

ISABELLA COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

April 9, 2026

A regular meeting of the Isabella County Planning Commission was held on April 9, 2026, at the Isabella County Commission on Aging Building, 2200 S. Lincoln Rd., Mt. Pleasant, Michigan immediately following the organizational meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kelly Bean, Tim, O'Neil, Steve Swaney, Phillip Vogel, Kyle Camp, Russ Hyde, Adam Brookens, Lisa Hoisington

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ann Silker

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT: Tim Nieporte, Community Development Director
Ray Johnson, Planner/GIS Analyst
Mackenzie Perkins, Administrative Assistant, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Bean at 6:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the members.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Vogel supported by Mr. Swaney to approve the agenda.

Yes: Kelly Bean, Kyle Camp, Adam Brookens, Lisa Hoisington, Steve Swaney, Phillip Vogel, Russ Hyde, Tim O'Neil

No: None

Motion to Approve carried.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the January 8, 2026 organizational meeting were circulated to the members prior to the meeting for their review.

A motion was made by Mr. Swaney, supported by Mr. O'Neil, to approve the organizational minutes from January 8, 2026.

Yes: Kelly Bean, Tim, O'Neil, Steve Swaney, Phillip Vogel, Kyle Camp, Russ Hyde, Adam Brookens, Lisa Hoisington

No: None

Motion to Approve carried.

Minutes of the January 8, 2026 regular meeting were circulated to the members prior to the meeting for their review.

A motion was made by Mr. Vogel, supported by Mr. Camp, to approve the regular minutes from January 8, 2026.

Yes: Kelly Bean, Tim, O'Neil, Steve Swaney, Phillip Vogel, Kyle Camp, Russ Hyde, Adam Brookens, Lisa Hoisington

No: None

Motion to Approve carried.

LIAISON REPORTS

Zoning Board of Appeals – Mr. Vogel stated that the Zoning Board elected the same officers. He also stated that the meetings will be held quarterly on the third Wednesday of the month at 9am at the Commission on Aging Building at 2200 S. Lincoln Rd., Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

Parks & Recreation – None

Board of Commissioners – Mr. Swaney stated that the Board will be holding a meeting next Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 10am at the Commission on Aging Building at 2200 S. Lincoln Rd., Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. He also stated that there will be a meeting at 1pm to follow for goal setting.

TOWNSHIP CONCERNS

Denver Township – Mrs. Jackie Curtis stated that Denver Township will be celebrating their 150-year anniversary. She stated that the event will happen on the last weekend of September.

Sherman Township – Mr. Richard Schmidt stated the Village Manager for Lake Isabella has resigned and Jessica will be taking over duties until a new Village Manager is hired.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Opened at 6:04 p.m.

Closed at 6:04 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARINGS –

Special Use Permit #26-01 – Hopewell Ranch – Sherman Township

Mr. Johnson stated that the special use application is to operate a Public and Institutional Use (Hopewell Ranch – Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Facility.) Mr. Johns stated that staff meet with Jodi Stuber where Jodi gave back ground on the property. Mr. Johnson stated that the Ranch has been operating since 2007. He also stated that after further discussion and research it was found that the Ranch was operating without prior land use approval and that multiple building and structures were built without permits.

Mr. Johnson stated that the request for approval to establish the property as a Public or Institutional Use and to construct a 60-foot by 120-foot office, banquet, and therapy building were received on March 12, 2026. Mr. Johnson went over the applications details once more with the Board.

Mr. Johnson informed the Board that if the application were to be approved that the staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Existing Buildings and Cabin Use

The applicant shall obtain inspections from the Building, Electrical, and Plumbing/Mechanical inspectors for all existing structures constructed without permits. Any deficiencies identified shall be corrected, and all required permits shall be obtained to bring structures into compliance with applicable codes.

2. Large Events

The property shall not be used as a commercial event venue open for rental by the general public. Events conducted on the property shall be limited to those organized and hosted by Hopewell Ranch. Private rentals for weddings, receptions, reunions, open houses, or similar events are expressly prohibited.

