

**PAW PAW TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Regular Meeting – March 17, 2026

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, Phil Hover, Adam Garland, Chuck Felcyn

ABSENT: None

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed meeting agenda.

- Felcyn offered a motion *to approve the agenda as presented.*
- Learned supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGroff, Hover, Garland, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Planning Commission reviewed the draft minutes from February 17, 2026.

- DeGroff offered a motion *to approve the minutes from the meeting held on February 17, 2026.*
- Garland supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGroff, Hover, Garland, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

5. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- There were no general public comments.

6. BUSINESS

a. Public Hearing and Consideration of a Conditional Rezoning Request. Kevin Prins of Excelling Leaders requests the conditional rezoning of land from Agricultural Farmland Protection (AGR) to Waterfront Area (WFR), with voluntary conditions and limitations, at 40730 62nd Avenue, Paw Paw, MI 49079 (80-14-021-027-01).

Don DeGroot presented on behalf of the applicant. He outlined the conditional rezoning request and described the voluntary conditions being offered as part of the proposal. DeGroot also provided an overview of the associated text amendment.

Chairman Kerby inquired about the proposed small accessory buildings. Kevin Prins responded that the buildings are intended for seasonal use only (summer).

Felcyn asked whether restroom facilities would be provided in the accessory structures, and Prins clarified that they would be located in the principal building.

DeGroff noted the importance of ensuring adequate fire access to the main building.

Hover expressed concern regarding the access easement serving the farm fields to the north. In response, Prins explained that the easement is located to the east of the subject property. Garland provided additional clarification regarding the easement location and tractor access serving the northern property.

Chairman Kerby asked whether the property is currently being farmed. Mr. Prins stated that the property was not farmed during the past year, which allowed for a clearer understanding of the available land area and topography. Chairman Kerby also asked about site topography, and Mr. Prins indicated that the property is relatively flat.

Jirousek explained that site-specific design and operational details would be evaluated during a future special land use and site plan review process. He further noted that the rezoning request generally meets the applicable standards and that the proposed voluntary conditions would help mitigate potential impacts associated with future non-residential uses. Jirousek explained the conditions as follows:

- Use of the subject land will be restricted to the following permitted uses:
 - Single-family dwellings, but subject to the dimensional requirements of the AGR zoning district when stricter than the WFR zoning district.
 - Minor home occupations.
 - Accessory uses or buildings.
 - Accessory dwelling units.
- Use of the subject land will be restricted to the following special land uses: nonprofit recreational, health, educational and social facilities.
- The subject land will continue to be used for agricultural purposes to the extent that it is allowed per Section 42-10.02 (A)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance and the Michigan Right to Farm Act.

Learned expressed concern regarding existing nonconforming uses on the property and how those may relate to future expansion. Jirousek acknowledged the concern and stated that a formal nonconformity analysis would be required before any future special land use application if the rezoning is approved.

Jirousek explained that both applications must be forwarded to the County Planning Commission before the Township Board considers them.

Chairman Kerby called for public comments. There were no public comments, so Chairman Kerby closed the public hearing.

- Learned offered a motion *to forward a positive recommendation to the Township Board regarding the proposed conditional rezoning request.*
- Hover supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGroff, Hover, Garland, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

b. Public Hearing and Consideration of a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment. Kevin Prins of Excelling Leaders requests an amendment to Section 42-5.05 E (1) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow the Planning Commission to waive the requirement of paved road access for special land uses in the WFR zoning district and to reduce the required setback for buildings 1,000 square feet or less.

Jirousek explained the proposed text amendment and stated that the applicant agreed with the minor change to the proposal, which would add the last sentence under paragraph (C).

- (a) The proposed site shall be provided frontage on a paved public road.*
- (b) The proposed site shall be provided direct access from the abutting paved public road. This requirement may be waived by the Planning Commission if minimal traffic is generated by the proposed use.*
- (c) A 100-foot setback shall be provided from each property line, including the waterfront, for any building larger than 1,000 square feet. For any building 1,000 square feet or less, the minimum setback shall be 50 feet.*

Chairman Kerby called for public comments. There were no public comments, so Chairman Kerby closed the public hearing.

- Learned offered a motion *to forward a positive recommendation to the Township Board regarding the proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendments.*
- Felcyn supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGroff, Hover, Garland, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

c. Consideration of the 2026 Paw Paw Township Master Plan

Felcyn asked whether the Maple City Veterans Memorial Park should be incorporated into the plan. The Planning Commission discussed its location within the Village and whether the memorial represents Township veterans.

Garland asked about the proposed commercial designation along County Road 671. Jirousek explained that the westernmost commercial area is intended to be more limited in scale. At the same time, the County Road 671 corridor is planned as a more fully developed commercial area, with emphasis on water quality protection, compatibility with adjacent properties, and minimizing impacts.

Learned asked whether the Future Land Use Map had been updated as previously directed for the west side of Threemile Lake. Jirousek confirmed that the revisions had been completed.

The Planning Commission felt that the direction provided in February was incorporated into the plan.

The Planning Commission also discussed recent interest in multi-family rental development north of the Village limits. There was no support for amending the Future Land Use Map to accommodate this type of development, citing the presence of farmland and proximity to water resources.

- Felcyn offered a motion *to approve a resolution to approve the 2026 Paw Paw Township Master Plan and recommend final approval by the Township Board contingent upon the inclusion of information concerning the Maple City Veterans Memorial Park, if determined applicable.*
- Learned supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGroff, Hover, Garland, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

7. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None

8. ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

Felcyn referenced a solar installation in Lawrence Township and expressed concern regarding the long-term effectiveness of screening over the lifespan of such projects. Jirousek noted that screening requirements typically include minimum installation standards, such as specified sizes for evergreen trees or similar plantings. The Planning Commission also discussed berming as a potential method to enhance long-term screening for solar installations.

DeGroff provided a Township Board update, noting a reduction in the Deputy Supervisor’s work hours and an opening on the County Commission.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at 7:30 pm.

- Felcyn offered a motion *to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm.*
- Garland supported the motion.
- Chairman Kerby called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).
 - Aye: Chairman Kerby, Learned, Arbanas, DeGroff, Hover, Garland, Felcyn
 - Nay: none
 - Abstain: none

Prepared by: David Jirousek, March 18, 2026

Approved: May 19, 2026