

City Of Hart

407 S. State St
Hart, Mi 49420

Planning Commission
Thursday, January 8th, 2026
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Clark, Jim Cunningham, Jim Evans, Cynitha Fout, Diane LaPorte, Andrew Mullen, and Betty Root

ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Nichole Kleiner, City Clerk – Karla Swihart, Catalina Burillo, and Lauren Dematteo

- C. Fout called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- B. Root motioned to amend the agenda to add the election of officers, and was supported by A. Mullen
 - Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0
- A. Mullen motioned to approve the amended agenda and was supported by J. Evans
 - Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

- J. Cunningham nominated Cynitha Fout for Chair, and was supported by J. Evans
 - J. Cunningham nominated Diane LaPorte for Vice Chair and was supported by J. Evans
- No other nominations
- Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- J. Cunningham motioned to approve the minutes from December 4th, 2025, and was supported by B. Root
 - Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

- NONE

PUBLIC HEARING:

- None

ACTION ITEMS:

- None

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Parcels Entering the City Upon Expiration of Act 425 Agreement
Upon expiration of the 1996 Conditional Transfer Agreement between the City of Hart and Hart Township, and to outline recommended steps for updating zoning and the zoning map once the parcels come fully into the City.
The Act 425 Agreement, executed March 15, 1996, conditionally transferred certain territory from Hart Township to the City for a term of 30 years for the purpose of providing water, sewer, and other governmental services. Under Article IV, Section 4.1, the term of the Agreement is 30 years. Under Section 4.3, the Agreement provides that upon termination after the initial 30—year term, the Transferred Area will automatically, unconditionally, and for all purposes be within the sole, complete, and permanent jurisdiction of the City.

Upon expiration of the Agreement:

- All parcels identified in the Transferred Area become fully and permanently part of the City's jurisdiction.
- The temporary governance structure created under the Agreement ends.
- Zoning and land use authority transitions entirely to the City, under the City's zoning ordinance, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Recommendation for Updating Zoning and Zoning Map

Once the parcels are fully incorporated into the City, the Planning Commission will need to ensure they are assigned an appropriate City zoning classification and shown correctly on the official zoning map. To accomplish this, the recommendation is as follows

1. Review Existing Township Zoning Classifications
Compile the current Hart Township zoning designations for all parcels in the Transferred Area so the Commission understands how the properties are presently regulated.
2. Evaluate Appropriate City Zoning Districts
Compare the existing uses, parcel configurations, utilities, and surrounding development patterns with the City's zoning districts to determine which City classifications best align with the Master Plan and land use goals.
3. Prepare a Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning) Proposal
Because these parcels are not currently assigned to a City zoning district, a rezoning is required. This should take the form of a comprehensive zoning map amendment affecting all parcels in the Transferred Area.
4. Conduct Public Hearing
As required by the Michigan Zoning Enable Act, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the proposed zoning map amendment, followed by a recommendation to City Council.
5. City Council Adoption
City Council will consider and act on the Planning Commission's recommendation to formally amend the zoning map and assign zoning districts to the parcels.
6. Update the Official Zoning Map
Once adopted, update the City's official zoning map and make it available on the City's website and in print.

These steps will ensure a smooth transition from Township zoning to City zoning and will provide clarity to property owners, developers, and the public regarding future land use regulations in the area.

- **WILL BE ON AGENDA FOR NEXT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING.**

- Sign Ordinance Gap for M-1 Medical/Institutional District

PURPOSE

City's Sign Ordinance as it relates to the M-1 Medical/Institutional Zoning District. Chapter 1259 (Signs) does not include sign standards that clearly apply to the M-1 district, creating uncertainty for applications and staff.

BACKGROUND

The Sign Ordinance establishes standards by zoning category (residential, commercial, and industrial). The M-1 Medical/Institutional District is not expressly addressed in those sections. As a result, there are no clear regulations governing permitted sign types, size, height, illumination, or placement within this district.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

The Planning Commission is asked to consider:

1. Whether the M-q District should have standalone sign standards or be aligned with an existing district (e.g., commercial or industrial).
2. Whether medical and institutional uses warrant unique sign allowances or limitations.
3. What approach best balances visibility, functionality, and neighborhood compatibility?

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

1. Planning Commission discussion and direction on how to address the omission.
2. Staff preparation of draft ordinance language consistent with Commission guidance.
3. Planning Commission review and recommendation following a public hearing.
 - D. LaPorte motioned to add M-1 Medical/Institutional District to Chapter 1259 (signs) and was supported by A. Mullen
 - Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0

▪ Data Center Land Use and Community Impacts

This agenda item is intended to introduce data center development as an emerging land use and to begin a policy-level discussion about potential community impacts. This is not a review of a specific proposal, but a proactive conversation to assess whether the City's current zoning and land-use framework is adequate.

OVERVIEW

Data centers are increasingly locating in small communities due to available land and access to power and fiber infrastructure. While these facilities can add taxable value, they often involve high utility demands and limited on-site employment. Communities without clear standards may face pressure to make land-use decisions without adequate policy guidance.

KEY DISCUSSION AREAS

- Zoning and land-use compatibility
- Electrical, water, and infrastructure capacity impacts
- Fiscal impacts versus public costs
- Noise, lighting, buffering, and visual impacts
- Public safety and emergency service considerations

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS

Depending on the discussion direction, next steps may include:

- Defining data centers in zoning ordinance
- Identifying appropriate zoning districts or standards
- Requiring utility or infrastructure impact analysis
- Scheduling a future study session or coordinating with City Council

CONCLUSION

This discussion will help determine whether proactive planning measures are needed to ensure future data center development aligns with the City's long-term goals.

- C. Fout recommended working with the surrounding districts to get a plan/recommendation. Get a moderator together and bring it back to the February Planning meeting.
- **Review of Housing Rental Code Ordinance and Enforcement Discussion**

The City of Hart has been in communication with Shelby Township and the Village of Shelby in partnering/shared services for the Rental Code Enforcement officer. It was recommended by the Planning Commission to get together a fee schedule. The Ordinance would need to be rewritten, maybe form a committee to start working on recommendations, and possibly invite the public to a working group.
- **Review of Dangerous Building Ordinance and Enforcement Discussion**

There is a resident in the City that burnt in July of 2024 and is still not taken care of, which, according to the City's ordinance, is in violation. The community has been inquiring what the City is going to do about the property. Upon recommendation from the Planning Commission, the City Manager will serve the property owner with a notice.

OTHER BUSINESS and COMMUNICATION FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- None

PUBLIC COMMENTS GENERAL:

- NONE

ADJOURN:

- There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned upon a motion by A. Mullen and supported by B. Root. The next meeting scheduled will be held on February 5th, 2026

Karla Swihart

Karla Swihart
City Clerk