3. Parking

All required parking shall be provided off-street in accordance with Section 5.11 of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant shall maintain sufficient on-site and approved off-site parking to accommodate large events, consistent with the submitted plan. The applicant shall implement measures to prohibit parking within the public road right-of-way.

4. Overflow Parking Agreement

Use of the adjacent property for overflow parking shall be permitted only with written authorization from the property owner. Documentation of such authorization shall be maintained. If such authorization is revoked, the applicant shall provide an alternative parking solution in compliance with the ordinance requirements.

5. Road Commission Approval

Review and approval from the Isabella County Road Commission shall be obtained to verify that site access, including driveway design and capacity, is adequate for the proposed use and event traffic.

6. Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control

The applicant shall obtain a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control permit for any earth change activity in accordance with Part 9I prior to construction.

7. Well and Septic Approval/Permits

The applicant shall obtain well and septic permits for the proposed building. Approval from the Central Michigan District Health Department shall be obtained for all sanitary facilities serving the site, including accommodations for cabins and event attendees. The proposed commercial kitchen shall receive all required permits and approvals from the Health Department, and documentation shall be provided to the county.

8. Hours of Operation

The Planning Commission authorizes 24-hours operation solely for the purpose of accommodating overnight stays associated with the approved use. Events and organized activities shall generally occur between the hours of 6:00 am and 9:00 pm., unless otherwise approved by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Johnson indicated that there has been an electrical permit pulled for the cabins that were built without permits. He stated that Mrs. Stuber is working toward getting the Ranch into compliance. He also stated that 6 letters of support were turned in to staff before packets were mailed out and 6 more letters of support were turned into the office after packets were mailed out and one more was given to the members prior to the meeting starting.

Mr. Brookens asked if the inspections were going to happen now or later.

Mr. Johnson stated that it would be now.

Mr. Camp asked if the inspections to the current buildings need to be inspected prior to the new building being built.

Mr. Johnson stated it will be a parallel process.

Mr. Camp asked if there were any letters of support from any adjacent neighbors.

Mr. Johnson stated that there was.

Mr. Hyde also stated that he was impressed with the knowledge and information the applicant gave the neighbor.

Mr. Johnson stated that a neighbor came into the office with questions and after the discussion were also in support of the Hopewell Ranch but did not provide staff with a written letter of support.

Mr. Bean asked if the applicant wanted to speak.

Jodi Stuber discussed the back ground of the property. She stated that their services have expanded and they are out growing the space. She also stated that this can make for year-round services to the kids they help in the summer time. Mrs. Stuber informed the Board that there are 4 (four) porta johns on site that comply according to the health department. Mrs. Stuber reviewed the certifications for volunteer staff at the ranch. Mrs. Stuber also told the Board that they will get all permits that are required.

Public Hearing opened 6:28 p.m.

Mr. Richard Schmidt stated that Sherman Township has no objections. He also stated he is an adjacent property owner and is in support of the Ranch.

Public Comment closed at 6:29 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Hyde to approve Special Use Permit Number 26-01 (SUP#26-01) as submitted by Jodi and Tyrone Stuber to establish a Public and Institutional Use (Hopewell Ranch – Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Facility) and construct a 120 ft x 60 ft office, banquet and therapy building in the Agricultural Buffer (AG-3) district. The approval shall be conditioned upon the following:

1. Existing Buildings and Cabin Use

The applicant shall obtain inspections from the Building, Electrical, and Plumbing/Mechanical inspectors for all existing structures constructed without permits. Any deficiencies identified shall be corrected, and all required permits shall be obtained to bring structures into compliance with applicable codes.

2. Large Events

The property shall not be used as a commercial event venue open for rental by the general public. Events conducted on the property shall be limited to those organized and hosted by Hopewell Ranch. Private rentals for weddings, receptions, reunions, open houses, or similar events are expressly prohibited.

3. Parking

All required parking shall be provided off-street in accordance with Section 5.11 of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant shall maintain sufficient on-site and approved off-site parking to accommodate large events, consistent with the submitted plan. The applicant shall implement measures to prohibit parking within the public road right-of-way.

4. Overflow Parking Agreement

Use of the adjacent property for overflow parking shall be permitted only with written authorization from the property owner. Documentation of such authorization shall be maintained. If such authorization is revoked, the applicant shall provide an alternative parking solution in compliance with the ordinance requirements.

5. Road Commission Approval

Review and approval from the Isabella County Road Commission shall be obtained to verify that site access, including driveway design and capacity, is adequate for the proposed use and event traffic.

6. Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control

The applicant shall obtain a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control permit for any earth change activity in accordance with Part 9I prior to construction.

7. Well and Septic Approval/Permits

The applicant shall obtain well and septic permits for the proposed building. Approval from the Central Michigan District Health Department shall be obtained for all sanitary facilities serving the site, including accommodations for cabins and event attendees. The proposed commercial kitchen shall receive all required permits and approvals from the Health Department, and documentation shall be provided to the county.

8. Hours of Operation

The Planning Commission authorizes 24-hours operation solely for the purpose of accommodating overnight stays associated with the approved use. Events and organized activities shall generally occur between the hours of 6:00 am and 9:00 pm., unless otherwise approved by the Planning Commission.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Swaney.

Mr. Brookens asked if the building do not pass inspection will they need to be torn down.

Mr. Nieporte stated that if the building is deemed uninhabitable we will direct them on the steps to be compliant.

Mr. Camp asked if public events need to have special permits. He also asked how do you limit someone events.

General discussion on temporary permits and special use permits.

Mr. Swaney stated that the events shouldn't be limited to just the three events.

Mr. Hyde stated that the limitation is that the event is only held by Hopewell Ranch. Mr. Hyde read the stipulation and feels it is adequate.

General discussion on what the center is permitted to do versus complaints and enforcements to control unauthorized activities.

Mr. Vogel stated that the application is high quality and addresses all concerns.

Mr. Swaney stated that the application was very thorough.

Mr. O'Neil stated that it meets requirements.

Mr. Bean asked why limitations for events.

Mr. Nieporte stated that there are separate temporary permits required for events outside of what is being requested.

Mrs. Stuber stated that other events that have been discussed are not part of their cause and will not be having large events like weddings, graduations, etc.

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

Yes: Kelly Bean, Tim, O'Neil, Steve Swaney, Phillip Vogel, Kyle Camp, Russ Hyde, Lisa Hoisington

No: Adam Brookens

Motion Carried.

Other Business (Non-Public Hearings)

Special Use Permit #26-01 – North Country Metals – Vernon Township

Mr. Johnson informed the board of the building size correction on the staff report. He stated the building is 120 x 64 ft. Mr. Johnson reviewed his staff report for a Site Plan Review application for a 120 x 64 ft inventory storage building. He stated that the proposed building addition is location on the western parcel and will be attached to the existing building.

Mr. Johnson stated that the primary use of North County Metals is commercial, the Planning Commission previously approved limited manufacturing activities as part of the 2017 site plan approval. Mr. Johnson stated that the proposed building is intended solely for storage.

Mr. Johnson stated staff provided the Board with a site plan checklist of ordinance requirements for their review.

Screening shall be installed and maintained within the western required setback, extending from the southern edge of the proposed building to the northern edge of the existing building, where adjacent to the residential use. The screening shall consist of a staggered double row of evergreen trees planted no more than ten (10) feet on center. All plantings shall have a minimum height of three (3) feet at the time of installation.

Mr. Johnson stated that the screening is not an option and is required to be installed and staff is of the opinion that the application meets all requirements of the ordinance with the recommended condition.

Mr. Bean asked if the applicant would like to speak.

Mr. Johnson informed the Chair that the applicant was not in attendance.

A motion was made by Mr. O'Neil to move to approve Site Plan Review 26-01 (SPR#26-01) as submitted by Victor Graber for North County Metals to construct a 120-foot by 64-foot accessory building to be used for inventory storage in the General Commercial (C-1) district. The approval shall be conditioned upon the following:

Screening shall be installed and maintained within the western required setback, extending from the southern edge of the proposed building to the northern edge of the existing building, where adjacent to the residential use. The screening shall consist of a staggered double row of evergreen trees planted no more than ten (10) feet on center. All plantings shall have a minimum height of three (3) feet at the time of installation.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Vogel.

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

Yes: Kelly Bean, Tim, O'Neil, Steve Swaney, Phillip Vogel, Kyle Camp, Russ Hyde, Adam Brookens, Lisa Hoisington

No: None

Motion Carried

Site Plan Review #26-02 – DTE Energy – Isabella Township

Mr. Nieporte introduced Kyle O'Meara, attorney hired by Isabella County, to assist staff.

Mr. O'Meara discussed conflict of interest. He also explained that he called each member to identify any potential conflict of interest. Mr. O'Meara informed the Board that both Mr. Vogel and Mr. Bean both had similar conflict of interests as they did back in 2019 when the Isabella Wind special use application and public hearing was held by the members. Mr. O'Meara recommended Mr. Vogel and Mr. Bean step outside for agenda item Site Plan Review #26-02 – DTE Energy – Isabella Township.

Mr. Vogel and Mr. Bean left the room at 6:48 pm after Mr. Bean gave the gavel to Mr. O'Neil as Vice-Chair.

Mr. Johnson stated that the applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for turbine component maintenance and storage laydown yard. Mr. Johnson stated that the purpose of the use is to support ongoing operation and maintenance activities associated with the existing Utility Grid Wind Energy Conversion System. Mr. Johnson stated that the site is not intended to function as

a salvage yard of for the permanent storage of dismantled or abandoned equipment. Mr. Johnson reviewed the history of the Isabella Wind Energy Project from 2019.

Mr. Johnson stated that the equipment and materials storage will be limited only to the Isabella Wind Energy Project. He also stated that if the site plan were approved, the materials will be limited exclusively to the areas indicated on the approved site plan.

Mr. Johnson stated that the staff recommends a condition requiring that any equipment determined to be inoperable or beyond repair be removed from the property within sixty (60) days. He also stated that the staff recommends that the Planning Commission require a detailed description of the measures that will be implemented to prevent the release of oil, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, and similar substances, as well as the procedures to mitigate potential environmental contamination.

Mr. Johnson informed the board that staff requested screening between the northern and western property boundaries and the proposed improvements. Mr. Johnson indicated that the proposed berm does not extend across the full width of the western boundary. Mr. Johnson informed the Board that staff recommends that approval be conditioned upon the installation of a continuous berm along the entire western extent of the proposed improvements where screening is required.

Mr. O'Meara reviewed the difference between a Site Plan Review and Special Use Permit and discussed the standards for site plan review approval. Mr. O'Meara also reviewed the resolution to approve with conditions and the resolution to deny the application. Mr. O'Meara also explained the difference of performance conditions and conditions required prior to construction.

Mr. Swaney discussed his concerns on the storage of new blades or repairable blades.

Mr. Camp asked if the blades would be stored where they were shown on the Site Plan.

Mr. Swaney expressed concerns that the application reads for a longer term for storage of blades.

Mr. Nieporte stated that the conditions the staff put into place will resolve these concerns and discussed the related conditions and storage locations.

Discussion on blade storage and maintenance tracking with Zoning Permits.

Mr. Camp asked if vehicles could be stored on the property.

Mr. Nieporte stated at this time there is no vehicle storage proposed, however, when working on blades or gravel loading/unloading there may be vehicles onsite.

Mr. O'Meara discussed complaint-based compliance.

Mr. Nieporte explained that the escrow received under the special use permit for the Isabella Wind Energy Project is earmarked for compliance and enforcement. He also stated purpose of this escrow account so there is no cost taxpayers for enforcement and it is replenishable if used. He informed the Board that it protects the Community against long term costs.

Discussion on turbine lighting.

Mr. Hyde expressed concern about spillage prevention and if the berm is to protect the drain and flood plain.

Mr. Nieporte stated the berm is for screening purposes. He informed the Board that any potential leakage or spill was a concern of staff and is mitigated by receiving a copy of a detailed plan to prevent and mitigate environmental concerns.

Mr. Hyde asked if the applicant needs to have a detailed plan before work is done or is it an ongoing situation.

Mr. Nieporte stated the plan is required prior to submission.

