

# MINUTES

**DRAFT**

**THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
THOMAS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING  
8215 SHIELDS DRIVE, SAGINAW, MICHIGAN  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2025, 7:00 P.M.**

Members Present: R. Iamurri, P. Lynch, S. Garvie, and K. McDonald  
Absent: S. Yockey, D. Bird, J. Curry  
Others Present: D. Sika, Community Development Director  
2 Interested Parties

Iamurri called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

## **Approval of Agenda:**

Motion by Lynch, supported by Garvie to approve the agenda as presented.

**VOTE      4 YEAS      0 NAYS      3 ABSENT      MOTION CARRIED**

## **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion by Garvie, supported by Curry to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2025 meeting.

**VOTE      4 YEAS      0 NAYS      3 ABSENT      MOTION CARRIED**

## **Hearings:**

### **A. Rezoning – 389 S Miller**

Iamurri opened the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

Sika presented the applicant's request to rezone the west half of the property at 389 S Miller from R-1, Residential, One-Family, Low Density District to R-2, Residential, Two-Family, Medium Density District. Sika explained that the property, which was formerly a church, is zoned R-1 on the west and R-2 on the east. The applicant requested to rezone the west half to create a uniform zoning across the property, which would allow the church to be converted to a Daycare Facility. Questions were asked and answered.

There was no Public Comment.

Iamurri Closed the hearing at 7:10 p.m.

Motion by Garvie, supported by McDonald to recommend to the Township Board to rezone the western portion of 389 S Miller Rd, Parcel # 28-12-3-25-3061-000 from R-1, Residential, One-Family, Low Density District to R-2, Residential, Two-Family, Medium Density District.

**VOTE            4 YEAS            0 NAYS            3 ABSENT            MOTION CARRIED**

**Old Business:**

**A. Master Plan Update**

Mike Daly-Martin from Spicer Group presented the proposed draft updates to the Goals and Objectives portion of the Master Plan. The Planning Commission members discussed and reviewed the proposed updates in the attached Draft Copies.

**Adjournment:**

Motion by Garvie, supported by McDonald to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

**VOTE            4 YEAS            0 NAYS            3 ABSENT            MOTION CARRIED**

## COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Planning for the future of any community is very important. In order for Thomas Township to be successful, it has set goals and objectives it wishes to achieve within the next 10 to 20 years. The Township Planning Commission reviewed and studied the goals from the 2021<sup>99</sup> Master Plan. They modified the goals and objectives as needed based upon current conditions, community input, and demographic trends. Goal statements generally describe a desired condition or end state that a community seeks to achieve, while an objective statement can be described as a milestone or sub-element of a goal. The objective is more specific than the goal and should have some measurable aspect so that progress toward achieving them may be observed. This section of the Master Plan will outline the goals and objectives for Thomas Township.

### OVERALL TOWNSHIP GOALS

1. Create an optimum human environment for the present and future residents of the Township that will offer variety, choice, opportunity for change and individual growth.
2. Develop an adequately balanced community-wide land use pattern to ensure diversity, stability and serve residents' needs.
3. Develop adequate guidelines to assure a reasonable balance between anticipated growth and development and the ability to provide necessary services.
4. ~~Further improve economic conditions by encouraging~~ Continually emphasize locally compatible and desirable commercial, recreational and cultural activities which will attract business and industry in order to further reduce unemployment, increase the local standard of living and improve the local economy.
5. ~~Encourage intergovernmental cooperation with surrounding governmental units in the growth of the Thomas Township area, particularly in the coordination of long-range planning efforts.~~ Encourage intergovernmental cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions to support the growth of Thomas Township, with a focus on coordinating long-range planning efforts.
6. ~~Encourage the maintenance of~~ Maintain an efficient thoroughfare system by regularly reviewing the traffic needs of the community in conjunction with the land use recommendations provided in the Master Plan.

**Commented [MD1]:** Since 2021, do we feel that adequate guidelines have been developed? Are there specific guidelines that could be useful that are useful to reference? One recommendation for design guidelines is referenced later in the Commercial Development Goal.

### RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Goal

Promote the development of planned residential areas designed to offer a variety of identifiable living environments.

