

Helena Township Planning Commission Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes
Thursday, October 02, 2025 @ 5:00pm
8751 Helena Road, Alden, Michigan 49612

Call to Order: Chair Jim Gurr called the meeting to order at 5:02pm

Pledge of Allegiance: All in room participated.

Roll Call: Present – F. VandenBerg, J. Gurr, D. Hunstad, M. Robinson, G. Schafer, J. Schilling and D. Whipple.
None Absent.

Township Officials Present: Butch Peeples, Oryana Leffew and Bob Logee

Approval of Agenda: J. Schilling motioned to approve agenda and D. Hunstad seconded.
Motion approved.

Conflict of Interest: None

Approval of September 04, 2025, Minutes:

D. Whipple motioned to approve minutes and J. Schilling seconded. Motion approved.

Communications:

- The commission acknowledged receiving communications from residents regarding RVs.
- There will be no Antrim County Planning Commission meeting in October due to a lack of agenda items.

Public Comments:

- Paul Sak commended the commission for correctly following legal procedure by holding a second public hearing for ordinance 5.02.01 and requested a review of procedures for ordinance 5.02.02.
- Gary Mayes addressed the concept that if a “use” is not explicitly mentioned in the zoning ordinance, it is permissible. Citing a Supreme Court ruling which clarifies that, in Michigan, “uses” not explicitly listed in a zoning district’s permitted “use” section are generally disallowed. He emphasized the importance of this understanding for the commission, as it could impact future issues.

New Business:

- Bob Logee, Zoning Administrator, shared the September 2025 zoning activity report.

Public Hearing: Ordinance 5.02.01:

At 5:10pm the regular meeting was temporarily closed to open a public hearing on Ordinance 5.02.01

- Paul Sak spoke to correct the minutes from the August 25, 2025 meeting. Paul clarified his original point was not about permitting two dwelling units on a single lot, but questioning the logic of allowing two separate, non-waterfront lots to share access via a single 100-foot waterfront lot. He argued that this still constitutes funneling by doubling the potential number of people, boats and docks on a standard 100-foot lot, which is inconsistent with the R1 zoning standard of one dwelling per lot.
- During the commission’s discussion, it was clarified that the ordinance applies only to vacant waterfront lots. Once a primary residence is built on the waterfront lot, the shared access for two back lots would be eliminated.

Helena Township Planning Commission Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes
Thursday, October 02, 2025 @ 5:00pm
8751 Helena Road, Alden, Michigan 49612

Commission Action of 5.02.01:

- Following the close of the public comment section, the commission discussed the ordinance. F. VandenBerg motioned and D. Whipple seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. The ordinance will be presented to the Helena Township Board on October 9, 2025 and to the Antrim County Planning Commission in November 2025.

The commission meeting began again at 5:21pm.

Announcements:

- The next Helena Township Planning Commission meeting is Thursday, November 6, 2025.
- Chair, J. Gurr, encouraged commission members to subscribe to Mary Riley's planning and zoning news email service. An email with details has been sent to members.

Adjourn: F. VandenBerg motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:24pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fay M. VandenBerg, Helena Township Planning Commission and Zoning Secretary