Mr. O'Meara discussed the for a spill situation.

Mr. Brookens asked how high the applicant can store material.

Mr. Nieporte stated that they material is will be stored on the ground and the berm will screen the material.

A motion was made by Mr. Swaney to adopt the proposed resolution approving Site Plan Review #26-02 subject to conditions.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Brookens.

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Bean called for a roll call vote

Tim, O'Neil – Yes
Steve Swaney – Yes
Kyle Camp – Yes
Russ Hyde – Yes
Adam Brookens – Yes
Lisa Hoisington – Yes

Motion Carried

Mr. Vogel and Mr. Bean were brought back to the meeting at 7:32 pm and the gavel was passed back to Mr. Bean.

Notice of Master Plan Distribution (Various Gratiot County Michigan)

Mr. Johnson indicated to the members that a notice of public hearing was received from several municipalities within Gratiot County. Mr. Johnson stated that it was for the public to provide an opportunity for interested citizens to express their views on the Gratiot Countywide Master Plan to be adopted. Mr. Johnson stated that staff will send a letter to Gratiot County informing them of the review and any comments the members have.

The members had no comments.

Osceola County Master Plan Adoption

Mr. Johnson indicated to the members that a notice that the Osceola County Master Plan was officially approved by the Osceola County Planning Commission on November 4, 2025. Mr. Johnson stated no action is required by the Planning Commission at this time.

Chippewa Township Notice of Intent

Mr. Johnson indicated that a notice of intent was received from Chippewa Township which indicated the Township would be amending their Master Plan. He also informed the members that once an amended plan was received from the Township, he would ensure it would be on a future agenda for their review and comment.

Lincoln Township Farmland Agreements

Mr. Johnson indicated that four (4) applications to the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program were received. He stated that one of the applications had an incorrect Tax ID but was corrected. He indicated the applications appeared to be complete and would send a letter back to Lincoln Township appraising them of the review.

Union Township Farmland Agreements

Mr. Johnson indicated that one (1) application to the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program were received. He indicated the applications appeared to be complete and would send a letter back to Union Township appraising them of the review.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Opened at 7:37 p.m.

Closed at 7:37 p.m.

STAFF COMMENTS – None

PLANNING COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Hyde thanked Tim Nieporte and team addressing the DTE concerns and their diligent work.

Mr. Nieporte stated it is his job to protect the community. Mr. Nieporte informed the Board he and Mr. Johnson will be going to Detroit Monday to visit BESS to see and understand the impact of a built site and one under construction.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bean adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ann Silker", written in black ink. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ann Silker, Secretary

Mackenzie Perkins, Recording Secretary

From: [Jodi Stuber](#)
To: [Ray Johnson](#)
Subject: Fwd: Letter of Support
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2026 11:02:45 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **brian Lownsbery** <lownsbery34@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 18, 2026 at 1:07 PM
Subject: Letter of Support
To: <jodistuber@hopewellranch.org>

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in strong support of Hopewell Ranch and its efforts to build a new facility that will expand its ability to serve individuals in need.

Through my personal experience with Hopewell Ranch, I have witnessed firsthand the powerful impact it has on those who come through its programs. The ranch provides a unique environment of peace, structure, and connection that is difficult to find elsewhere. It is a place where individuals can step away from the noise of daily life and begin to heal—mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Programs such as Project Solomon have been especially meaningful, offering veterans and others a space to reconnect, reflect, and rebuild. The combination of community, purpose, and faith-centered support creates lasting change that extends far beyond the time spent on the ranch.

As the need for these services continues to grow, expanding the facilities is not just beneficial—it is necessary. A new building would allow Hopewell Ranch to reach more people, provide additional programming, and deepen the level of care and support offered to each individual.

I believe strongly in the mission of Hopewell Ranch and the lives it is changing every day. Investing in this expansion is an investment in healing, restoration, and hope for countless individuals and families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brian Lownsbery

To whom it may concern,

March 13, 2026

My name is Beth Abbott, and I am a retired Marine, 3-time Combat Veteran of nearly 22 years of active-duty service in the United States Marine Corps. I have served all over America and the globe. I retired on June 30, 2025, as a First Sergeant. I am originally from Blanchard, Michigan and I reside in Stafford, Virginia where I share custody of my two kids, who are my whole world.

I heard about HopeWell Ranch about 9 months ago, when a family friend started volunteering there and I knew I had to get over there and get involved the next time I came home to visit. I can come home once a month for a week at a time now since retiring and it feels amazing to have that freedom of movement. Recently in February, I was able to attend the Veterans group called Project Solomon on Tuesday mornings from 9:30am until 12:30pm. It was so impactful and powerful, just being in a room of like-minded people, veterans of all ages. We were able to break bread, eat some amazing food and open up to one another, because that safe space fostered an environment where we could take off our armor and feel a bit free and safe with one another. After that, we were walked over to the horse area where two amazing women led us through some equine therapy with three different horses and that not only got our minds flowing, but it opened us up to talking about our feelings and as you know that is something most veterans are not fond of. There was also a licensed psychologist there as well and between her and the Equine EAGALA trained certified professional, they were able to lead and guide us through a series of very important, tough questions to start a process of what I like to call learning how to struggle well, which I learned from Boulder Crest Foundation. I believe with the right program and certified training they could implement a program for veterans called "Post Traumatic Growth" or PTG, and they could further their outreach and studies in helping veterans and their families with their every day life struggles.

Project Solomon is a spot-on, much-needed program that has already helped so many veterans and their families. If HopeWell Ranch had more resources and spaces for veterans and their families to gather, I truly believe this would grow bigger and reach more people. Right now, some people drive 3 hours to be there, learn and grow for a 4-hour session, so the need and want is there! There is a massive need for a bigger facility, a larger kitchen to accommodate the needs of this amazing program and an added-on banquet hall to this larger facility to help service and support the veterans and their families. Right now, what they have is a small room where barely 12 veterans could fit in there comfortably and eat together without touching elbows. The importance of this program is huge, and the greater need is right now and here.

RECEIVED

APR 13 2026

Subject: Letter of Support for Hopewell Ranch Zoning Request

INSPECTION DEPT.

Sherman Township Planning Commission
Isabella County, Michigan

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support for the zoning request submitted by Hopewell Ranch to expand their services within Sherman Township.

Over the past three months, I have had the opportunity to engage directly with the leadership team and experience their facility firsthand. What stands out immediately is the clear alignment between their mission, their programming, and the environment they have created. Their work is intentional, thoughtful, and grounded in providing meaningful therapeutic support for veterans and children.

On a personal level, my experience at Hopewell Ranch has been impactful. The environment they have cultivated offers a unique space for reflection, connection, and healing. The presence of horses, combined with the care and professionalism of the team, creates an experience that is both powerful and restorative.

From a professional perspective, as a faculty member in the College of Business at Ferris State University specializing in event management and experiential design, I recognize well-executed operations when I see them. Hopewell Ranch demonstrates strategic thinking, strong leadership, and a clear understanding of how to deliver services that meet real community needs. Their approach reflects both operational discipline and genuine care for those they serve.

From a land use standpoint, the proposed expansion is both appropriate and compatible with the surrounding environment. The nature of equine-assisted therapy inherently requires open space, thoughtful site planning, and a setting that supports calm, low-impact activity. The current operations reflect respect for the land, controlled use of space, and a clear awareness of how to operate responsibly within a rural township context. I am confident their expansion will continue to align with these principles, minimizing disruption while enhancing the value of the property and its incredible contribution to the community.

The proposed expansion represents an opportunity to extend these services to a broader population, addressing critical gaps in support for vulnerable groups in the Isabella County region. Equally important, I have full confidence in this team's ability to manage that growth responsibly, maintaining the integrity of their mission while being thoughtful neighbors and community partners within Sherman Township.

I fully support this zoning request and believe it will have a positive and lasting impact on the surrounding community. I am also personally committed to supporting their efforts through my professional expertise in event management as they continue to grow.

RECEIVED

APR 6 2026

INSPECTION DEPT.

