

YATES TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING FINAL MINUTES
September 23, 2025 5:30 P.M. ET

1) The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Guydon at 5:31 p.m.

2) Roll Call attendance was as follows:

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

A quorum was established.

3) The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

4) Approval of the Agenda

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

Change by Commissioner Evans to correct a typo on the agenda on items 6.a and 6.b from 43-15-233-001-00 to 43-15-223-001-00. The correct information was on the published hearing notice.

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

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

Secretary Evans made the following statement:

Chair, I need to disclose a conflict of interest. I serve on the board of Lake County Merry Makers nonprofit, which is an applicant in this matter. Because of this, I will not participate in the deliberation or vote on this proposal. I am recusing myself and ask that the minutes reflect this.

I will step away from the commission table during discussion of this item to avoid any appearance of influence.

I am here in my capacity as a board member of Lake County Merry Makers, not as a planning commissioner, and will not take part in commission deliberation or voting on this matter. I will provide factual information as needed.

Commissioner McClure stated:

I am Linde McClure and I will be recusing myself when we discuss the parcel on the Lot Owners Association. I live within 300 feet of the project so I will be stepping away when we get to that portion of this agenda.

Vice-Chair Guydon asked the public for any information that they have or concerns that they have.

Mrs. Mildred Kyles asked about money given to the township for the two projects. Asked if owners in Idlewild Terrace #4 had been notified by mail. Commented on concern of conflict for Blair Evans to part of the agenda since he is on the agenda. Also conflict with two proposals presented.

Tama Hamilton Ray commented that all proposal for projects be heard in a fair manner as there have been past instance where that was not the case.

Kyle Grier expressed a concern that Blair Evans is on many boards and other directors of the Lot Owners and Merry Makers can present a proposal to prevent conflict of interest.

Monet McClure Rabb asked about the ability to make comment at the hearing.

Nicolena Stubbs commented that McClure and Evans have already recused themselves.

Ilan Shabaz claimed that Secretary Evans should not have been in the room at the last meeting. She claimed that at the last meeting Shawn Coffey sent an official resignation letter to the board and there was no reinstatement by the township board, that it was confirmed by the township that his resignation had been submitted, and was told that zoning board bylaws were not available.

Secretary Evans indicated that the item that he recused himself from hasn't come up yet so he returned to comment. First there is only special land use application on the agenda, not two. Second there was no resignation submitted by Shawn Coffey to his knowledge and as Secretary he would have been informed.

Ex-officio Shawn Coffey commented that he does want to step down but he hasn't yet and won't until there is someone to fill his place (Coffey stepped away from the microphone so the rest was too quiet to capture). He repeated that he hasn't stepped down.

Vice-Chair Guydon clarified the rules for comment.

Ilan Shabaz claimed that the Supervisor Kurt said that there was a text message from Coffey to the board members stated that he resigned.

Ex-officio Shawn Coffey left the meeting.

Jeff Ray commented on concern for transparency – construction, adjoining of parcels, change in zoning. Need to know what the changes mean for people near the area.

Colleen Carrington commented that she doesn't understand the way that things are happening. She expected to hear information on what was being requested, an explanation of it, and receive feedback on it. We need to hear what it is before we can make a decent comment.

Commissioner Ellis clarified that the Commission is still on item 5 information from the public and not yet on the Special Land Use item.

Dana Joubert commented that she wanted to get information. For information to be available to the public prior to a vote.

Commissioner Ellis made a comment that the commission can't deliberate or vote on the Special Land Use application as there will not be a quorum. She would like to get the hearing information as that is what people came for.

Vice-Chair Guydon closed public comment.

Vice-Chair Guydon moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Secretary Evans.

Vice-Chair Guydon asked that people take their concerns to the board.

Secretary Evans stated that the packets of information for the two business items have been in the Clerks office for weeks and the notices where in the paper, on the door and on the website.

The point of the hearing is to unpack that information, discuss what it is about through the Zoning Administrator and the applicant then get input on it after that. There were no problems with notification of property owners. It would make sense to allow the zoning administrator to present 6.c and 6.d the text and map amendments to the zoning ordinance and get input from the public on those. The basic information has been available and if there is a need after the public hearing with input then the commission can consider delaying a vote but the topic hasn't even been opened yet. He argued against adjourning the meeting because we haven't even opened the hearing to be able to disclose the information and to get the public input.

Commissioner Ellis noted that there is a quorum for 6.c and 6.d.

Commissioner McClure discussed that it is only fair for homeowners who made special trips here to get information for the applicant to speak to them and explain the process and vision, it is only fair. Can we at least have the applicant explain as she is on zoom? She felt that it is only fair for them to have information and specifics because some people did fly in and drive in town specifically to find out about this particular project. We may not be able to vote on it today but at least give them that honor. If Denise can be put back on zoom I think we owe that to them to get some type of description because this was tabled at the last meeting and we did not get to hear from her at all. Commissioner Ellis agreed.

Vice-Chair Guydon withdrew her motion to end the meeting, second by Commissioner Ellis.

Motion to withdraw passed by unanimous voice vote.

Vice-Chair Guydon indicated in response to Commissioner McClure's comment that people should send a request for additional information if more is needed above that which has been available. It isn't possible to proceed with the hearing on 6.a because the commission would not have a quorum.

