

Holly Township
Planning Commission – Regular Meeting
Minutes of June 11, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chair Kerton called the regular meeting of the Holly Township Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. Located at the Holly Township Offices (Upstairs), 102 Civic Drive, Holly, Michigan 48442

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Members Present

Ray Kerton
Ben Armstead
Chuck Stoner
Leslie Jorgensen
Michael McCanney
Derek Sommer

Members Absent

Glen Mitchell

Others Present

Karin Winchester, Clerk/Zoning Administrator
Alexis Farrell, McKenna & Assoc.
Paige Smith, McKenna & Assoc.
Doug Smith, NOCFA Deputy Chief
Chip Schultz, Michigan Renaissance Operating
Manager

- **Motion by Commissioner McCanney to excuse Glen Mitchell. Supported by Commissioner Armstead. A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion carried 6/0.**

AGENDA APPROVAL

- **Motion by Commissioner Sommer to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Commissioner Kerton. A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion carried 6/0.**

PUBLIC COMMENT: For items on the agenda only.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: Special Land Use Application by the Michigan Renaissance Festival to operate a Festival and other Events on parcel number 01-12-476-002 and 01-12-401-003 in an AGRE. Zoning District.

- **Motion by Commissioner Stoner to open the public hearing. Supported by Commissioner Sommer. A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion carried 6/0.**

No Public Comment.

- **Motion by Commissioner Jorgensen to close the public hearing. Supported by Commissioner Sommer. A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion carried 6/0.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 09, 2025

- **Motion by Commissioner Sommer to approve the minutes as presented. Supported by Commissioner Armstead. A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion was carried 6/0.**

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Special Land Use Application by the Michigan Renaissance Festival to operate a Festival and other Events on parcel number 01-12-476-002 and 01-12-401-003 in an AGRE Zoning District.

Township Planner Alexis Farrell presented her June 3, 2025 Michigan Renaissance Festival Planners Review to the commission in detail and noted that the Festival is working very closely with the Township, the Fire Department and the Building Inspector to correct Festival building and fire code issues. The Building Inspector has a very extensive list of requirements they are required to complete by August 1, 2026. They provide the township, the planner and the fire department status reports on a regular basis.

The fire department does an annual report at the end of the Festival. During the Festival, the department has at least two people full-time on-site, doing fire watch and catching issues as they occur.

The Festival is very good at taking care of the items that are more operational and happening during the Festival. The bigger items we put into a report that we give them every year. It is broken down into infrastructure items, and then on things that occur on an operational basis. This year, we had 10 major categories of items. One of the big items is increasing the water supply. They do not have the water supply that is required.

They need enough water to adequately supply the site which will provide an adequate, orderly and safe evacuation of people which will be done through several methods. They have a 25-year-old 30,000-gallon water tank that they have committed to replacing. In addition, they have committed to installing one five-hundred-gallon fire hydrant well this year and a second one before the Festival in 2026. With a new water tank and well hydrants there will be enough water supply to have a proper emergency response

We estimate that there could be 22,000 to 25,000 people on-site at a time because people come and go all day. We designed access in our plan for 32, 000 to 35,000 people and how to

get them evacuated. They are required to install the kind of gates which are called stadium gates that swing open and to have people manned at each gate to get people out. In an emergency people must be directed to these gates so they are not sent back to the main entrance.

They have replaced the main gate at first aide, the gates at 100, 300 buildings and at the 700 Fire Lane. They purchased the material to do 3 more gates this year and will replace the rest of the gates in 2026. The majority of the fire departments' requirements are planned to be done by August 1st this year, but some will linger through the season and then a few items into 2026. We agreed last year that the drop dead to complete all building and fire related issues is August 1, 2026. From a fire department's standpoint, we believe there is a plan in place that will take care of it.

The commitments this year are much stronger than in past years. There are concrete solutions that are being proposed that will meet the intent of codes and safety standards.

- **Motion by Commissioner McCanney to approve the special use requests for the operation of the Michigan Renaissance Festival at 12600 Dixie Highway, Holly, MI 48442 subject to the eight conditions outlined in the Planner's report dated June 3, 2025, on the findings of fact that:**
- **The operation of the site will be harmonious and in accordance with the general and specific objectives of the Township master plan and will be compatible with the natural environment based on the site design and operational regulations put in place by the Festival.**
 - **The site is designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and will not change the essential character of the area.**
 - **The site and operation are not hazardous or disturbing to existing or future nearby uses based on the landscape buffering and operational regulations such as parking management put in place by the Festival.**
 - **The site and operation are compatible with adjacent uses of land and will promote the use of land in a socially and economically desirable manner, based on the landscape buffering and operational regulations such as parking management put in place by the Festival.**
 - **The site and operation are served adequately by essential public services and facilities that the Michigan Renaissance Festival provides and facilitates**

through contracts with the Oakland County Sheriff's Office, and services provided by the North Oakland County Fire Authority and Groveland Township Fire Department adequately any such service or facility.

- **The site and operation will not create excessive additional public costs and will not significantly decrease property values of surrounding properties, based on the continuing investment into the site and its long-standing history in the Township.**
- **The site and operation meets all the requirements and standards of the Holly Township Zoning Ordinance and other applicable laws, standards, ordinances, and/or regulations.**

Supported by Commissioner Armstead. A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion was carried 6/0.

2. **Site Plan Application by the Michigan Renaissance Festival to operate a Festival and other Events on parcel number 01-12-476-002 and 01-12-401-003 in an AGRE Zoning District.**
 - **Motion by Stoner to approve the Site Plan Motion to approve the site plan for the Michigan Renaissance Festival at 12600 Dixie Highway, Holly, MI 48442 based on the plans dated April 1, 2025. Supported by Commissioner Sommer. A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion was carried 6/0.**

REPORTS – No Reports.

PUBLIC COMMENT - No Public Comment.

ADJOURNMENT – Vice Chair Kerton adjourned the meeting at 7:21 pm.

Karin S. Winchester, Clerk