

ISABELLA COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION

July 10, 2025

A regular meeting of the Isabella County Planning Commission was held on July 10, 2025 at the Isabella County Commission on Aging Building, 2200 S. Lincoln Rd., Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kelly Bean, Tim O'Neil, , Lisa Hoisington, Russ Hyde, Kyle Camp

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ann Silker, Phillip Vogel, Adam Brookens, Bob Campbell

**SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT:** Ray Johnson, Planner/GIS Analyst  
Mackenzie Rahl, Administrative Assistant, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Bean at 6:36 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the members.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Mr. O'Neil, supported by Mr. Camp to approve the agenda.

Yes: Kelly Bean, Tim O'Neil, , Lisa Hoisington, Russ Hyde, Kyle Camp

No: None

Motion to Approve Carried

**PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Minutes of the June 12, 2025 special meeting were circulated to the members prior to the meeting for their review.

Mr. Hyde stated that there was a grammatical error on page two (2) that two sentences were missing the word "stated".

A motion was made by Mr. Hyde, supported by Mr. Camp to approve the amended minutes.

Yes: Kelly Bean, Tim O'Neil, Lisa Hoisington, Russ Hyde, Kyle Camp  
No: None

Motion to Approve Carried

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

Zoning Board of Appeals – None

Parks & Recreation – None

Board of Commissioners – None

## **TOWNSHIP CONCERNS**

Denver Township – Ms. Jackie Curtis indicated that the Township is quiet.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Opened at 6:38 p.m.

Closed at 6:38 p.m.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS – None**

## **OTHER BUSINESS (NON-PUBLIC HEARINGS)**

### **SITE PLAN REVIEW #25-07 – Miller's Post Frame – Vernon Township**

Mr. Johnson reported that in April of this year, staff received a written complaint alleging unauthorized construction and development activity on Mr. Larry Miller's property, including concerns about potential stormwater runoff impacts.

Following an inspection, staff confirmed that development had occurred without the necessary permits. Upon contact, Mr. Miller stated he was unaware that permits were required. As a result, staff directed that no further work or development take place until the appropriate permits were obtained.

Mr. Johnson noted that staff worked closely with Mr. Miller through several phone calls and in-person meetings to ensure he understood the ordinance requirements.

He reviewed both the submitted application and his staff report, noting that Mr. Miller applied for approval to construct a contractor storage building, a small office, and an area for outdoor storage. The proposed building measures 64 feet by 44 feet, with an attached office space of 8 feet by 24 feet.

The site plan includes two designated display areas for small accessory buildings offered for sale—one in a single row along the southern property line, and another to the east of the main storage building. Mr. Johnson clarified that these display areas are considered accessory to the principal use and should be limited to the locations shown on the site plan.

Given the presence of a new driveway and the location of the site along E. Pere Marquette Road—which falls under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)—Mr. Johnson emphasized that Mr. Miller must obtain MDOT approval for the driveway entrance and submit documentation to staff.

In response to the stormwater concerns raised by a neighboring property owner, staff strongly recommended that any approval be conditioned upon the submission of an engineered stormwater management plan, subject to staff approval.

Mr. Johnson also reviewed the screening requirements in the zoning ordinance. Mr. Miller has proposed a six-foot privacy fence; however, staff recommended vegetative screening as a more appropriate option that aligns with the surrounding neighborhood character. The final decision on screening rests with the Planning Commission.

Additionally, Mr. Johnson noted that signs had been installed on the property without the required permits. He recommended a condition be imposed to ensure compliance with sign regulations as outlined in the ordinance and shown on the approved site plan. No permit should be issued until full compliance is demonstrated.

In conclusion, Mr. Johnson also addressed the proposed outdoor storage area, which is located under the structure labeled “T-Shed” on the site plan. He recommended that all outdoor storage be confined to this area and that any future expansion would require the applicant to return to the Planning Commission for an amendment or new site plan approval.

