

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD JANUARY 9 8, 2026**

Agenda

Election of Officers: Chair, Vice Chair

Work Item: Miscellaneous Zoning Ordinance Amendments (draft one)

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, January 8, 2026, commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Chapman, Township Board Liaison
Deb Everett
Scot Jefferies
Alistair Smith
Jeremiah Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; Leeanna Harris, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Colten Hutson, Zoning Administrator; and approximately 16 interested persons.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Acting Chair Everett introduced the item of agenda approval. It was noted that Item 4, Election of Officers, will be removed from the agenda due to the lack of a full Planning Commission being present.

Mr. A. Smith made a **motion** to adopt the agenda as amended. Mr. Jefferies **supported the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

Planning Director Stefforia announced that the January 22 Planning Commission meeting will consist of a formal Planning Commission and public education session regarding battery energy storage systems. Confirmed speakers include representatives from the Michigan Public Service Commission, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and the Graham Institute for Sustainability at the University of Michigan.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Acting Chair Everett opened the floor for public comment on non-agenda items. One individual addressed the Commission regarding drafting an energy ordinance requesting that the Planning Commission take sufficient time, seek diverse expert input, and proceed cautiously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 13, 2025

Acting Chair Everett asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes of the meeting held on November 13, 2025. There were none.

Mr. Jefferies made **a motion** to approve the Minutes of the Meetings of November 13, 2025, as presented. Mr. A. Smith **supported the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

MISCELLANEOUS ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS (DRAFT ONE)

Director Stefforia explained that the Planning Department periodically brings forward miscellaneous text amendments as part of ongoing ordinance maintenance and per department goals shared with the Township Board annually.. These updates include housekeeping fixes (corrections and cross-reference cleanups) as well as targeted changes to address provisions that have proven unworkable during administration and development review. The main impetus, however, is to address inadequate lighting in the multi-family areas and some older commercial areas where security concerns have been raised by residents, business owners and the Sheriff's Department.

A request was received from the Legal Department, in coordination with the Sheriff's Department and Ordinance Enforcement Department to update outdoor lighting standards, especially in commercial and multi-family areas to improve safety and security. Staff noted older apartment complexes and some businesses seek increased lighting for resident/visitor safety and for security camera effectiveness. Because some older sites are nonconforming, the Township is also considering companion amendments to the general ordinance to establish minimum lighting levels where zoning cannot require upgrades.

Additionally, other changes include the following. Clarify the definition of Assembly/Convention Hall so the term applies only where a space is principally used for large gatherings, avoiding unintended barriers to small-scale entrepreneurial uses.

An amendment to allow indoor recreation uses in existing commercial/industrial buildings (e.g., skating rink, bowling, indoor recreation/health club) as permitted rather than requiring a special use process, while still requiring code/fire/parking compliance, is proposed.

Changes are proposed to reduce burdens in the Village Commercial **District** by streamlining review for additions and exterior façade changes to an administrative review level, while still requiring compliance with the village form-based code standards.

Also, allowing Assembly/Convention Hall uses in existing Village Commercial buildings as a special exception to support reuse of previously occupied event spaces is proposed, with

discussion about whether an occupancy cap is necessary and what an appropriate cap would be. Staff offered to provide historical background/minutes and prior occupancy information at the next review of the amendments.

Several corrections to ordinance references and formatting issues are proposed, including renaming/aligning section titles (e.g., “Neighborhood Commercial Overlay”), updating landscaping references to current sections, fixing outdated lighting section citations, and removing duplicated provisions.

Home occupation standards are clarified to ensure limitations apply to detached accessory structures (not attached garages), consistent with intent.

Submittal requirements are modernized by removing obsolete requirements for hard copies, mylar, CDs, or floppy disks.

Adjust vehicle/equipment display rules for dealerships and similar uses, recognizing existing conditions along Stadium Drive and aiming to avoid variances, while protecting required green space/landscaping.

Updating address posting requirements for residential addresses by adding ADUs to the listed exceptions. There was discussion as to whether other codes (fire/building) already govern address visibility; commissioners emphasized safety and requested additional coordination with the Fire Marshal/building official.

Clarify communication tower provisions to ensure consistent references to the Township’s 5G/communications standards section and remove duplicative text.

The next steps were discussed. The amendment package is intended to move forward to a public hearing (date to be determined). Staff indicated additional refinements, particularly on the address posting topic, could be made prior to the hearing as further input from public safety officials is gathered.

Mr. Chapman made a **motion** to move the discussed miscellaneous zoning ordinance amendments forward to a public hearing at the next available Planning Commission meeting, with the public hearing date to be determined. Mr. Jefferies **supported the motion.** The **motion passed** unanimously.

2026 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

The Acting Chair introduced the proposed 2026 Planning Commission meeting schedule, continuing the regular meeting pattern of the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, with exceptions in November and December.

Mr. A. Smith made a **motion** to approve the 2026 Planning Commission meeting schedule as presented. Mr. Jefferies **supported the motion.** The **motion passed** unanimously.

2025 PLANNING DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT

The Planning Commission received the 2025 Annual Report prepared by the Planning Department. Commissioners acknowledged the volume of work completed during the year and noted that the report provides a helpful summary for both the Commission and the community. Commissioners expressed appreciation to staff for compiling the report and recognized the value of documenting accomplishments and progress over the past year. It was noted that the Annual Report will be made available on the Township website for public reference.

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

Planning Director Stefforia responded to questions raised during public comment, clarifying that no application has been submitted or is under review and that discussions to date have been limited to general education and information sharing. Ms. Stefforia further clarified that she is not representing any developer and has no ongoing professional involvement with other jurisdiction or with related projects in other jurisdictions.

She reiterated that the Township's approach to this issue is education-first, including coordination with the Fire Department and regional and state-level agencies, to ensure public safety considerations are fully understood before any policy decisions are contemplated.

In response to questions about timing, Ms. Stefforia indicated that a working draft ordinance can be shared with the Planning Commission for review and discussion purposes, with the understanding that it would be clearly identified as a draft and subject to potentially significant revision as additional expert input is received. She noted that multiple iterations are expected and that version tracking and redlined changes would help maintain transparency throughout the process.

She concluded by emphasizing that the issue represents a significant and evolving land use challenge statewide, that the Township is proceeding deliberately and transparently, and that staff welcomes informed discussion as the Planning Commission and community continue to learn more.

PUBLIC COMMENT (*reopened*)

An audience member shouted out asking why additional public comment had not been taken and questioning action items on the agenda. Acting Chair Everett stated that only election of officers had been removed from the agenda when it was approved due to only 5 members being present. Stefforia reminded them that the minutes, 2026 meeting schedule and annual report were, in fact, discussed and addressed. Acting Chair Everett reopened the floor for public comment. Five individuals addressed the Planning Commission.

With no further comment, public comment was closed.

Trustee Chapman asked that a time for Planning Commissioner comments be added to the end of the agenda. There was concurrence that this should be added to future agendas.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Minutes Prepared: January 8, 2026

Minutes Approved: