

ARLINGTON TOWNSHIP
52022 34th Avenue, Bangor, Michigan
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

March 4, 2026

Public Hearing

Peggy Douglas, Acting Chairperson, called Public Hearing on the Master Plan to order at 6:02 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Tony Stocchiero, Kevin Haverkamp, Jeff Douglas, and Peggy Douglas all present. Peggy welcomed, new member, Keven Haverkamp to the Planning Commission (PC).

Approval of Agenda: Tony Stocchiero made a motion to approve the agenda, supported by Jeff Douglas. All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting Minutes: Motion was made by Peggy Douglas to approve the December 10, 2025 PC Meeting Minutes, supported by Kevin Haverkamp. All in favor. Motion carried. (Note: per agenda, this was to occur during the Regular Meeting.)

Open Public Hearing: Tony Stocchiero made a motion to Open the Public Hearing regarding the draft of the Master Plan. Jeff Douglas supported the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Annie Davidson-Funke stated that she read the entire plan. She noted that agriculture, small farms, and preserving history was important, especially cemeteries and old schools.

Peggy reviewed statements that were created by her and Jeff, that they would like to add to the Master Plan. Marcy Hamilton, SWMPC, stated as long as the statements are not too substantial, of high significance, and do not change the overall plan; they may be added as long as there is approval by the PC. Each of the statements were reviewed and approved by the PC. They are included at the end of these minutes.

Marcy will incorporate the approved statements into the Master Plan. The Plan will be brought to the next regular meeting of the PC, with resolution, for consideration of approval. It will carry on to the Board for their consideration, at the April meeting. A resolution 'Asserting the Township Board the Right to Approve the Master Plan' will be brought to the Board at their March meeting.

Close Public Hearing: Tony Stocchiero made a motion to Close the Public Hearing. Kevin Haverkamp supported the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Adjourn Public Hearing: Motion was made by Peggy Douglas to adjourn the Public Hearing at 6:49 pm, supported by Kevin Haverkamp. All in favor. Motion carried.

Regular Meeting

Peggy Douglas, Acting Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:49 pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The minutes were approved earlier in the meeting. (Out of order by error.)

Election of Officers:

Peggy Douglas nominated Jeff Douglas to be **Secretary**, supported by Tony Stocchiero. All in favor. Motion carried.

Peggy Douglas nominated Kevin Haverkamp to be **Co-Chairperson**, supported by Jeff Douglas. All in favor. Motion carried.

Tony Stocchiero nominated Peggy Douglas to be **Chairperson**, supported by Kevin Haverkamp. All in favor. Motion carried.

Regular Meeting Dates for 2026: The following dates were approved at the December 3rd, 2025 meeting: March 4, June 3, September 2, December 2 at 6:00 pm.

Additional Regular Meeting Dates for 2026: Additional meetings will be needed throughout the year to finalize the Master Plan and to review the Zoning Ordinance. The following dates were suggested: April 1, May 6, July 1, August 5, October 7, November 4 at 6:00 pm.

Jeff Douglas made a motion to accept the additional meeting dates as stated above, Kevin Haverkamp supported the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Distribution of Zoning Ordinance: The McKenna timeline, table of contents, and initial page of definitions were distributed to the PC. There is a total of 20 sections to the zoning ordinance and 26 pages of definitions. Peggy will email the entire list of definitions to the PC so they can be reviewed while going over the various sections of the ordinance. A few sections will be emailed to the PC each month for their comment and will be discussed at the following PC meeting. These sections with comments/changes/suggestions will be brought forward to the Board each month; so as not to bombard them with the entire document to review at one time.

Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Information: Marcy spoke on the RRC. The RRC would interview the township, review documents and analyze data regarding planning and zoning. They would come up with a plan of action to implement best practices. Not many small rural townships undertake this program; it takes time and staffing to complete. The PC was given a handout on the program.

MSU Extension - Van Burn County Educator: Tyler Augst from the MSU Extension is available to come and discuss what the PC and ZBA should be doing. Georgette Peterson will reach out to Tyler to see when he is available to come and talk with the PC and Zoning Board of Appeals at the same time.

Public Comment: Citizen Planner Training was discussed.