He closed by stating that, with the inclusion of the recommended conditions, the site plan appears to comply with all applicable zoning ordinance requirements.

1. A driveway permit from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) shall be provided to the community development staff prior to the issuance of a permit.
2. Buildings for sale shall display as single rows as shown on the site plan.
3. Prior to the issuance of a permit, the applicant shall provide an engineered drawing for storm water management that is acceptable to the Community Development staff.
4. Screening in the form of a 6ft solid privacy fence shall be installed and maintained on the north property line beginning at the east corner of the building, continuing to the west corner of the parking lot. At no time shall any outdoor storage exceed the height of the fence

OR

4. Screening in the form of double row of staggered evergreen trees shall be installed and maintained on the north property line beginning at the east corner of the building, continuing to the west corner of the parking lot. Tress shall be a minimum of 3 feet in height and spaced no greater than 10 feet on center.
5. Prior to the issuance of any permits, the property shall be brought into compliance with Section 7.08 (signs) of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff shall verify compliance, including the removal or relocation of any signage in excess of what is permitted.
6. All outdoor storage must be fully contained within the proposed t-shed, as indicated on the approved site plan. No outdoor storage is permitted elsewhere on the property.

Mr. Bean asked that a discussion on what type of screening should be installed on this property take place before a motion is made.

Mr. Hyde asked if the property was above or below the visual level of the neighboring property.

Mr. Johnson stated that it was level to the neighboring properties.

Mr. Camp asked if there is a threshold for how many accessory buildings could be on the property.

Mr. Johnson stated that if the members approve the site plan, then the location indicated is that limit. In the future, Mr. Miller could propose additional locations by submitting an application for an expansion.

Mr. Camp asked if the trees used for screening were to die, would Mr. Miller be required to replace them.

Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Miller would have to replant any dead trees for the life of the proposed use.

Discussion on the use of the building occurred.

Mr. Hyde asked if the small buildings being sold on the property were being built on the property.

Mr. Johnson stated that they are built off the property and then are proposed to be placed on this property for retail sale.

Mr. Bean asked if fencing materials for Mr. Miller's business will be placed in the storage building.

Mr. Johnson stated that it's likely, and the T-Sheds purpose is proposed to be for additional outdoor storage.

General discussion on permitting process.

Mr. Camp asked what makes the stormwater management plan acceptable to staff.

Mr. Johnson stated that it is acceptable upon review and with an engineer's stamp.

Mr. Bean stated that he has no problem with a privacy fence instead of trees for screening.

Mr. Johnson explained that privacy fencing is out of the norm when commercial development is adjacent to agricultural property. He stated that previous conditions made by the members on other agricultural properties throughout the county required vegetative screening. He indicated that vegetative screening is more harmonious with the character of the surrounding properties in this case.

Mr. O'Neil and Mr. Camp indicated they would like to see trees used as screening.

General discussion on fences and vegetative screening.

Mrs. Hoisington and Mr. Hyde agreed with Mr. O'Neil and Mr. Camp.

Mr. Bean called for a motion.

A motion was made by Mr. Camp to approve Site Plan Review 25-07 (SPR#25-07) as submitted by Larry Miller to construct a 44' x 64' and 8' x 24' contractor and office building and other site developments in the Restrictive Agricultural (AG-1) district. The approval shall be conditioned upon the following:

1. A driveway permit from the Michigan department of transportation (MDOT) shall be provided to Community Development staff prior to the issuance of a permit.
2. Buildings for sale shall be displayed as single rows as show on the site plan.
3. Prior to the issuance of a permit, the applicant shall provide an engineered drawing for storm water management that is acceptable to Community Development staff.
4. Screening in the form of a double row of staggered evergreen trees shall be installed and maintained on the north property line beginning at the east corner of the building, continuing to the west corner of the parking lot. Trees shall be a minimum of 3 feet in height and spaced no greater than 10 feet on center. An amended site plan showing the screening shall be submitted and approved by Community Development staff.
5. Prior to the issuance of any permits, the property shall be brought into compliance with section 7.08 (Signs) of the zoning ordinance. Staff shall verify compliance, including the removal and/or relocation of any signage in excess of what is permitted.
6. All outdoor storage must be fully contained within the proposed T-shed, as indicated on the approved site plan. No outdoor storage is permitted elsewhere on the property.

