

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 27, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Chairperson Sager called the meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission to order at 6 p.m. at the Ross Township Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Michael Moore
Jeff Price

Also Present: Bert Gale, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator
Josh Thall – Township Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Bekes made a motion to approve the agenda as written and Maslen supported. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Sager moved to approve the April 13th Special Planning Commission (PC) meeting minutes as written and Snyder supported. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Sager asked if anyone wanted to give public comments on any topic that was not listed as a public hearing on the current PC agenda. Noting no one volunteered public comment, Chair Sager closed the public comment period.

NEW BUSINESS

The next matter to come before the Planning Commission (PC) was consideration of the request by Robert Presley for approval to construct a front yard accessory building on a property located at 10458 N. 45th Street, as a special land use in Section 18.4.D. of the Ross Township Zoning Ordinance (ZO) which construction is only permitted as a special land use under the ZO. Applicant also requests approval of a

site plan for the proposed construction. The property is in the R-R Rural Residential District, parcel identification number 3904-02-405-013.

Chairperson Sager opened the public hearing.

Gale provided an overview of the application stating the proposal is to construct the accessory building (a pole barn) on the Rural Residential District (R-R) zoned parcel in the front yard, with a 115.3-foot setback from the front yard property line which is double the minimum front yard requirement. Gale recited Section 18.4.D provides a path for PC approval if the PC agrees after reviewing Sections 19.3 and 21.6 of the ZO.

Robert Presley was present for the application and stated the topography of the very rural lot does not allow construction of the 32' x 64' pole barn behind the home, the building will be used for personal storage and vehicles, no commercial activity will take place in the building, no plumbing is expected and electrical service will be required.

Questions by PC members determined the entry doors will be two 12' x 12' doors, there will be no change to the existing driveway, the requested placement's topography will not present a problem for storm water runoff control, there are no landscaping needs, no living quarters will be part of the building and the requested placement is the best spot for the building due to the land topography, the heavy forested area and adequate distances from neighboring buildings.

Chair Sager opened public comment and Trevor Miller stated his support of the project. No additional public comment was offered.

Chair Sager noted there was zero written correspondence presented and closed the public hearing.

The Commission proceeded with their review of Section 18.4 D with the following findings on the items from Bert Gale's initial assessment that were considered not met:

The PC waived the need for location, dimensions and height of all existing buildings/structures on the subject property as the mapping for the application showed no site line issues of neighboring properties and the pole barn would meet all ZO requirements.

The PC waived the need to understand the width of the driveway as the current driveway will be unchanged other than to build access from it to the new building which would be constructed a minimum of 115 feet from the front property line.

The PC waived the need to identify the location of existing and proposed utilities as the applicant stated that there will be no plumbing needs and electrical service needs will tie into the existing home's electrical service and preferably will be placed underground and will be constructed within current electrical code that is not the purview of the PC.

In consideration of the Special Land Use Criteria set forth in Section 19.3, the Commission concluded the following:

- 1) The proposal meets all the requirements specified in this Ordinance for the Special Land Use requested, as well as all other Township, County, State and Federal requirements.
- 2) The proposal will be compatible with the natural environment.

- 3) The proposed accessory building will only be used as cold storage, with no living quarters and no commercial activity allowed.
- 4) Regarding compatibility with adjacent uses, it was recognized the proposal provides more than adequate separation and buffering as the property is in the R-R Zoning District and neighbors do not have line of sight to the subject location of the pole barn.
- 5) The project was deemed consistent with the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.
- 6) The project was deemed consistent with and promotes the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance.

The Commission continued their review of Section 21.6 – (Approval) and determined all requirements of 21.6.B have been met with the following findings:

- 1) The proposed use will not have a harmful effect on the surrounding neighborhood development as there is not a need to require additional screening and no viewshed issue of neighbors result from the intended building placement.
- 2) The existing driveway from the road will not be changed, which maintains the proper relationship between the major thoroughfares and the driveway.
- 3) No adverse effects were determined that would result from the building placement.
- 4) No additional utilities would be constructed, whereby the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Township would be protected. Electrical services would only be allowed if installed within electrical code.
- 5) There would be no changes to the natural features of the landscape.
- 6) The features of the current landscape will be retained other than the removal of trees to allow construction.
- 7) The plan will not result in any additional runoff of surface waters onto adjoining properties due to the topography of the land.

It was reiterated that the above findings were based on the application documents presented and representations made by the applicant at the meeting.

Bekes moved to approve the construction of the 32' x 64' pole barn in the front yard with a front yard setback of 115 feet for the application of Robert Presley at 10458 N. 45th Street, with the condition the building will not be used for commercial purposes and will be used as residential accessory use only. The motion to approve is for both the approval of Special Land Use and the Site Plan. The approval is granted based upon the review findings of Section 18.4.D – Residential Accessory Buildings/Structures, Section 19.3 – Special Land Use Criteria, Section 21.6.B – Site Plan Review Criteria, and all material supplied by and representations made by the applicant to the Planning Commission at the April 27, 2026, meeting. Maslen supported and the motion carried unanimously.