Adjournment: Motion was made by Jeff Douglas to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm, supported by Kevin Haverkamp. All in favor. Motion carried.

Master Plan Suggested Additions

Page 16 – PC Approved

Agricultural Economy

Add at the end...

Arlington Township has lost a significant portion of orchard acreage due to imports, lack of processing facilities, available markets and production costs. In general, the orchards have been cleared and the acreage brought into row crop production. Some orchards have been converted to pasture and forage harvesting. Livestock operations are typically small with under 20 animals in most operations.

Page 21 – PC Approved

Economic Value

Small, niche, high value agricultural operations have developed in place of the traditional family farms. These small niche operations often requiring “off farm” employment for economic reasons. These economic factors must be considered when evaluating the “value” of a piece of farmland:

Managed forests, for timber production, is a non-traditional agricultural operation. Trees are a long-term crop with yields taking 20 plus years to develop (grow). Timber is a high value crop, when managed properly, which can provide income opportunities on a long-term basis. As Arlington Township has a significant percentage of forest acreage, this could be an untapped economic opportunity.

Page 32 and 33 – Approved

Wetlands

They also remove impurities as water moves through the soil strata and into the aquifers where most of Arlington’s drinking water is obtained through wells.

Wetland restoration can be inexpensive to implement, based on final goals.

Page 42 – PC Approved

Drinking Water and Sanitary Waste

Septic systems around lakes, especially with small lots, have a high probability of failure with water contamination and as a result high density homes/lots around lakes are especially at risk for inadequate septic systems. These areas should consider a sanitary sewer system or off-site septic fields to significantly reduce lake water contamination from septic discharge.

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Recreation

The National Recreation and Park Association recommends that communities have 10.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and 1 park for every 2,386 residents. Both North and South Scott Lakes offer the largest recreational opportunity in Arlington Township for residents. The Michigan Department

of Natural Resources (MDNR) hosts a public boat launch on the northern shore of North Scott Lake which provides access to the lake for boating, fishing, and swimming for all Township residents.

Cedar Lodge is a small private summer camp and equestrian facility, covering 150 acres with a 12-acre private lake, located on the corner of 48th Avenue and 52nd Street in Arlington Township. The Lodge offers horseback riding, camping activities, art, sports, and overnight or day programs on its rustic scenic property.

The Fuller Woods State Game Area, located on CR 673 between 40th and 38th Avenues, consists of 85 acres of deciduous woods with wild turkeys and white-tailed deer. It is managed by the MDNR and provides limited recreational use with hunting as its primary use followed by hiking and wildlife viewing. The Van Buren Sportmen's Club offers an indoor and outdoor shooting range where hunter and firearm safety, as well as concealed pistol license classes, are held.

It is, however, likely that most residents of Arlington Township travel outside of the Township for recreational activities. Many parks and recreational facilities exist just outside of the Township border in Bangor, Lawrence, and other surrounding communities. M-43, which runs through the Township, hosts a main thoroughfare to one of the largest recreational areas – Lake Michigan.

Page 48 – PC Approved

School Districts

Arlington Township does not have any schools within its region but is instead served by Bangor and Lawrence Public Schools just outside its boundaries. Bangor Public Schools serve the north and western parts of Arlington Township while Lawrence Public Schools serve more of the southeastern area of the Township.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Bangor Public Schools served 998 students across its jurisdiction in the 2022-2023 school year. The Bangor Public School system operates four schools: an elementary, middle, and high school; along with a career academy. Lawrence Public Schools served 419 students in its district during the 2022-2023 school year. The Lawrence Public School system operates two schools, an elementary and junior/senior high school.

Additionally, Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) is located in Lawrence and serves students in Van Buren County including Arlington Township. VBISD offers special education, a career readiness program and several technical education programs such as agriculture, automotive, business, information technology and public safety among others.

Page 56 – PC Approved

Environmental Protection Goal – add as #7

Plan for the future use of parks and recreation, which not only assists in conserving natural resources and sustaining the environment but also provides numerous other benefits. These include improved health and mental well-being by engaging in physical exercise such as walking, jogging, hiking, and sports; community engagement with friends and family; and economic growth by making the Township a more desirable place to live – Long Term.