

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 10, 2026**

AGENDA

PUBLIC HEARING: PRINCIPAL USE SOLAR MORATORIUM

WORK ITEM: DRAFT ONE - ENERGY SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, September 10, 2026, commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Chapman, Township Board Liaison
 Grace Engels
 Deb Everett, Vice Chair
 Scot Jefferies
 Alistair Smith, Chair
 Ron Ver Planck

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeremiah Smith

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; James Porter, Township Attorney Colten Hutson, Zoning Administrator; Leeanna Harris, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Jennifer Wood, Recording Secretary; and approximately 38 members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

At 6:00 p.m., Chair A. Smith called the meeting to order. Those in attendance joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair A. Smith explained that the Commission would consider the solar moratorium and then continue its detailed review of the draft energy-systems ordinance before receiving public comment.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair A. Smith asked if there were any additions or modifications to the agenda. There were none.

Vice Chair Everett **made a motion** to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Jefferies **supported the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF AUGUST 27, 2026

Commissioner Ver Planck requested a correction under Planning Commissioner Comments. He stated that the reference to concerns regarding the “sanitary sewer project” should instead read “opposition to any road connection to Bluffton Avenue.” The Commission agreed to the correction.

Trustee Chapman **made a motion** to approve the Minutes of the August 27, 2026, meeting as amended. Vice Chair Everett **supported the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: PRINCIPAL USE SOLAR MORATORIUM

Planning Director Jodi Stefforia presented the revised principal-use solar energy development moratorium. She explained that the revised language removed definitions that could create confusion, made clear that both applications and development would be subject to the moratorium, and closed potential gaps involving essential-service claims and hybrid solar and energy-storage projects. Accessory solar installations would not be affected.

Chair A. Smith resumed the public hearing from the table of August 27, 2026. No one spoke. Chair A. Smith closed the public hearing. Commissioners confirmed that the clean version on Packet Page 10 was the ordinance under consideration and had no further questions.

Trustee Chapman **made a motion** to approve the principal-use solar energy development zoning moratorium ordinance to forward to the Township Board for consideration. Vice Chair Everett **supported the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

WORK ITEM: DRAFT ONE - ENERGY SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

The Commission resumed its line-by-line review of Draft One of the energy-systems ordinance at Section 49.290.D. Ms. Stefforia, Attorney Porter, and the Commissioners reviewed the proposed standards for solar energy systems, wind energy systems, and energy storage systems. No final action was taken.

During review of the principal-use solar provisions, Commissioners discussed whether projects on developed or industrial sites and solar canopies over parking areas should be treated differently from greenfield or agricultural installations. Staff agreed to revisit the definition and standards for those situations in Draft Two. Attorney Porter explained that determining whether agriculture is an established land use may depend on the property's historic use, continued capability for agricultural use, and evidence of abandonment. The Commission also reviewed height, setbacks, ground cover, agricultural protection, fencing, lighting, sound, glare, signage, maintenance, and Michigan Public Service Commission requirements.

For wind energy systems, the Commission directed staff to correct a maintenance provision that referred to solar panels. Members suggested graphics to illustrate setbacks and discussed the proposed 30-hour annual shadow-flicker limit. They asked that Draft Two clarify that cumulative shadow flicker from a project must be evaluated for

nonparticipating properties and potential future development, rather than only one occupied building. The Commission also reviewed height, sound, lighting, signal interference, safety, signage, maintenance, and state-siting requirements.

Discussion of energy storage systems covered applicable codes and independent technical review; battery management and monitoring; cybersecurity; enclosures and thermal management; fire detection, suppression, and containment; and manufacturer quality assurance and acceptance testing.

The Commission also discussed geotechnical, groundwater, and air-dispersion studies; emergency response; and long-term monitoring. Commissioners emphasized that technical experts should be selected by the Township, remain independent of the applicant, and be paid through the applicant's escrow.

Commissioners requested clear requirements for ongoing cybersecurity updates and a ten-business-day response period for requested information.

The Commission asked staff to revisit the definition of sensitive land uses and the proposed 2,000-foot setback so that parks, water bodies, and other sensitive land without a building would be addressed. Members also requested a setback approach responsive to zoning and surrounding land uses so energy storage would not be unintentionally precluded from appropriate locations.

The sound standard should protect all nonparticipating properties. References to the Fire Department, emergency-plan submittals, plan-review frequency, 24-hour emergency contacts, and records filed with the Township Clerk should be made consistent.

The Commission recessed for approximately ten minutes during the review. Work concluded after the public-safety provisions, with approximately six pages remaining. Staff will incorporate the requested changes with draft two. The review will continue at a future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair A. Smith opened the floor for public comment. Fourteen individuals spoke. Topics included construction vibration, insurance, ownership, environmental impacts, social impacts, decommissioning, industrial siting, alternative sites, complaint enforcement, property values, emergency staffing, water use, groundwater, and independent review. Chair A. Smith closed public comments.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Trustee Chapman thanked the public for remaining through the ordinance review and for providing detailed information. Ms. Stefforia stated that an alternate-site analysis requirement would be restored to the next draft using Michigan Public Service Commission language. She also noted that Western Michigan University had installed a one-megawatt

energy storage facility outside the Township's review authority, although local emergency response would still apply.

OTHER UPDATES AND BUSINESS

There were no other updates or business.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Minutes Prepared: September 13, 2026

Minutes Approved: September 24, 2026