#### Objectives

1. Maintain the "rural character" of Thomas Township through innovative mechanisms designed to conserve open space, protect the natural environment and preserve agricultural lands.

## Attachment A – Draft Copy Presented to Planning Commission

2. Encourage a cluster development pattern which builds upon existing urban development in a contiguous fashion, provides adequate space for future developments and encourages and supports rural lifestyles and agricultural pursuits.
3. Prevent the encroachment of commercial or industrial activity in established residential areas.
4. Encourage the removal of conflicting or undesirable land uses from residential areas to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for residents.
5. Continue to provide suitable housing for the elderly population by promoting a range of housing options that are safe, accessible, and affordable.
6. Promote preservation and code enforcement to maintain substantial residential neighborhoods.
7. Encourage creativity and innovation in the development of residential property through the Township's Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Condominium Regulations and other applicable ordinances.



8. Encourage "infill" development to occur prior to an unwarranted expansion of urban utilities.
9. Consider the establishment of land trusts and conservancies for the protection of open space.
- 9.10. Prioritize initiatives that support the development of diverse housing types to provide options for residents of all income levels.

**Commented [MD2]:** Is this something that the Township still values? Not all commercial activities are incompatible with residential uses. Example: Consider a multi family development (apartments) adjacent to a commercial town center development... This provides convenient access to services for those who live nearby.

**Commented [MD3]:** I agree with this objective, but consider the impact of infill development on prime agricultural land... This could effectively permit sprawl and loss of ag land as long as utilities are present... Do we want to rephrase this?

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Goal

Provide for a full range of locally needed and compatibly located commercial facilities which are adequate to serve the residential population.

#### Objectives

1. Continue to implement a subarea development plan for Gratiot Road to enhance the appearance and function of the commercial corridor.



## Attachment A – Draft Copy Presented to Planning Commission

2. Continue to work with the DDA to improve the business corridor by supporting streetscape improvements, attracting new businesses, promoting economic development initiatives, and creating more vibrant, accessible, and visually appealing commercial environment.
3. Encourage the development of clustered commercial and office facilities in close proximity to major street intersections, thus providing the opportunity to offer a variety of goods and services most conveniently.
4. Plan for additional commercial development along the M-46 corridor, specifically between Swan Creek and the intersection of M-52 and M-46, including parallel road development.
5. Plan for infill and redevelopment of older nonconforming structures and nonconforming sites within the existing business district, specifically between the Tittabawassee River and Swan Creek.



**Commented [MD4]:** Are these borders still appropriate? Consider expanding to Gleaner Rd. to encompass the tech park.

6. Plan for and encourage the development of the area called Thomas Business District North, located north of M-46 and east of Kennely Road.
7. Maintain different classes of commercial zoning to minimize conflicts with residential and light industrial uses and to provide suitable locations for a wide variety of commercial business types.
8. Encourage the use of landscaping, setbacks and marginal access drives to promote aesthetics and safety.
9. Maintain sign regulations that will allow for less obtrusive signage along Gratiot Road and in all other areas of the Township.
10. Review the North Business District Overlay standards to encourage town center-style development.
11. Ensure that the M-46 Corridor Overlay Zone and the Township North Business District Overlay Zone include aesthetic guidelines that align with the Township's vision for future development. Explore the creation of design guidelines to establish objective standards for new developments that complement and enhance existing placemaking elements in these areas.

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### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Goal

Encourage a variety of industrial development with attractive sites, such as the Great Lakes Tech Park, which will strengthen the tax base and provide a place of employment for area residents.

#### Objectives

1. Encourage the development of new types of industries, especially those that are economically associated with the existing industrial base and compatible with the environment and existing land use pattern.
2. Provide industry at locations which can be readily serviced by public utilities and which are easily accessible to the existing land use pattern.
3. Locate industrial areas where they have reasonable boundaries and are not subject to encroachment by incompatible uses [such as residential and recreational uses](#).
4. Incorporate and utilize the concept of development of industrial land in industrial parks or planned industrial districts with well-designed points of entrance and exit, controlled site and building design and adequate parking areas.

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

#### Goal

Provide adequate utilities and infrastructure so that Thomas Township may ensure managed and responsible growth and provide for the infrastructure needs of all Township property owners.

