

**Douglass Township
Montcalm County
State of Michigan
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ANNUAL REPORT 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) allows for the establishment of local Planning Commissions, Master Plans, and other associated activities. Douglass Township's Planning Commission is established by Article II.125.3811 under Planning Commission Creation and Administration. This report is prepared and submitted to the Township Board according to the Douglass Township Planning Commission bylaws, section 4 (e) under Duties and Responsibilities and section 13 (a) and (b) under Annual Report. The Planning Commission is responsible for:

- Developing/Reviewing the Douglass Township Master Plan which provides guidance for land use and future development
- Creating a zoning ordinance to align goals of the Master Plan to future land use regulations
- Reviewing proposed projects ensuring they comply with zoning rules
- Considering special issues or participating in projects as directed by the township board

MEMBERSHIP

The Douglass Township Planning Commission bylaws section 2 under Membership (a) and (b), and section 3 under Requirements of Membership (a-d) outline standards for the Commission. In 2025, the Douglass Township Planning Commission consisted of 7 members whose terms, attendance, and training are listed in the chart below.

MEMBER	TERM BEGAN	TERM EXPIRES	MEETING ATTENDANCE	TRAININGS
Fletcher Wernholm Completing Rick	April 2025	Dec. 2027	April, July, October, November 4,	

Baldwin's term			December	
Mike Swan Vice Chairman	July 2022	Dec. 2025	November 24, December	
Melissa Bannen	March 2023	Dec. 2027	April, July, November 4, December	
Matt Moorman	March 2023	Dec. 2026	Jan, April, July, October, November 4 & 24, December	Jan. 2025 PC training at MCC October 2025 Training at Maple Valley
Eric Tester, Board Liaison	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2025	Jan, April, July, October	
Jon Bailey, Chairman	April 2023	Dec. 2027	Jan, April, November 24, December	
Kathy Rasmussen, Secretary	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2025	Jan, April, July	Jan. 2025 PC training at MCC
Mark Hill completing Kathy Rasmussen's term	Aug. 2025	Dec. 2025	October, November 4 & 24, December	October 2025 Training at Maple Valley

MEETINGS

The MPEA requires that local Planning Commissions meet at least four times a year. The Douglass Township Planning Commission bylaws section 7 under Meetings (a-d) states rules for meetings. In 2025, the Douglass Township Planning Commission met regularly on the last Wednesday of each month at 7 pm and held a total of 4 meetings which included Regular Quarterly Meetings, Special Meetings and Public Hearings. The Douglass Township Planning Commission bylaws section 9 under Minutes (a) and (b) require a synopsis of meetings which is provided in the following chart:

DATE	TYPE OF MEETING	SUMMARY
Jan. 29	Regular and Special	Nomination of officers, public input on zoning amendments, review of updated zoning

		book to recommend to board
April 30	Regular	Short term rentals, Accessory Unit Dwellings
July 30	Regular	Zoning admin report, resignation, appointment of new secretary, blight issues, noise ordinance, animal units
Oct. 29	Regular and Special/Public Hearing	Noise ordinance & animal units
Nov. 4	Special Meeting	Discussion on short term rentals
Nov. 24	Special Meeting	Review proposed ordinance on short term rentals
Dec. 18	Special Meeting/Public Hearing	Discussion and approval of short term rental ordinance

MASTER PLAN REVIEW

The Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing and updating the Master Plan to ensure it is a continuing reflection of the township's interests and needs. The township's current Master Plan was adopted in 2016. The MPEA requires a formal review (and update or reaffirmation) occur at least every five years. The Douglass Township Planning Commission bylaws Section 4 under Duties and Responsibilities (b) and (c) direct the commission to consider its Master Plan. A summary of items was reviewed in 2022 and can be found in the Annual Report for 2022 and 2023. No Master Plan review was held in 2025.

ZONING AND PERMIT REVIEW

The Zoning Administrator for Douglass Township, Dave Kelsey, provided the following summary of all land use permit activity for 2025 and the previous 4 years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

YEARLY REPC

TOWNSHIP OF DOUGLAS

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Acc. Building		10	3	3	5	14	7	
Barn (Pole)		12	9	5	5	6	11	11
Barn Addition		1	1	1		1	1	2
Deck		1	1	4		3	3	1
Garage		1	6	4	5	7	3	1
Home		1	3	5	9	4	10	6
Home Addition		5	3	2	2	3	2	3
Land Division						0	1	3
Miscellaneous		10	3	3	5	14	5	6
Solar / Wind				1				
Special Use								
Variance								
Total		36	41	29	28	31	52	43
								33

2024-2028

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
	7			
11	7			
	1			
8	1			
3	4			
6	7			
3	4			
3	9			
4	8			

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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The State of Michigan Open Meetings Act 267 15.263 section 3.(5) states a person must be permitted to address a meeting of a public body under rules established and recorded by the public body. The legislature or a house of the legislature may provide by rule that the right to address may be limited to prescribed times at hearings and committee meetings only. The Douglass Township Planning Commission bylaws section 8 under Public Hearings (a) and (b 1-6), and section 7 (f 4 and 7) sets forth procedures for gathering public comment. The Planning commission heard and considered a total of comments from citizens during 2025. The breakdown is as follows:

DATE	NUMBER OF COMMENTS	SUMMARY
Jan. 29	2	Concern on short term rental
April 30	0	
July 30	Multiple comments	Blight at Indianhead Lake
October 29	Multiple comments	Concerns for need of zoning on short term rentals
November 4	Multiple Comments	Questions and concerns about short-term rentals
November 24	Multiple Comments	Questions on short term rentals
December 18	Multiple Comments	Questions on proposed short term rental ordinance

PLANNING COMMISSION GOALS/WORK PLAN 2025

The Douglass Township Planning Commission bylaws under Duties and Responsibilities section 4 (f) (g) and (h) instructs the Planning Commission to make recommendations, if desired, on zoning and planning changes/amendments. The points in the following chart were recommended for review in 2026:

SUMMARY

In the calendar year 2025 the Douglass Township Planning Commission accomplished the following:

- Voted to send updated zoning book to board for approval
- Approved noise ordinance
- Approved animal unit ordinance
- Approved short term rental ordinance

WORK GOALS FOR 2026

The PC set these initial work goals to be carried over into 2026:
Review of Master plan