Ford River Township Planning Commission

3845 K Rd, Bark River, MI 49807

Regular Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2026

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Keith Mineau. 7:00 pm

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by K. Mineau.

3. Roll Call

Present: K. Mineau, R. Ness, J. Church, R. Fettig, J. Hoffmeyer.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared by Planning Commission members.

6. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by J. Hoffmeyer, seconded by R. Ness.

7. Approval of Minutes

R. Fettig questioned how to obtain copies of the approved meeting minutes. J. Church informed him that the minutes had been submitted to Debi Brown, Ford River Township Clerk.

Motion to approve the minutes by J. Hoffmeyer, seconded by R. Ness.

8. Reports

A. Zoning Administrator Report – Brett Jenshak

The Zoning Administrator reported on the following matters:

- Permit for construction of a garage in the R2 district.
- Fence in the RR district to be shortened.
- Permit for residential development in the R2 district.
- Permit for a fence in the R2 district.
- Land division request from a property owner wishing to sell two acres to his brother.
- Special Use Permit request from Church Brewery to change its hours of operation to noon–10:00 p.m., Monday through Sunday.

A public hearing will be required for the Church Brewery Special Use Permit request.

Motion by J. Church, seconded by J. Hoffmeyer, to schedule the public hearing for the November 4, 2026, Planning Commission meeting.

B. Communications and Inquiries

The Zoning Administrator reported on the following inquiries:

- An R2 district property owner inquired about making arts and crafts at home and selling them online. The Zoning Administrator advised that a Special Use Permit would be required if the activity were to take place.
- A property owner wishing to construct a home and detached garage is awaiting a response from EGLE.
- An individual inquired about purchasing a home for use as an Adult Foster Care Home. The

individual was informed that a Conditional Special Use Permit would be required.

C. Civil Infractions

R. Fettig inquired about when civil infraction notices would be issued.

It was reported that four notices concerning Short-Term Rentals (STRs) had been sent out the previous month. This information was included in the August Zoning Administrator's Report.

9. New Business

None.

10. Unfinished Business

A. Ryan – CUPPAD – Zoning Ordinance Updates

Discussion continued regarding the review of township zoning ordinances, including permitted and conditional uses within each zoning district.

Topics discussed included:

- The possibility of establishing an Industrial Zoning District in the future.
- Clarification of zoning district boundaries, with the goal of following existing property lines whenever possible.
- Consideration of additional Commercial Zoning Districts south along M-35 and west along US-41.

Once the updated zoning map is completed, the Commission will continue discussions regarding possible rezoning of certain areas for commercial and industrial uses.

B. Campground Ordinance

Discussion continued regarding proposed campground regulations.

Suggestions included:

- Allowing campgrounds in Resource Production (RP) or Rural Residential (RR) districts.
- Requiring a minimum of 10 acres for campgrounds with more than five campsites, as discussed in reference to Michigan law.
- Requiring a minimum of five acres for campgrounds with fewer than five campsites. ● Allowing an additional residence on the campground property for a caretaker. ● Requiring a Special Use Permit for campground operations.

These recommendations remain under consideration as the ordinance is developed.

C. Microbrewery Ordinance

The Commission discussed proposed regulations for microbreweries.

Suggestions included:

- Allowing microbreweries in Agricultural Production (AP) or Resource Production (RP) districts. ● Expanding the definition to include the production of wine, cider, and beer.
- Allowing associated activities such as outdoor seating or gathering areas, food service, and entertainment.
- Including standards for parking, outdoor storage, and fencing.

D. Solar/Wind Ordinances

Discussion included allowing solar energy systems as an accessory use in all zoning districts.

The Commission also discussed applying standards from Michigan Public Act 233 to solar developments ranging from one acre to 500 acres.

E. Industrial District Standards Ordinance
Discussion was tabled until a later date, pending completion of the updated zoning map.

F. Data Center Ordinance

Commission members were asked to review the Michigan Planning Association (MPA) example ordinance for data centers.

G. New Zoning Application

The Commission discussed proposed additions and improvements to the existing zoning application, based on recommendations from the Zoning Administrator.

The changes are intended to provide property owners with clearer instructions and guidance when preparing site plans.

The Zoning Administrator will prepare a draft of the revised application for Planning Commission review at the November meeting.

H. Recreation Plan

Work continues on updating the Township Recreation Plan.

Only 13 responses had been received through the questionnaire posted on the Township website. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would like to see additional public input.

A draft of the Recreation Plan is expected to be available for review at the November meeting.

I. Master Plan – Section 4: Land Use and Zoning

A printed copy of Section 4, Land Use and Zoning, of the Township Master Plan was provided for review. **11. Communications**

Two letters regarding the Recreation Plan were presented for review.

12. Public Comments

None.

13. Board Comments

None.

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by J. Church, seconded by R. Ness. 8:49 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Hoffmeyer
Ford River Township Planning Commission

_____ Date Approved: _____