

***Douglass Township Planning Commission
Annual Report
Calendar Year 2022***

***Douglass Township
Montcalm County
State of Michigan***

***Douglass Township
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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 2022, the Planning Commission consisted of 7 members whose terms, attendance, and training are listed in the chart below.

Name	Member since	Term expires	Attendance	Trainings (hrs)
Jack Jeppesen, chair	Approx. 1997	Dec. 2023	5/5 100%	Montcalm County planning commission training 2 hours April 21, 2022.
Tammy Sweeris, vice chair	Jan. 2022	Dec. 2024	5/5 100%	
Becky Sowles, Secretary	Jan. 2022	Dec. 2024	5/5 100%	Montcalm County planning commission training 2 hours April 21, 2022.
Rick Baldwin	Jan. 2001	Dec. 2023	5/5 100%	Montcalm County planning commission training 2 hours April 21, 2022.
Paul Olson	Jan. 2022	Dec. 2022	4/5 80%	
*Todd Wells Mike Swan *Wells resigned May 2022	Oct.2002 July 2022	May 2022 Dec. 2022	2/3 66% 1/1 100%	

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. The Douglass Township Planning Commission met regularly on the last Wednesday of each month at 7 pm and held 3 regular meetings in 2022. October's meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum and was not rescheduled. The Planning Commission held 2 Public Hearings (April and May) with one Special Meeting following the Public Hearing in April. The **Douglass Township Planning Commission bylaws section 9 under Minutes (a) and (b)** require a synopsis of meetings which is provided.

Date	Type of Meeting	Summary
Jan. 26, 2022	Regular quarterly meeting	Election of officers, Wind Energy Conversion Systems setbacks, height, sound discussion, motions and votes.
March 30, 2022	Regular quarterly meeting	Wind Energy Conversion Systems sound review and discussion
April 27, 2022	Public Hearing	Seaplanes, lakes, Radio Frequency signals discussion pertaining to Wind Energy Conversion Systems.
April 27, 2022	Special Meeting	2017 Wind Energy Conversion Systems ordinance, map overlays, liability discussion. Master Plan review discussion.
May 25, 2022	Special Meeting	Open Meeting Act violations, conflict of interest discussion, decision to send Wind Energy Conversion Systems to board.
July 27, 2022	Public Hearing	Recommend sending 2017 Wind Energy Conversion Systems to board to rescind.
July 27, 2022	Regular quarterly meeting	Master Plan Review, changes recommended by planner discussed.
October 26, 2022	Regular quarterly meeting canceled due to lack of quorum.	

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. The Planning Commission and its Land Planner, Paul LeBlanc of PLB Planning Group in Grand Rapids, Michigan, discussed items for review in April and July. A summary of items reviewed and discussed follows, however, due to the October meeting being canceled, no follow-up on these items occurred in 2022.

Master Plan Item	Section and page number	Planner comments/suggestions
Fire department	Community facilities page 20	Fire department is incorrect. We use Belvidere, Day and Stanton.
Private sewer/water	Community facilities page 21	Clarify language on private water and sewer systems.
Sidewalks	Community facilities page 23	Clarify language on sidewalks and paths, as we do not have any.
Industrial area	Goals/Policies page 26	Do not need to keep industrial area. Specify why it is not suitable or we can keep it.
Agricultural status	Future Land Use page 28	5 acres in agricultural district would be a good size for a house. Produce better language for agricultural district.
Lakes	Future Land Use page 30	Add all lakes identified in Wind Energy Conversion Systems discussion (Christina, Hemingway, and Mud lakes) and get overlay maps.
Land uses	Future Land Use page 31	Better classification of general business or nonconforming uses.

ZONING AND PERMIT REVIEW

The Zoning Administrator for Douglass Township, Dave Kelsey, provided the following summary of all land use permit activity for 2022 and the previous 5 years.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Pole Barns	12	9	5	2	6	11
Barn Additions	1	1	1	0	1	1
Decks	1	1	4	0	3	3
Garages	1	6	4	5	7	3
Homes	1	3	9	5	4	10
Home additions	5	3	2	2	3	2
Accessory building	1	0	3	3	2	0
Misc.	10	3	3	5	14	5
Variances			9			4
Special Use Permits			1			
Lot line Adjustment and division						1

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 102 total comments from citizens during 2022. Citizens were given three minutes each to share their comments/concerns. The breakdown is as follows:

	Jan. 26	March 30	April 27 Public Hearing	April 27 Special Meeting	May 25 Special Meeting	July 27 Public Hearing	July 27 Regular Meeting
Comments related to agenda items	4			16	12		
General Public Comments	12	9	26	10	17	6	8

PLANNING COMMISSION GOALS/WORK PLAN

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 consideration as part of the Master Plan Review. Due to the cancellation of the October 2022 Planning Commission meeting, no follow up on these items has occurred.

2022 Goals/Work Plan for Planning Commission

1. Ensure all planning commission members receive copies of the Master Plan. (Tammy Sweeris, Paul Olson and Mike Swan need a copy).
2. Paul LeBlanc (planner) to update demographics, traffic, etc.
3. Make decision on keeping/changing 1 industrial area.
4. Paul LeBlanc (planner) to provide overlay maps in contrasting colors.
5. Paul LeBlanc (planner) to provide overlay maps for fire department areas.
6. Paul LeBlanc (planner) to clarify language on private sewer/water.
7. Paul LeBlanc (planner) to clarify language on sidewalks, paths.
8. Discuss minimum square footage requirements for dwellings. (Public hearing needed if this is pursued).
9. Discuss adding classification of EED (economy efficiency dwellings).
10. Discuss barndominiums.
11. Work on the Off Road Vehicle and Blight issues.