To all whom ask;
What is HOPEWELL Ranch

As a new person discovering the fine folks @ H.R., this is a place of Safety, Serenity, Comradery, all while tailoring Equine therapeutic Equestrian therapy, as well as project Solomon, a Veterans of all ages program offered Every Tuesday.

The Ranch itself specializes in K-12 programs that teach folks respect and have lots of fun while learning.

When able to build the new facility they will be able to widely expand their offerings with a suitable kitchen, dining, class rooms, offices, for all volunteers to have plenty of room for growth.

Sincerely, Jeffrey Steffen
Veteran USAF

RECEIVED

APR 1 2026

INSPECTION DEPT.
To Isabella County,

I am writing as a student and volunteer to share how Hopewell Ranch has personally impacted my life. I first learned about the ranch through a professor who encouraged our class to complete volunteer hours. While there were many organizations to choose from, Hopewell Ranch immediately stood out to me, and I am so grateful that it did.

From my very first day, the staff welcomed me with kindness, encouragement, and genuine care. While I primarily work with the animals, I have also been able to witness the powerful connections that are formed at the ranch, especially among veterans and members of the community. Seeing people come together, laugh, and support one another has shown me just how meaningful this place truly is.

Hopewell Ranch has also become a place of comfort and peace in my own life. College can be overwhelming, filled with stress, responsibilities, and personal challenges. There have been many times when I've needed a break from everything, and Hopewell has given me that space. It is somewhere I can go to reset, breathe, and feel grounded again.

As someone who experiences anxiety, even coming to the farm alone can sometimes feel difficult. But the moment I arrive; I am greeted with warm smiles and genuine conversation that immediately put me at ease. That sense of welcome is not just something I experience, it is something that everyone who comes to Hopewell Ranch feels. No one is overlooked or judged. It is a place where people are truly valued and supported.

Hopewell Ranch has made a lasting impact on me, and I am incredibly thankful to be a part of it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name, possibly "M. Smith" or similar, written over a vertical line of text.

RECEIVED

APR 1 2026

INSPECTION DEPT.

To whom it may concern,

My name is Janel Egbert. I wanted to share some awesome things about Hopewell Farm. For starters, the entire staff is always welcoming. When my daughter Brooklynn began unbridled potential, she was a sad little girl and through the bond with her assigned horse she has built trust and joy. Her mentors have helped her to build confidence and friendship. Hopewell treats her like family.

The staff also support our Veterans! The need for support has outgrown the lodging. We are all hoping to see some expansion for our Veterans and our community! Hopewell gives light and hope to those who need or want it.

Hopewell is an amazing resource for our community. They offer many opportunities both young and elderly. The staff put on a fun farm fair free to the community, getting us together. We are grateful for all they offer!

Thank You, Janel

March 20, 2026

Dear Isabella County,

My name is Tracy Palmer and I live in Mt. Pleasant. Almost five years ago I caught COVID-19 and became very ill. I never seemed to get better. I was then referred to a heart and lung specialist who ran every test he could to figure out what was wrong with me. He finally took me in for a heart catheter. I never left the hospital and immediately went into a 5-bypass heart surgery. It took me a very long time to recuperate. Becoming very anxious and depressed. Not wanting to even leave my house, because it was just too much for me to handle emotionally and physically. As of 2023 I have been on disability and in 2024 moved to the Mt. Pleasant area. A good friend of mine introduced me to her sister who at the time worked for HopeWell Ranch. Coming from a horse and farm background from childhood, I immediately felt at home at HopeWell. The staff let me do what I could to build up my strength and confidence. I suffered greatly from anxiety and PTSD. The first time I went into the pasture with the horses, they really helped me by just being there and giving me that unconditional love. I started to get stronger as time went by purely by being with the horses and the staff of the ranch. The ranch personnel treat me as family and uplift me in my troubled times. I started to work more behind the scenes of all the wonderful events we have for the community and programs for the children in Isabella County. Along with our Project Solomon veteran program that I have recently started helping with. I see the passion and the vision at the ranch and want to help build that dream. I now work through AARP SCSEP program and have become the office manager at HopeWell Ranch and love every moment of it. Without HopeWell I believe I would have not gotten better. This ranch has truly saved my life.

Sincerely,
Tracy Palmer