

Holly Township
Planning Commission – Regular Meeting
Minutes of April 8, 2026

CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Mitchell 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

ROLL CALL

Present: Glen Mitchell, Michael McCanney, Ben Armstead, Ray Kerton, Chuck Stoner, Derek Sommer and Leslie Jorgensen.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Alexis Farrell Rodriguez, Planner and Clerk Winchester.

The audience included Jake Van Boxel, a principal planner with McKenna, who introduced himself as someone who will be helping Alexis with site plan reviews and planning to allow her to focus on the zoning ordinance update. Jake has about a dozen years of experience and previously served as city manager, village manager, and planning director for multiple communities across Michigan.

AGENDA APPROVAL

- **Motion by Commissioner Kerton to approve the April 8, 2026 agenda. Supported by Commissioner Sommer. A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion carried 7/0.**

PUBLIC COMMENT – For Items on the Agenda Only: None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 11, 2026.

The March 11, 2026 seemed to be intermixed with February 11, 2026 minutes. Clerk Winchester will revise for approval next month.

The Commission took no action.

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Holly Township Zoning Ordinance Diagnostics for Review and Discussion.

Alexis presented an update on the zoning ordinance rewrite, explaining that the anticipated adoption date remains November 2026. She noted that bringing Jake Van Bockel on board would help free up her schedule to focus on the ordinance update, as the township has become increasingly busy with casework.

The ordinance update focuses on several key areas: modernization of outdated provisions, filling procedural gaps, adding reasonable waiver and concession options (particularly for parking requirements), and aligning the ordinance with the master plan. Alexis emphasized that the current ordinance lacks flexibility for planning commissioners to provide reasonable waivers when circumstances warrant them.

The rural town center concept, which has been in the master plan since 2016 and was reaffirmed in the 2024 update, generated extensive discussion. Commissioner Stoner expressed concerns about the practical implementation of sidewalk requirements, particularly the 8-foot width specification. He noted that requiring such wide sidewalks creates significant financial burdens for businesses, citing examples where properties would need to install sidewalks that connect to nothing due to neighboring state land and utility substations.

Commissioner Mitchell suggested focusing on specific areas like Grange Hall Road and Fish Lake Road where continuous pathways could be established, rather than piecemeal installations. He emphasized the need for grant funding and coordinated township-level planning to make pathway networks viable.

The commission discussed the pathway master plan map, which shows proposed connections throughout the township. Alexis explained that the ordinance currently requires pathway installation or payment in lieu when certain triggers occur, such as major site plan amendments. This payment-in-lieu system allows the township to collect funds for future pathway construction in areas where immediate installation doesn't make sense.

Commissioner Sommer raised concerns about the decades-long timeline for pathway development and questioned whether requiring immediate payments for infrastructure that may never materialize is fair to property owners. The commission expressed interest in exploring more incremental approaches that could be adjusted as development patterns become clearer.

Commissioner Armstead emphasized the importance of clarity in ordinance language, noting that current regulations are often difficult for average property owners to understand, leading to confusion and unexpected requirements during the approval process. He stressed the need for regulations that welcome businesses while still achieving the township's planning goals. Alexis confirmed that the updated ordinance will use "lean zoning" principles to eliminate confusing language and make requirements clearer for both applicants and planning commissioners. She plans to bring a draft ordinance to the commission hopefully next month.

2. Proposed Planning Commission By-Laws Amendment.

The Commission took No Action.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Application from Michael Issac 329 Beaver Run, Holly, MI 48442 for Preliminary Site Condominium Approval for Meadowview Estates, Parcel ID# 01-22-476-007.

Alexis presented the preliminary site plan for a 6-unit site condominium on approximately 15 acres. The property had previously received conditional rezoning approval that limited development to 6 units and ~~required~~ a conservation easement along the frontage. The development will utilize well and septic systems, with units arranged to preserve mature trees along Fagan Road.

The site plan review revealed several technical issues that need resolution before final approval. The Oakland County Road Commission recommended relocating the driveway for unit 6 to move it further from the Grange Hall Road intersection for safety reasons. The conservation easement, while offered by the applicant, has not yet been formally recorded and needs to be properly documented.

Commissioner Sommer questioned the property boundary configuration between units 4 and 5, which takes an unusual turn to accommodate the existing silos and provide adequate driveway access. The commission confirmed this design serves practical purposes and makes sense given the site constraints.

Commissioner McCanney noted an error on the site plan cover sheet that references the Clinton River instead of the Shiawassee River, and questioned flood plain notations that appeared to be copied from another project. These will need correction in the final submittal.

Extensive discussion occurred regarding tree preservation and landscaping requirements. The township has tree preservation standards that may require a detailed tree survey if significant trees are to be removed. The commission noted that much of the site contains lower-quality vegetation that property owners would likely want to clear anyway. The conservation easement will help preserve the most significant trees along the road frontage.

The pathway requirement generated significant debate. Under current regulations, the development would need to either install pathways or make a payment in lieu. Several commissioners questioned the wisdom of requiring pathway payments for infrastructure that may never connect to anything, given the rural location and lack of nearby development. Ben Armstead expressed particular concern about collecting money from developers for sidewalks that may never be built or used, calling it unfair to property owners.

The commission discussed the policy implications of the pathway requirements, with some members suggesting that master plan amendments might be needed to create more realistic and

incremental pathway development strategies. Commissioner Sommer noted that requiring large payments for infrastructure spanning decades of potential development seems problematic. Commissioner Stoner pointed out that requiring 8-foot pathways to nowhere, particularly in areas where connections are unlikely for many years, creates unrealistic financial burdens. The commission expressed interest in exploring more flexible approaches that focus on areas where pathway connections are more immediately viable.

Despite concerns about pathway policy, the commission found the overall site plan well-designed and appropriate for the location.

- **Motion by Commissioner McCanney, seconded by Commissioner Sommer to grant preliminary approval of the site condominium encompassing 6 residential units on parcel ID 01-22-476-007, per the conditional rezoning agreement dated September 10, 2025, contingent on the following conditions being addressed before final approval: 1) notation of all trees to be retained and determination of compliance with landscaping requirements and whether replacement is required; 2) identification of the 3.04 acre conservation easement area on unit 1 per the agreement with no clearing of existing vegetation except for appropriate access; 3) proposed driveways must be acceptable to Oakland County Road Commission and minimize disturbance to the conservation easement; 4) existing silos and barn foundation must be mitigated appropriately per the township engineer and building official; and 5) safety path requirements must be met. . A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion carried 7/0.**

REPORTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ADJOURNMENT

- **Motion by Commissioner Sommer to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Commissioner Armstead. A voice vote was taken. All present voted yes. The motion carried 7/0.**

ADJOURNMENT – Commissioner Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 8:06 pm.

Karin S. Winchester, Clerk