

**WEST BRANCH TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
JUNE 8, 2026 -- 7pm**

1. Chairman Brenda Shaw called the meeting to order at 7pm.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Members Present: Brenda Aldrich, Tanner Watson, Brandon Chmiko, Nellie Corrine, Laurie Beauchamp.
Three (3) members of public present.
4. Agenda: Chairman Shaw requested two additions to the agenda under New Business - Section 6 – Item B – Planning Commission By-Laws; Section 6 – Item C – Blight Ordinance. ***Motion made to approve agenda with additions made by Brandon Chmiko, supported by Tanner Watson. Motion approved.***
5. Approval of April 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes. ***Motion made to approve meeting minutes as written made by Brandon Chmiko, supported by Brenda Aldrich. Motion approved.***
6. Public Comment - None
7. Old Business –
 - A. Zoning of Sawyer – tabled until September 21 Meeting
 - B. Solar/Wind/Radio Towers, etc. – tabled until September 21 Meeting.
8. New Business
 - A. Review of Resident's February 10, 2026 letter calling attention to discrepancies in references in our Township Zoning Act in comparison with 2024 West Branch Township Master Plan. REF: Township Rural Zoning Act (PA 184 of 1943); Michigan Zoning Enabling (PA 110 of 2006); Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008); Township Planning Act, Public 168 of 1959

Mr. Greg Hardy was present at the meeting to discuss his letter regarding discrepancies in our zoning ordinance. Township Board referred his letter to the Planning Commission. Mr. Hardy provided the Commission that the intent of his letter was to advise the township of the discrepancies so that corrections can be made to alleviate confusion between the documents and update our zoning ordinance to current acts. Mr. Hardy informed the Planning Commission that the Michigan Planning Association has helpful webinars available. Planning Commission thanked Mr. Hardy for his letter and attendance at the meeting.

Ray Johnson, Zoning Administrator, provided some additional information including a copy of Skandia's Zoning Ordinance Article I – Purpose of Zoning for reference.

After discussion, ***motion made to work on current ordinances references to bring into compliance with referenced acts. Motion made by Brandon Chmiko, supported by Tanner Watson. Motion approved.*** All members should review documents provided and be ready to discuss at our next meeting. Recommendation to have ordinance reviewed by attorney after changes are made. Will need to publish after attorney's review.

B. Planning Commission By-Laws Review/Update needed. ***Motion made by Brenda Aldrich that she will work on updates to by-laws to be reviewed at next meeting before submittal to Township Board, supported by Nellie Corrine. Motion approved.***

C. Blight Ordinance – A proposed blight ordinance was submitted to the Commission by Zoning Administrator Ray Johnson for review and

submission to the Township Board for possible approval. Blight Ordinance 2026-1 submitted to Planning Commission would be similar to Forsythe Township's ordinance. Skandia's blight ordinance was also submitted for review. After discussion, one of the main needs for the ordinance was to bring property with public safety concerns in compliance (for example – buildings that are uninhabitable be addressed – removal of unsafe blight for sanitary reasons). Tanner Watson will work on the suggested blight ordinance and bring it to our next Planning Commission Meeting for review before submission to Township Board. Brenda Aldrich suggested that we research options for property owners who may be in need of financial assistance to address their property issues.

Motion made by Brandon Chimko, supported by Tanner Watson to schedule our next Planning Commission Meeting on Monday, July 6 - 7pm to address and review these New Business issues. Motion approved.

Motion made by Tanner Watson, supported by Nellie Corrine at 8pm. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted:

Laurie Beauchamp

Commission Secretary

Attachments: Skandia's Zoning Article I – page 1 & 2

Skandia Township Blight Ordinance

Proposed Blight Ordinance 2026-1

Hardy Letter dated February 10, 2026