The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Neil.

Mr. Bean called for further discussion.

Hearing no discussion, Mr. Bean called for a vote.

Yes: Kelly Bean, Tim O'Neil, Kyle Camp, Russ Hyde, Lisa Hoisington

No: None

Motion to Approve Carried

#### **Site Plan Review #25-08 – Reuben Luthy – Isabella Township**

Mr. Johnson reviewed his staff report and the application submitted by Reuben Luthy. He indicated that Mr. Luthy submitted a Site Plan Review application for two 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> buildings. He stated that one is located on Parcel C and one on Parcel D shown on the attached site plan.

Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Luthy is proposing to construct these buildings without a defined tenant or use at this time. He stated that once Mr. Luthy identifies a tenant a separate site plan review application will be required for the change of use.

Mr. Hyde asked if there needed to be an address at this time.

Mr. Johnson stated that there does not, however one will be required prior to the occupancy of either building. He also stated that staff will require Mr. Luthy's well and septic approval for the buildings prior to occupancy.

Discussion on permitting process.

Mr. Johnson stated that staff has reviewed the site plan and it appears to meet all ordinance requirements with the inclusion of recommended conditions:

1. A site plan review permit application shall be submitted and approved prior to establishing a use in either of the new buildings.
2. A copy of well and septic permit/approval shall be provided to staff prior to establishing a use in either building.
3. The applicant shall obtain an address for each building prior to establishing a use in either building.

Mr. Hyde asked if Mr. Luthy would be responsible for the maintenance of property until there is a tenant.

Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Luthy would be responsible for maintenance until the building is occupied.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the letter sent Mr. Luthy earlier in the week.

Mr. Camp asked when a road would be approved for this property.

Mr. Johnson stated all three properties are serviced by Luthy Dr., a private road that was approved and constructed several years ago. He indicated that parking areas, dumpsters, etc. will be reviewed when Mr. Luthy applies to establish a use in the buildings.

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Bean called for a motion.

A motion was made by Mr. O'Neil to approve Site Plan Review 25-08 (SPR#25-08) as submitted by Reuben Luthy to construct two (2) 50' x 100' empty industrial in the Light Industrial (L-I) district. The approval shall be conditioned upon the following:

1. A site plan review permit application shall be submitted and approved prior to establishing a use in either of the new buildings.
2. A copy of well and septic permit/approval shall be provided to staff prior to establishing a use in either building.

3. The applicant shall obtain an address for each building prior to establishing a use in either building.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Camp.

Mr. Bean called for further discussion.

Hearing no discussion, Mr. Bean called for a vote.

Yes: Kelly Bean, Tim O'Neil, Kyle Camp, Russ Hyde, Lisa Hoisington

No: None

Motion to Approve Carried

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – Opened at 7:16 p.m. Closed at 7:16 p.m.

**STAFF COMMENTS –**

Mr. Johnson thanked the Board Members for their flexibility for this evening's meeting.

**PLANNING COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS –**

Mr. Hyde asked when the next meeting will be.

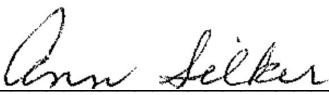
Mr. Johnson stated that it will be in October for the regular meeting unless there is a special meeting request by an applicant.

Discussion on the Mission Road Solar Farm construction progress.

Mr. O'Neil thanked the members.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Bean adjourned the meeting at 7:18 PM



Ann Silker, Secretary

Mackenzie Rahl, Recording Secretary