The next matter was Public Hearing concerning proposed ZO text amendments to update language regarding electrical code terms and standards.

Chair Sager opened the public hearing.

No public comment was offered. Chair Sager stated no written correspondence on the matter was received.

Gale suggested fixes to a typo in C1, improve the format in C2 and eliminate the last sentence in C3. The PC agreed with the recommended changes and Thall will make the changes for the final document.

The public hearing was closed.

Bekes moved to approve the updated proposed text amendments to update language regarding electrical code terms and standards, and with PC recommendation for approval, have Thall present the document to the Ross Township Board for their review and approval. Chair Sager supported and the motion passed unanimously.

The next matter to come before the PC is the Public Hearing concerning a proposed ZO text amendment to the C-1 Bay Commercial District sidewalk development standards by making sidewalks a discretionary requirement of the Planning Commission rather than requiring sidewalks in all cases.

Chair Sager opened the public hearing, read the text change and suggested if the update moves to the Ross Township Board for approval, the entire section 10.6.D.1-5 should be presented. Thall agreed and committed to giving the Board the entire respective ZO section.

No public comment was offered. Chair Sager stated no written correspondence on the matter was received and the public hearing was closed.

Chair Sager moved to approve the proposed text amendment on making sidewalks a discretionary requirement within the C-1 Zoning District and have Thall present the PC recommended text amendment to the Ross Township Board for review and approval. Bekes supported and the motion passed unanimously.

The next matter to come before the Planning Commission is the application of Dogwood Farms, LLC for site plan review and approval to convert an existing two-unit residential unit to a two-unit condominium unit pursuant to Section 21.2.G of the Ross Township Zoning Ordinance. The property is located at 11377 and 11385 East D Avenue, Ross Township, in the RR District, parcel identification number 3904-18-380-0.

Gale provided an overview of the proposal noting no changes to the current property will be made.

Michael Fisher was present on behalf of the application and provided an overview of the proposal, noting the change will allow two owners versus one or two renters of the structure would be beneficial and that he fully discussed the change with Angela Story (assessor). HOA documentation including a proposed master deed and bylaws to be utilized if approved were presented.

In response to questions, the PC confirmed a site condominium in the R-R District is an acceptable use, the general common element will be the land, the documents presented will become rules for the two owners, there will be zero change to the existing building/property with the change and a recordable easement should be prepared as the ingress/egress portion of the driveway was constructed on adjoining property to the east.

Sager questioned if the email from January 23, 2020 discussing the move of this property to a site condominium by then Planner Harvey should be part of the Application and available to the Planning Commission. It was determined not necessary to produce in order to move forward with a decision on this matter.

The Commission continued their review of Section 21.6 (Approval) and determined all requirements of 21.6B have been met with the following findings:

- 1) The proposed use will not have a harmful effect on the surrounding neighborhood development as there will be no change to the current structure.
- 2) The existing driveway from the road will not be changed, maintaining the proper relationship between the major thoroughfares and the driveway.
- 3) No adverse effects were determined that would result from the building placement as the building will not be relocated.
- 4) No additional utilities would be constructed, whereby the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Township would be protected.
- 5) There would be no changes to the natural features of the landscape.
- 6) The features of the current landscape will be retained.
- 7) The plan will not result in any additional runoff of surface waters onto adjoining properties.

Bekes moved to grant Site Plan Approval to convert an existing duplex residential unit at 11377 and 11385 East D Avenue to a two-unit condominium unit pursuant to Section 21.2.G of the Ross Township Zoning Ordinance. Approval is granted based upon the review findings of Section 21.6 – Site Plan Review Criteria, material supplied by and representations made by the applicant, and conditioned upon the Township Attorney review and approval of the condominium unit documents including the Master Deed, Bylaws and the easement concern solution regarding the driveway encroachment. Snyder supported and the motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The ZBA request for clarification of language in variance application criteria, ZO Section 23.8, was moved forward by Thall passing out like ordinances from Texas Township and Oshtemo Township for PC review and consideration. The PC will review the materials and further discuss potential changes to the Ross Township ZO at future meetings.

Setback provisions between zoning classifications were tabled.

Topographic elevations required in site plan application criteria, Section 21.4.N resulted in consensus that a four-foot maximum for topographic elevations be written as acceptable in the respective ZO Section. Thall will write the intended change and present it to the PC for consideration at future PC meetings.

TOWNSHIP BOARD

Bekes reported the April regular Board meeting was cancelled, and the next Board meeting will be on April 30th at 6 pm at the Ross Township Hall.

ZBA REPORT

Bekes reported a ZBA meeting has not been conducted since the last PC meeting. The next ZBA meeting is scheduled for May 6th at 5:30 am at the Ross Township Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

MEMBERS/ADVISORS

Chair Sager stated PC Member Jeff Price resigned his PC Commission, due to health reasons.

ADJOURNMENT

Bekes moved to adjourn the meeting and Markillie supported. The motion passed unanimously and Chair Sager adjourned the meeting at 7:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Bekes
Acting Recording Secretary