#### Objectives

1. Provide for public and semi-public use areas offering a variety of opportunities for human fulfillment in locations that are appropriate for their development and utilization.
2. Extend and stage future sewer and water facilities using a strategic long-term approach.
3. [Encourage large lots and on-site disposal systems where sewer service is not foreseeable within the planning period.](#)
4. Continue to plan for community facilities including fire stations, libraries, general utilities, community parks and Township offices.
5. Develop an annual Capital Improvements Program to schedule and prioritize future infrastructure needs.



**Commented [MD5]:** Some may see this as at odds with agricultural preservation... Consider changing this to only encourage development in areas with existing infrastructure in place or in areas with planned utility expansions.

## Attachment A – Draft Copy Presented to Planning Commission

6. ~~Continue to pursue the development of~~ Maintain a fee schedule that requires new development to share in the costs of new growth.

6.

### TRANSPORTATION

#### Goal

Plan for a network of roads by type and function that will provide a complete road system including major, secondary, collector and local roads. Include non-motorized transportation in transportation planning.

#### Objectives

1. Cooperate with the Michigan Department of Transportation and Saginaw County Road Commission to ensure that a proper relationship exists between planned road improvements and the Township's desired future land use pattern.
2. ~~Limit points of ingress/egress on major roads.~~ Minimize the number of access points along major roadways, through the expanded implementation of access management standards, as developed for the M-46 Corridor Overlay Zone.
3. Provide a transportation system that recognizes the need for both auto and truck traffic and eliminates as many points of conflict between the two as possible.
4. Increase pedestrian safety by providing opportunities for pedestrian sidewalks along existing and planned road systems.
5. Continue to improve the local road system to better serve residences and businesses.
6. Utilize the federal/state street and highway functional classification system for purposes of classifying existing and future roads within Thomas Township.
7. Continue to develop non-motorized pathways as alternative transportation routes.
8. Continue to work toward development of an M-46 parallel road north of M-46.





## Attachment A – Draft Copy Presented to Planning Commission

### RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

#### Goal

Protect the natural resources of Thomas Township and provide for the recreational needs of all Township residents to preserve the quality of life ~~for Township residents.~~

#### Objectives

1. Cooperate with the State of Michigan and adjoining communities in the development of recreation and community facilities.
2. Promote the development of existing recreational facilities and preserve sufficient open space to satisfy the needs of the Township residents.
3. Coordinate the review of plats and site plans with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and applicable County offices.
4. Preserve and enhance the water quality of and recreation opportunities on the Tittabawassee River.
5. Continue to develop recreational paths in the Township.



~~5.6. Continue to identify and pursue opportunities for the acquisition and development of parkland throughout the Township.~~

~~6.1. Continue to work with DOW, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the EPA on Tittabawassee River environmental issues.~~

Details regarding the parks and specific needs for the Thomas Township Park system are included in the most recent Thomas Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which is available on the Township website.

### SUSTAINABILITY

#### Goal

Support the conservation and enhancement of Thomas Township's natural landscapes and ecosystems.

#### Objectives

1. Protect and sustain the natural features of vital environmental areas, including groundwater, surface water, forests, and wildlife habitats.
2. Promote sustainable agricultural practices throughout the Township by encouraging the use of vegetative buffers along waterways, crop rotation, and cover cropping to protect soil and water resources, as well as other environmentally responsible farming methods.
3. Stay informed about key environmental issues that may impact the Township.

## Attachment A – Draft Copy Presented to Planning Commission

4. Continue to work with DOW, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and the EPA on Tittabawassee River environmental issues.
5. Promote participation in conservation programs, such as P.A. 116 and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), that support environmental protection and sustainable agricultural practices.

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#### Objectives

1. Maintain the “rural character” of Thomas Township through innovative mechanisms designed to conserve open space, protect the natural environment and preserve agricultural lands.



## Attachment B – Draft Copy as Amended by the Planning Commission

2. Encourage a cluster development pattern which builds upon existing urban development in a contiguous fashion, provides adequate space for future developments and encourages and supports rural lifestyles and agricultural pursuits.
3. Encourage “infill” development to occur prior to an unwarranted expansion of urban utilities.
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4. Increase pedestrian safety by providing opportunities for pedestrian sidewalks along existing and planned road systems.
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8. Continue to work toward development of an M-46 parallel road north of M-46.

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