

YATES TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING FINAL MINUTES  
August 26, 2025 5:30 P.M. ET

1) The meeting was called to order by Chair Grier at 5:32 p.m.

2) Roll Call attendance was as follows:

Present:, Commissioner Amy Ellis, Secretary Blair Evans, Commissioner Kyle Green (late 5:43p.m.), Chair Chris Grier, Commissioner Beulah Guydon and Commissioner Linda McClure.  
Absent: YTB Rep. & Ex-officio Shawn Coffey.

A quorum was established.

3) The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

4) Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Ellis to approve the agenda as written, seconded by Secretary Evans.

Discussion to change by Chair Grier to remove 6.d and 6.e as application was withdrawn

Motion to approve agenda with changes passed by unanimous voice vote.

5) Information from the public for items on the agenda:

Jeff Ray commented on 1) governing fair and equitable transparency, 2) Idlewild Lot Owners Association and Lessee Lake County Merry Makers, 3) neighborhood around Idlewild Lot Owners building. That included conflict of interest and full information on plans and process.

Nicolette McClure commented on timelines, not invited to meetings, ownership of property.

Tammy Hamilton Ray commented on the organizational structure of applicant organization and relationship between organizations. Questions on plans for renovation and on combining of parcels. Nature of quiet neighborhood. Duration of construction and timelines.

Ilan Shabazz asked questions on process for information exchange.

Geraldine Walker asked about public vote on the issue.

Kyle Grier commented on misnumbering in published notice. Transparency with Lot Owners and Merry Makers and conflict of representing both applicants.

Ms. Wade commented on the rezoning for the application that was withdrawn.

6) New Business

Chair Grier thanks workgroup for rubrics.

a. Review of Evaluation Rubrics for Idlewild Historic Sites, rezoning, PUD

Chair Grier begins walkthrough of Idlewild Historic Sites rubric.

Secretary Evans explained that the rubric only contains content from the zoning ordinance.

Chair Grier recessed the meeting to confer with Zoning Administrator and township attorney about severity of error in published notice.

Chair Grier reconvened and indicated that the attorney couldn't be reached.

Secretary Evans recused himself from the conversation due to being on the Board of the Lake County Merry Makers who is one of the applicants. He left the commissioners table.

Chair Grier moved to go forward with the hearing and consider the issue there. Seconded by Commissioner McClure.

Chair Grier asked Secretary Evans to leave the room during the vote and the hearing. Secretary Evans reminded the chair that he is doing administration of the zoom meeting which could only happen in the room.

Commissioner Ellis suggested delaying to correct the error.

Commissioner Guydon suggested delaying to be accurate.

Chair Grier recessed the meeting to confer with the Township attorney on the topic being discussed.

Chair Grier reconvened the meeting.

Chair Grier withdrew the motion with consent from the second, Linda McClure.

Motion to withdraw the motion passed by a vote of 5 yes, 0 no, no abstentions by voice vote.

Chair Grier indicated that the attorney advised that this happens all of the time and it is 50/50 as to what the PC decides. He indicated that it is not a material error as there is only one section 4.02. He suggested asking the applicant what their preference was.

Chair Grier asked the applicant, Denise Bellamy, if it would be her desire to continue with the hearing. She replied yes.

Chair Grier made a motion to continue with the hearing. There was no second.

Commissioner Guydon moved to reschedule the hearing to a date in the future as soon as possible, second by Commissioner Ellis.

The commissioners discussed a possible date of September 22. Chair Grier asked the applicant if she was available on September 22. She indicated no.

Motion to reschedule to a date to be determined passed by a vote of 5 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions by voice vote.

- f. Presentation, deliberation and decision on Preliminary Plan for PUD for Parcel 15-008-048-00

Chair Grier asked Secretary Evans to rejoin the commission for the evaluation of the rubric.

Chair Grier begins a review of the PUD rubric. He indicated that there are multiple phases and the first phase with a preliminary plan is to get feedback from the commissioners prior to the development and submission of a final plan.

Secretary Evans indicates that he is a member of the applicant, so he is going to shift from being a planning commissioner to a member of the public to present this to the planning commission, while continuing to do zoom administration. He left the commission table.

Acting Zoning Administrator Johnson presented the findings of fact for the preliminary application. He indicated that this is the first PUD that the township has considered.

The applicant Historic Idlewild Preservation Society represented by Blair Evans presented the preliminary plan to the commissioners.

