

Portland Township
Ionia County, MI
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Portlandtownship.org

The Portland Township Planning Commission met on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 7:00 pm at the Portland Township Hall for its final quarterly meeting of 2025 and review of a special use permit submitted by township resident Kelli Rodriguez.

Chairman Ross Schneider called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Planning Commission members present included: Ross Schneider, Mark Simon, Andrew Huhn, Michael Kolp, Julie Krzeminski, Kevin DiPiazza, and Tony Dixon.

Motion made to approve the October 16, 2025 Planning Commission minutes by Mark Simon, seconded by Mike Kolp and carried.

There were no changes to the agenda.

There was no public comment made.

Old Business: The Planning Commission revisited the current commercial zoning of the township owned property on Grand River in respect to a zoning ordinance amendment with language regarding Township owned, operated or sponsored recycling collection centers. The language of the proposed ordinance amendment was reviewed for clarity, where it was stated the proposed ordinance was reviewed and deemed legally sufficient by legal counsel, and the same agreed upon by planning commission members. The only change that was addressed as needing correction was amending the subsection letter designations from (dd) and (ee) to (ff) and (gg).

Further discussion was had about the proposed recycling collection placement which is well away from residential areas and near adjacent to Grand River for ease of access. Since the recycling units themselves, installation, and routine servicing are being provided at no cost by Ionia County, the only cost to the township would be a minor ground amendment for concrete pad placement and driveway access; the cost of which is offset by the cost savings to the township of the approximately \$24,000/year the township pays for recycling service currently that it would no longer need to pay with the new units.

It was determined that no adjustment was necessary for the R-1 [southern] portion of the township owned property along Grand River and no further ordinance amendment or recycling

language would be necessary for consideration as no recycling activity or equipment would be conducted on the R-1 zoned portion of the property.

The proposed ordinance amendment and recycling placement will be scheduled for a public hearing in March 2026.

New Business: The Planning Commission reviewed a special use application under submitted by township resident Kelli Rodriguez for a home-based business under township ordinance 3.7.03 (j) on her property at 7575 Lyons Rd. The proposed home-based business would be conducting elopement ceremonies. Kelli's 1.38 acre property borders Grand River, and ceremonies would held along the riverbank on her property. Ms. Rodriguez included in her comments that she has received very positive feedback from her surrounding neighbors regarding her proposed home-based business. The following questions were reviewed as required by township ordinance section 3.15.06(g) as part of the special use application:

- (i) Type of business: Home based business to conduct elopement marriage ceremonies.
- (ii) Hours of operation: Typically weekends with possibly infrequent weeknight evenings, 11:00 am – 9:00 pm, seasonally dependent. Ceremonies would be one to two hours long maximum including pictures.
- (iii) Number of employees: No additional employees
- (iv) Amount and type of waste (material and effluent) to be generated and the method of handling and disposing of waste: No waste expected. Materials needed for ceremony would be reusable such as pews and wedding arbors, and stored in Ms. Rodriguez's pole barn which also has a plumbed restroom facility that guests can use.
- (v) Anticipated levels of noise, odor, glare, dust, fumes, and related impacts: Small speakers for vocal projection audio only. No other impacts
- (vi) Anticipated traffic levels (customer, delivery vehicles, etc.): Minimal to none. Maximum of 50 attendees would be present on Ms. Rodriguez property for ceremonies, but Ms. Rodriguez would have attendees bussed in to minimize parking and additional traffic with plans to purchase a 16 passenger bus for such purpose.
- (vii) Sketch size, number and type of proposed outdoor business items. A property map was supplied and reviewed with the application. There would be no permanent structures or signs on the property. All equipment purposed for ceremonies would be stored in Ms. Rodriguez's pole barn when not in use.

After reviewing all applicable information and comments regarding Ms. Rodriguez's special use application, motion was made for Planning Commission approval of the special use application home based business to advance to public hearing by Kevin DiPiazza, seconded by Andrew Huhn and carried. A public hearing will be scheduled at a to be determined date.

Additional new business was discussion about data centers due to the increased number of proposed data centers in surrounding municipalities and townships and across Michigan. While the township does not have any specific requests that have been made to Portland township, several aspects of data center impacts on township resources and integrity were discussed such as: significant impacts on the existing electrical grid and additional electrical load requirements; an average of 1 million gallons/day of water needed for cooling and need for closed-loop ground water system rather than taxation on existing water sheds and sources; noise decibel limitations; environmental impact studies; additional agreements for auxiliary funding for community services, farmland conservation, fire rescue improvements; and limitation to industrial zones only. While there was no consensus in agreement or disagreement with data centers in general It was agreed that greater discussion and review of current ordinances that would need amendment to propose clarifying language specifically for data centers would be needed to safeguard township and its master plan integrity.

Lastly, the planning commission set meeting dates for calendar year 2026:

March 4, 2026 7:00 PM

June 3, 2026 7:00 PM

September 2, 2026 7:00 PM

December 2, 2026 7:00 PM

Public Comment: None

Motion to adjourn at 7:40 PM made by Tony Dixon, seconded by Mark Simon and carried.

Kevin DiPiazza
Portland Township Planning Commission Secretary