8.a (Self-Storage in HCI- Request from Brian Methner) ahead of item 6.a.*
- DeGroff supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGroff, Bowditch, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Planning Commission reviewed the draft minutes from June 17, 2025.

- DeGroff offered a motion *to approve the minutes from the meeting held on June 17, 2025, as presented.*
- Felcyn supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGroff, Bowditch, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

5. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- No general public comments.

Item 8.a moved ahead of 6.a. Self-Storage in HCI- Request from Brian Methner.

Brian Methner requested an amendment to the zoning ordinance to allow for self-storage and athletic training facilities within the HCI zoning district. Township Planner, David Jirousek, mentioned that it is common for these uses to be allowed in industrial zoning districts. The Planning Commission generally supported this idea, and Learned suggested further analysis of the parking requirements for athletic training facilities. The general consensus was for self-storage to be a permitted use and for athletic training to be a special land use in HCI. The Planning Commission asked Jirousek to prepare the text amendment with the goal of setting a hearing for the August meeting.

6. BUSINESS

a. Public Hearing and Consideration of Zoning Ordinance Amendment. Amendments to Section 5.08 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow off-site accessory buildings under certain circumstances as special land uses.

Jirousek provided a general overview of the proposed text amendment. He explained that the ordinance currently allows “off-site” accessory buildings if the accessory building lot abuts the principal dwelling lot. The historic zoning interpretation has been that lots directly across the street also qualify. The proposed amendment clarifies the current provisions and would allow off-site accessory buildings for waterfront lots that are not directly across the street and not directly abutting the principal dwelling waterfront lot. However, specific use requirements would apply, and applications must be reviewed through the special land use process.

Felcyn asked if the restrictive covenant could be lifted if a neighbor wanted to purchase the off-site accessory building lot. Jirousek said yes, but it should be clarified that a purchase should be allowable if the lot still qualifies and is approved through the special land use process. The Planning Commission also clarified that the maximum separation distance should be 100 feet between the principal and accessory lots, and that there should be no more than one complete lot between the two subject lots.

Chairman Kerby opened the public hearing.

- Andy Przbyslawski spoke in favor of the text amendment.

Chairman Kerby closed the public hearing.

- Learned offered a motion *to send a positive recommendation to the Township Board with clarifications regarding the purchase of the accessory building lot by a neighbor and the maximum separation as discussed during the hearing.*
- Arbanas supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGross, Bowditch, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

b. Master Plan. Draft review and discussion.

Jirousek provided a general overview of the master plan. The overall framework was established in this draft, but the recommendations and future land use map must be developed and refined. The Master plan will also acknowledge that public water and sewer service will not be available for the foreseeable future, and future land use categories should be defined and explained accordingly. However, the Master Plan could be updated in the future if there is a water and sewer feasibility study and development of the utility authority. At the next meeting, the Planning Commission will review the proposed land use categories and participate in a future land use mapping exercise.

DeGroff also suggested a secondary public open house meeting to further involve the public with the review of the formal draft plan. DeGroff also suggested placing signs and mailer notices to get the word out. The Planning Commission agreed and generally thought that a September timeframe would be appropriate. Jirousek suggested that the public event could be half an open house and then half a formal presentation of the proposed master plan update.

7. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

8. ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

Chairman Kerby and Bowditch provided an overview of an alternative energy training event that they attended. The group generally discussed communications between members and at meetings, as well as ways to improve communication with Township staff and officials. Further, the group discussed the pavement exemption for the AGS site plan and expressed concern that the applicant did not fully disclose all the intended uses of the site (which may have affected the decision on the pavement exemption).

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at 7:15 pm.

- Learned offered a motion *to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 pm.*
- Felcyn supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGroff, Bowditch, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

Prepared by: David Jirousek, July 16, 2025

Approved: August 19, 2025