

BURT TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

July 9, 2026

The Burt Township Planning Commission was called to order by Jay Jontz on July 9, 2026, at 6:55 p.m. at the Burt Township Hall

PLANNING COMMITTEE ATTENDEES: Paul Janness, Jay Jontz, and new commissioner Bill Drushel replacing Gene Hodulik, Supervisor. Absent were Matt Landon and Allen Kozlowski.

ALSO ATTENDING IN PERSON: Jim Larson--Zoning Administrator, Ken Lane--Planning Consultant from Beckett & Raeder, Gene Hodulik-Supervisor, and Carolyn Hodulik-- Recording Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Jontz

DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Janness, supported by Jontz to approve the May 14, 2026, minutes.

MOTION APPROVED

REPORTS:

TOWNSHIP: Hodulik reported that Bill Drushel has replaced him on the Planning & Zoning Commission after 30 years as a Commissioner; Big Dump Day on June 20 was a success; June 22 all the gravel roads were brined; August 4 is primary day; getting ready for court action regarding multiple sheds on a property; after a day of heavy rain, West Burt Lake Road caved in near the Indian Road intersection and about ¼ mile of the bike trail was destroyed; chipping last year's ice storm timber debris May 6-9 and was finally hauled away June 6 & 7; Indian Point Road engineering drawings are still not complete; there will be bids for cemetery maintenance; first half property taxes have been mailed out; the 2025-2026 audit is underway (Nieland & Kosanke, Cheboygan, MI); the heavy rains caused a deep washout on the north side of Hardwood Road (Cottage Shores).

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS: Jontz reported that the P.A. Miller Shared Access Site License was tabled until the two parties either come to an agreement or take it to court.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR: Larson reported that a campground on South Extension will be asking for variances to comply with the township zoning at the July 24 ZBA meeting. The owners will then need a special use permit from the Planning Commission. He said he has received numerous phone calls but activity is low due to difficulty in finding contractors.

PLANNING CONSULTANT: Ken Lane reported that the August 26 MTA seminar for planning & zoning in Gaylord will cover renewable energy, data centers, short term rentals, & enforcing ordinances, and he plans to attend. These are particularly hot topics in the state at this time. He covered his memo regarding data centers analysis involving Saline Township, Michigan, and Sulphur Springs, Texas.

OLD BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ON DATA CENTER REQUIREMENTS: Ken Lane summarized the important points of the sample zoning ordinance language for data centers. This will be the blueprint for creating an ordinance for Burt Township. An ordinance which was adopted at the May 14, 2026, meeting for data center moratorium was discussed. Ken Lane will forward the moratorium ordinance to Hodulik to present at the August 6 township meeting for approval. He also emphasized the point that the Planning Commission should be proactive in developing the ordinance covering data centers and battery energy storage.

DISCUSSION OF BATTERY ENERGY FACILITY REQUIREMENTS: The most important requirement discussed was the fire protection ability of the Topinabee and Pellston Fire Departments. The battery facilities store the energy created by solar panels and wind turbines. The negatives for battery energy facilities are far less than those for data centers. The draft for battery storage that Ken Lane included in the packet is a very good example for Burt Township to use and modify as needed.

SHORT TERM RENTALS: Any ordinance created must have good law enforcement behind it to be effective, and this is difficult to do. Examples were provided of different methods to cap the number of rentals. In summary, this is a very difficult issue to control. Since our township has only had minimum complaints, this is a topic to monitor.

WEST SIDE TRANSFER STATION: Jontz would really like the small door unlocked all the time. Suggestion was made to unlock the door but have camera and lights to illuminate for any trespassing.

NEW BUSINESS;

MASTER PLAN 2026-2031: A better photograph of the Burt Township Hall was selected for the cover of the Master Plan.

A motion by Drushel and supported by Janness to send the proposed Master Plan to the Township Board of Trustees for final approval. The Resolution is as follows: NOW, THEREFORE, the Burt Planning Commission hereby approves and recommends the adoption by the Township Board of Trustees the 2026-2031 Burt Township Master Plan as submitted and amended at the July 9, 2026, public hearing, including all the text, charts, tables, maps, and descriptive and other matter therein intended by the Planning Commission to form the complete 2026-2031 Master Plan. The vote was 3 yeas, zero nays, zero abstain, and 2 absent. Resolution Adopted.

BRAINSTORM: Get 4 extra dumpsters for each transfer station for the 4th of July time period. Proposed Burt Township garage sale may be two weekends next June (one weekend for the east side and one for the west side), prior to Big Dump Day.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Made by Drushel, supported by Janness to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Hodulik, Recording Secretary