6) New Business

Public hearing on Text and Map amendments to Zoning Ordinance

Vice-Chair Guydon indicated that there are 5 text amendments to the zoning. She asked Secretary Evans about newer information that came from the attorney. Secretary Evans indicated that Supervisor Johnson could speak to that.

Vice-Chair Guydon indicates that we will open a hearing for item 6.d on text and map amendments to the ordinance.

There was discussion about the number of copies of the proposal for the audience, many don't have copies.

Secretary Evans placed the amendment proposal on screen for the audience in the room and those on Zoom.

The Supervisor indicated that copies aren't able to be made at that moment. Secretary Evans reminded that these packets have been available in the Clerk's office for weeks.

Vice-Chair Guydon indicates that there are many inconsistencies, questions and concerns that have happened tonight. We cannot give you copies tonight and that puts you at a disadvantage.

Motion by Vice-Chair Guydon to close the hearing, second by Secretary Evans for the sake of discussion.

Secretary Evans explained that from a process point of view the information was noticed and available in the Clerk's office up to and including today. The Supervisor made copies for what he expected as audience size and the actual audience is larger. It is viewable on the screen and if someone's eyesight is poor then perhaps they can use or share one of the paper copies in the room. If everything has to be 100% perfect then nothing will ever get done. It is an inconvenience however the information was and is available, the legal process was followed, and he circulated many copies in the room so if people want to share those that can work. It is not perfect, but it is not a material error to shut down the process of moving forward. One person's opinion.

Vice-Chair Guydon states that with all of the issues that have occurred tonight the commissioners aren't prepared to move forward successfully and efficiently with c & d.

Secretary Evans asked if there are any inconsistencies with c & d that have occurred?

Vice-Chair Guydon states that she is looking at the entire tone of the meeting.

Secretary Evans offers that one of the challenges is that the audience can set the tone at any point in time. So if folks want to obstruct any progress and the standard is that if the tone is unpleasant with people representing things which may be accurate or inaccurate, then we will never get anything done because folks will just shut down the meeting. We must consider whether the concerns are a) valid and b) are material. We have a responsibility of also getting business done.

Commissioner Ellis commented that she picked up the information from the Clerk's office over a week ago and we can't have a & b due to a lack of quorum but we have a quorum for c & d and it is important and straightforward.

Motion to close the hearing passed 4 yes, 1 no.

7) Public Comment: according to the Planning Commission bylaws

Dr. Fenobia Dallas commented that putting information on the website would help.

Susan Matous commented that it is unfortunate that the information wasn't able to be made available at the hearings to address the comments that were being made without any knowledge of the information. And speaking out of turn is disruptive and causes community division.

Mrs. Kyles claimed that the same name appears on both items and is a conflict. Asked if people in Idlewild Terrace #4 had been notified. Suggested studying conflict of interest. And get parliamentarian. Also had a funding question.

Dana Joubert commented to piggyback on what Susan Matous said. There are people who want more than the general information and want it broken down. Some made special arrangements in the hope of really having that explained. Disappointed to not have been able to hear the information.

Ilan Shabaz indicates that she would like to file a FOIA request for applications that have been submitted for variations such as this that have actually been denied but we are looking to move so quickly on a special land use and change in zoning and a change in zoning ordinances which to my understanding Blair himself actually wrote those ordinances. So if there are individuals, which I know there are that have reported them to myself, that they filed for applications as well to have projects going on and applications submitted that were actually denied. I would like to do a little more digging to see why have other applications submitted for zoning for amendments and things of that nature that have all been denied.

John Weeks commented on a big conflict of interest. Concern on trust. Lack of communication. Board opinions should be a reflection of the public, not personal.

Jeff Ray commented on need to be responsive to people in addition to legal.

Nicolena Stubbs commented that basic information was available to all and the hearing is where more detailed information can be had. It is unfortunate that the hearings couldn't occur so that people could actually get information and discuss it. Community members also have a responsibility to seek information themselves. Also commented on the known historic use of the Riffe building and the contradiction between wanting it to serve the community better but blocking progress on it. Also people's personal issues blocking progress, jobs, things to do, etc.

Monet McClure Rabb commented that it was extremely important to get information.

Dr. Williams claimed that he felt that there were 5 violations of Michigan compiled law at the last meeting. You can't sit on the Planning board and the Appeals board – it is a conflict of interest. Is concerned that it isn't fair and equal. Everyone should have a say.

Secretary Evans commented on the legal statement by Dr. Williams saying it is illegal to serve on the Planning Commission and the ZBA. Not only is it not illegal it is a legal requirement that the ZBA have a Planning Commission member on it, and it is not optional.

Tamma Hamilton Ray questioned how the map amendment change in zoning in Idlewild Terrace #4 would impact the properties in that area. Perhaps it could be answered today or in future communications.

Betty Wiggins commented on not understanding the purpose of the special land use request. Also noted that the community operates on fear. Has concerns about rezoning from agricultural to residential.

Chris Grier commented that the purpose of a public hearing is to discover information. Also conflict of interest allows for just leaving the table as opposed to the room. Described resignation process for board.

8) Adjournment

Motion by Secretary Evans to adjourn, second by Commissioner Green.

Meeting adjourned by Vice-Chair Guydon at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted



Acting Secretary Blair Evans