

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 23, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Chairperson Sager called the meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission to order at 6:01 PM at the Ross Township Hall. All rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Pamela Sager
Michael Bekes
Mark Markillie
Michael Moore
Steve Maslen
Sherri Snyder

Absent: Jeff Price

Also Present: Robert Thall – Township Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Sager requested input on having Public Comment at both the start and end of Planning Commission meetings. The suggestion was well received and will be implemented accordingly.

Moore motioned to approve the agenda as written, and Markillie supported. The motion was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The Commission proceeded with consideration of the November 24, 2025, Planning Commission (PC) meeting minutes. Chair Sager motioned to approve the minutes as written and Moore supported. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

NEW BUSINESS

The first item to come up was a Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) request for PC review of variance application criteria to simplify and clarify requirements.

Thall handed out copies of Article 23 (ZONING BOARD of APPEALS), Section 23.8 (Variance Standards and Conditions), A (Standards), numbers 1 – 6, before explaining the request for review of this section from the ZBA. After discussion, PC members agreed that Thall will gather similar ordinance samples for the PC to review as the next step. Bekes shared he will let the Ross Township Board know this work is in progress.

The next item is to establish by resolution the Planning Commission Meeting dates for fiscal year 2026-2027. The meeting schedule presented was the fourth Monday of each month, when necessary, with the exceptions of the May meeting which is scheduled for the third Monday in May to avoid a meeting on Memorial Day and December when a meeting is not normally scheduled. Snyder motioned to approve the schedule and Bekes supported. The roll-call vote resulted in unanimous approval. Chair Sager asked Secretary Moore to sign the resolution with plans to give it to the Ross Township Office for implementation.

The next item is the election of Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary) for fiscal year 2026-2027.

Snyder nominated Pamela Sager as Chair and Sager accepted. Snyder proceeded with a motion to elect Sager as Chair and Markillie supported. The motion was unanimously approved.

Moore nominated Sherri Snyder as Vice Chair and Snyder accepted. Moore proceeded with a motion to elect Snyder as Vice Chair and Chair Sager supported. The motion was unanimously approved.

Markillie nominated Michael Moore as Secretary and Moore accepted. Markillie proceeded with a motion to elect Moore as Secretary and Snyder supported. The motion was unanimously approved.

The next item is the Budget Review for fiscal year 2026-2027. Chair Sager noted that current draft budget salaries account for five members, whereas the Planning Commission is composed of seven members. Chair Sager will forward that information to Treasurer Wiersma. The proposed 3% pay increase for attending PC members was deemed acceptable as the 3% is considered a cost-of-living adjustment. The PC members all agreed that any raise in future years beyond a cost-of-living adjustment is considered excessive. Additional discussion resulted in consensus that all other aspects of the proposed budget appeared satisfactory.

Snyder motioned to acknowledge PC review of, and agreement with, the proposed budget prior to Budget Committee review and Township Board approval with the change to reflect seven PC members in the salary line and Moore supported. The roll-call vote resulted in unanimous approval.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The first item to come up is continued discussion of references in Article 18, and 2.2 Definitions of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) to reflect updated electrical code language and standards.

After discussion, Moore motioned to accept the changes outlined in Attachment A with October 27, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes and proceed to Public Hearing. Markillie supported and the motion was unanimously approved.

The Planning Commission (PC) adopted a strategy to address outstanding Zoning Ordinance (ZO) updates collectively, allowing multiple ordinance revisions to be considered during a single Public Hearing. Should an application require PC review at a regularly scheduled meeting, Chair Sager may include a Public Hearing for any ZO update that is ready for consideration on the corresponding agenda.

The next item is the re-address of a potential chicken ordinance after reviewing updated sample ordinances.

After discussion, Bekes motioned to conduct no additional work to address the potential chicken or poultry ordinance until the Planning Commission better understands what the public may desire in this area via a Master Plan update, constituent survey results, State legislature changes currently in process, Ross Township Board direction, additional public comment at PC Meetings, and/or complaints that may come forward through AGS or other avenues. Snyder supported and the motion carried with unanimous approval.

The next item is the review and consideration of potential changes to site plan and lot use Zoning Ordinance text relating to sidewalk and other possible requirements.

After discussion, Bekes motioned to approve a ZO update by changing Article 10, Section 10.6, D (Sidewalks and Pedestrian Linkages) to state: 'Where they do not exist, sidewalks may be required along the abutting road and may be within the public right-of-way to provide linkage as determined by the Planning Commission.' Markillie supported and the motion carried with unanimous approval.

Approval of the motion resulted in this ZO update being ready to proceed to Public Hearing. The PC agreed to include this update in the strategy for an upcoming Public Hearing as noted above.

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Bekes reported the Public Hearing for the 2026-2027 Fiscal Year budget will be held on Thursday, March 26th at 6 pm at the Township Hall. Thall reported that Ross Township and Augusta Village agreed Ross Township will manage fire services for the Village under a new service agreement.

REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Bekes reported two candidates to replace Frank Guarisco on the ZBA were considered with Bruce Bond chosen as the replacement. To date, Bruce attended both the February and the March ZBA meetings.

Bekes reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals convened on March 4th and approved a street setback variance of 11 feet to permit a 4-foot extension for a garage. Additionally, the ZBA granted a variance for a garage roof height of 18 feet 7 inches.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

Markillie opined setback and screening requirements between R1 and R3 properties may be an area of concern. Markillie will bring forward ordinances from other communities to give insight into the PC if current standards closely match others or if the PC should consider tightening standards.

Snyder facilitated a discussion about ZO language as it pertains to data centers. Thall concurred with several aspects that were raised and will share the views on the topic with Supervisor Hutchings.

Snyder brought up confinement in buildings and/or jails. Thall explained that current laws prevent any action on the matter under our Zoning Ordinance.

Bekes shared the Township Board may be asking the PC to develop a five-year capital improvement plan for the Township.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Bekes motioned to adjourn the meeting and Snyder supported. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Bekes
Board Liaison to the Planning Commission
Acting Recording Secretary