Chair Grier asked for a definition of Solidarity Economy. Blair Evans gave a reference for further details and a short definition with examples.

Chair Grier asked about manufacturing durable goods and what digital fabrication is. Blair Evans described digital fabrication and the use of local renewal resources like industrial hemp to manufacture things including housing and recreational equipment. He described capability and collaborations with other institutions to gain control of "making our own stuff" in Idlewild. He described his knowledge and expertise in the field and the application of these technologies to impacts of self-determination, self-reliance and resilience at community level.

Commissioner Guydon asked how members of the community can benefit. Blair Evans indicated that there are several ways. Those who are interested can participate in living wage jobs, but also as worker owners of businesses. Also training in workforce skills and business skills. Further, even if you don't directly work or train there the more money people in the community make and have the more they can spend for products and service in the area so other local businesses benefit. In addition the youth camp will serve to allow young people to gain these skills for lifelong use. That along with the exposure to college level activities and behaviors will allow young people to see a wide range of possibilities for themselves before they get a limited mindset.

Commissioner Ellis asked about infrastructure, especially sewer vs septic. There was a discussion of tradeoffs and the nature of professional engineering and design. There was also a question about tax breaks and Mr. Evans indicated that there are no tax exemptions being requested.

Commissioner Green asked how the co-ops are chosen and what the timeline for the project is. Mr. Evans responded that there are several co-ops that will be operating the center. There are others that are already defined to produce things like housing, furniture, recreational equipment, etc. The expectation is that many additional co-ops will be ones that people in the community think of and can be established using the capabilities of the hub. In terms of timeline we would like to break ground before winter. If not then right after. To be completely built out with 5 years but to be in substantial operation within a year. Mr. Evans discussed the strategy of building the facilities, etc. ourselves as early as possible so that those investment or earned dollars can circulate within the community instead of immediately leaving the community to outside firms.

Chair Grier move to make Commissioner McClure the recording secretary while Secretary Evans is not active as a commissioner, second by Commissioner Guydon.

Motion passed by a vote of 5 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions by voice vote.

Chair Grier resumes completing the rubric / checklist. He has recorded consent to items through D. on page 1. During further items it was discussed that the township planned to contract with a Planner, on recommendation from the attorney, to evaluate the technical details of the final plan when submitted. Mr. Evans noted that the Yates Township Master Plan doesn't include a future land use plan to guide decisions in this area. Commissioner

Green suggested signage details in the final plan i.e. Ferris State University signage - especially for any signs outside the buffer zone.

Chair Grier asked that the Supervisor and board look at the cost of extending the sewer line to this location.

Chair Grier asked about any smell of industrial hemp and if it is similar to marijuana. Mr. Evans responded to the difference and the natural dissipation that would happen with the layout. He also addressed smell and waste from the digital fabrication and indicated that they operate in office environments without objections. There was further discussion on ecology and responsible management of waste.

Chair Grier and Commissioner Ellis asked about impact on neighbors. Mr. Evans responded that the buffer zones and the layout will avoid disturbing neighbors and the supervision in the licensed and accredited camp avoids disruption by youth campers.

Commissioner Guydon asked about who was eligible to participate. Mr. Evans indicated the full range from local to international people can and will participate. There will be a wide range of costs from free to professional level.

Commissioner Ellis moved to move the preliminary application forward, second by Commissioner Green.

Motion passed by a vote of 5 yes, 0 no, no abstentions by voice vote

g. Review of Evaluation Rubrics

Secretary Evans rejoined the meeting.

Commissioners reflected on utility of rubrics.

Secretary Evans discussed Rezoning rubric. Commissioner Guydon spoke to the objective nature of the rubrics in general. Secretary Evans discussed PUD rubric.

Commissioners reflected on the use of the rubric during this meeting.

7) Public Comment: according to the Planning Commission bylaws

Dr. Fenobia Dallas commented on impact on property values, electric, water table, air quality, traffic, noise from camp, wandering campers, unintended consequences.

Ilan Shabaz claimed apparent contradictions in application and misunderstanding by commission. Expressed concerns about job training and level of project in the small community of Idlewild.

Nicolette McClure commented that she hates change and didn't hear any comments from agency review. Claimed lack of transparency and that some people get and other people can't - like growing reefer or having an agricultural district. Need to be consistently right will all people. Incomplete projects can be blight.

Kyle Grier commented that the PUD should be listed in the publication of the notice.

8) Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by Chair Grier at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted



Acting Secretary Blair Evans