

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AUGUST 14, 2025**

AGENDA

PUBLIC HEARING: ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS (MUD, PUD, ETC.)

PUBLIC HEARING: ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT (SUPPLEMENTAL SETBACK, PARKING)

PRESENTATION: BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, August 14, 2025, commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Chapman, Township Board Liaison
 Philip Doorlag, Chair
 Deb Everett, Vice Chair
 Scot Jefferies
 Scott Makohn
 Alistair Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeremiah Smith

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; James Porter, Township Attorney; Leeanna Harris, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Colten Hutson, Zoning Administrator; Jennifer Wood, Recording Secretary; and approximately 7 interested persons.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Doorlag called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Those in attendance joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Doorlag inquired if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

Mr. A. Smith made a **motion** to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Jefferies **seconded the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Doorlag inquired if anyone present wished to speak on non-agenda items. No one came forward.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 24, 2025

Chair Doorlag asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes of the meeting on July 24, 2025. There were none.

Mr. Jefferies made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of July 24, 2025, as presented. Mr. A. Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING - TEXT AMENDMENTS ADDRESSING MUD, PUD, ADULT FOSTER CARE, NON-MOTORIZED AND TEMPORARY OUTDOOR EVENTS

Ms. Stefforia presented her updated staff report, dated August 14, 2025, which is hereby incorporated into the official record. Draft one of the amendments was considered in June. The amendments were set for hearing on July 24; at that meeting, the item was adjourned to the August 14 meeting.

The amendments propose changes to the Mixed Use District as a result of its application to the first MUD project. Also being presented are unrelated changes to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance regarding phasing timelines. Adult Foster Care facilities, temporary outdoor events and changes to the non-motorized facilities are also proposed.

The Planning Commission reviewed various sections of the proposed ordinance amendment. Clarifications were provided regarding language related to temporary outdoor events, drive-through restrictions for restaurants in multi-tenant buildings, and adult foster care family home occupancy requirements. Discussion included whether drive-through limitations should apply more broadly beyond restaurants and clarification that temporary events are limited to 12 days per calendar year in total.

Chair Doorlag opened the public hearing for comments. There were none.

Chair Doorlag closed the public hearing.

Mr. A. Smith made a motion to accept the text amendments as presented related to Mixed-Use Developments (MUD), Planned Unit Developments (PUD), Adult Foster Care, Non-Motorized Transportation, and Temporary Outdoor Events and forward to the Township Board of Trustees with a recommendation of adoption. Mr. Makohn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT (SUPPLEMENTAL SETBACK, PARKING)

Ms. Stefforia presented her staff report, dated August 14, 2025, which is hereby incorporated into the record. In a recent application of the supplemental setback requirement for commercial properties adjacent to residential areas, staff identified that not all permitted uses in commercial or industrial districts generate impacts that justify increased setbacks. For example, low-impact uses like office buildings may not warrant a greater setback, suggesting that specific exceptions should be incorporated into the ordinance.

In addition, minor language changes are being recommended to clarify regulations regarding parking and the storage of recreational vehicles (RVs), boats, and other vehicles in residential districts.

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendments, specifically addressing how building height affects setback requirements in commercial and industrial districts. It was clarified that for buildings exceeding 25 feet in height, the increased setback requirements still apply even when reduced by 50%, maintaining proportional height-to-setback ratios. Commissioners also discussed the applicability of these changes to the mixed-use district and confirmed they would not apply there, as mixed-use development follows its own setback standards.

Further clarification was provided regarding off-street parking regulations for one and two-family dwellings. The goal was to ensure consistent language so that exemptions from general off-street parking requirements do not override specific provisions regarding RV and boat storage.

Chair Doorlag opened the public hearing for comments. There were none.

Chair Doorlag closed the public hearing.

Mr. Chapman made **a motion** to accept the Zoning Ordinance text amendments for supplemental setbacks and parking regulations as presented and forward to the Township Board with a recommendation of adoption. Mr. Doorlag **seconded the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

PRESETATION: BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS

Ms. Rachel Walker, the Director of Permitting from NewEdge spoke to the Commission regarding standalone utility scaled battery energy storage development. Also joining Ms. Walker were her colleagues Mr. Steve Barna, the Chief Development Officer and Ms. Donna Marceau the Senior Director of Real Estate. The team was invited to provide general information on this emerging technology, its role in grid infrastructure, and to answer questions from the Commission.

Battery energy storage system facilities are large-scale, stationary battery systems that store excess energy, particularly from intermittent renewable sources like wind and solar, and then release it when demand increases. Though similar in principle to the batteries in everyday electronics, these systems are built to stricter safety standards and are considered critical infrastructure. Ms. Walker emphasized their usefulness in stabilizing the electrical grid and supporting state and local energy goals, including Michigan's targets for renewable energy and energy storage.

The team also addressed how battery energy storage system projects are developed, explaining that the process typically takes 2 to 5 years, includes land acquisition, environmental reviews, regulatory permitting, community engagement, and eventual construction. Battery enclosures resemble large steel shipping containers and produce minimal noise, about the level of a residential air conditioning unit at the property line. Safety and fire prevention are a top priority, with the company partnering with experienced firefighter consultants and complying with national fire codes. Financially, these projects can generate significant tax revenue for local communities. The systems are non-toxic, non-emitting, and largely maintenance-free. At the end of their 25-year lifespan, projects are either decommissioned and the land restored or potentially renewed through contract extensions. The companies that build these systems tend not to maintain ownership but sell to utility companies typically that have issued an RFP for a facility to be built.

The Planning Commission engaged in a wide-ranging discussion with the applicant on battery energy storage systems covering fire suppression features, utility company involvement, project timelines, site screening, decommissioning procedures, emergency response planning, and potential health and environmental impacts. Commissioners asked questions related to site safety, future industry changes, long-term ownership responsibilities, training for local first responders, and whether energy benefits would be local. The applicant provided clarifications on industry practices, including best practices for decommissioning and fire safety.

The Commission thanked NewEdge for their presentation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Doorlag opened the floor for public comment. One person came forward in opposition to the Township considering a battery energy storage system.

OTHER UPDATES AND BUSINESS

Chair Doorlag inquired if there were any other updates or business.

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Minutes Prepared: August 18, 2025

Minutes Approved: August 28, 2025