Au Train Township, Planning Commission
Special Meeting

Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 6:00pm
Au Train Township Hall - N7569 Spruce St – Au Train, MI 49806
MINUTES

- **CALL TO ORDER** - The meeting was called to order by Chair LaCombe at 6:01pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

- **ROLL CALL** – Members present: Chair Scott LaCombe, Vice Chair Jesse Cadwell, Secretary Alexandra Free, Member Wyatt Seaberg, Member John Carr

  Others present: Zoning Administrator Donna Shields, Johnny Ray Kroupa, Carol Denman

- **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Motion by Seaberg, second by Carr to approve agenda as presented. Motion Carried

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion by Seaberg, second by Cadwell to approve minutes of the January 19, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting. Motion Carried

- **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT –** ZA Shields presented on the latest zoning activity. Report is on file at the Township Hall and on the website.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

- **BOARD COMMENTS – None**

- **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

  a **Johnny Ray Kroupa requesting a conditional use permit for a short-term rental at E5433 Oak St, Au Train, Parcel ID# 001-376-003-00**

  Chair LaCombe opened the hearing at 6:06 pm.

  Zoning Administrator Shields presented her staff report summarizing the request. Her report basically found the requested use harmonious with the adjacent parcels in that it would still be used as a family dwelling. The only special concerns that were mentioned is the fact that this home is located on an unimproved Township Road, however it is currently cared for by a neighbor and Mr. Kroupa can also help tend to it as part of his business is plowing in the winter months.

  The applicant was asked to present his request. He proceeded to tell the commission that his sole purpose for purchasing this property was to have it as a rental since another parcel he owns became ineligible for the short-term rental use with the recent amendments. He stated he has a tenant living there now that will move over to his parcel on Woodland in the R1/2 district.

Chair LaCombe opened the public comment period

No comments were given by any persons in attendance. Secretary Free proceeded to summarize written comments received from adjacent neighbor Caroline Transchida who expressed concerns about yet another rental. Her concerns were mostly about traffic on their street (Grove) caused by the Tiny Homes rentals as well as ATV and snowmobile users that seemed to lack concern for the locals.

Secretary Free also noted receipt of several emails from property owner Duane Newton. Mr. Newton's emails were not addressed to the Commission as being submitted for "public comments" for the hearing, though covered questions and concerns regarding the sizing of the septic system, the constraint of trash on the property, and other concerns.

Chair LaCombe closed the public comment and declared the public hearing closed at 6:31pm

The Commission began discussion of the applicant's request. First addressing concerns of the neighbors. The traffic noted by Mrs. Transchida is on Grove Street. While some traffic may be stemming from the tiny homes resort, many locals run their ATVs around the undeveloped roads in the village and concerns can't be specifically tied to it being caused by rentals.

Mr. Newton's concerns about the septic system being not up to LMAS standards and why weren't we checking for permits on this was discussed. As was stressed to the Planning Commission by the Au Train Township Board, we are not the overseers of the health code. That is LMAS's realm. We do not require the applicant to prove to us their system is up to code or what capacity it is rated for. The landowner is held by the regulations to ensure that they are, but unless we have reason to believe otherwise, we trust the landowners are following the regulations.

The Board reviewed the General Standards from Section 802A of the Au Train Township Zoning Ordinance. See *Statement of Findings and Conclusions* **Attachment A**.

Motion by Carr, Second by Seaberg to approve the use of short-term rental for Johnny Ray Kroupa located at E5433 Oak St, Au Train, Parcel ID# 001-376-003-00. The application is found to meet all requirements of the Au Train Township Zoning Ordinance, Section 802A - Basis of Determination General Standards.

ROLL CALL: Carr: Yes, Seaberg: Yes, Cadwell: Yes, LaCombe: Yes, Free: Yes

Motion approved 5-0

Chair LaCombe called a brief recess at 6:50pm

Chair LaCombe resumed the meeting at 7:00pm

- **OLD BUSINESS –** None
- **NEW BUSINESS -** None
- **CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS –** None
- **PUBLIC COMMENT** – None
- **BOARD COMMENT** -- None
- **NEXT MEETING** – February 19, 2026 at 6:00pm the Planning Commission will meet for another work session on the Zoning Ordinance amendments.
- **ADJOURN** – Motion by Carr, second by Seaberg to adjourn at 7:03pm. Motion Carried

Minutes submitted by: Donna Shields, Recording Secretary, to the Au Train Township Planning Commission

Approved: February 19, 2026

Signed: _____on file_____
Donna Shields – Recording Secretary

Signed: _____on file_____
Alexandra Free - Secretary

Au Train Township
Alger County, Michigan

ATTACHMENT A

STATEMENT OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Conditional Use Hearing

Prepared by: D Shields, Recording Secretary

Parcel #: 001-376-003-00 **Date of Hearing: February 12, 2026**

Applicant: Johnny Ray Kroupa **Owner: Same**

Address: E5433 Oak St, Au Train, MI

District: Town Development **Request: Short-term rental**

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Section 802 - Basis of Determination / General Standards

A. The Planning Commission shall review the particular circumstances of the conditional use request under consideration in terms of the following standards and shall approve a conditional use only upon a finding of compliance with each of the following standards as well as applicable standards established elsewhere in this Ordinance.

1. **The conditional use shall not interfere with the public health, safety, and welfare of adjacent property or Au Train Township.**

   Discussion: The Commission members agreed with the staff comments that the use remains similar to current use except for length of rental period. Home is currently used as a single family dwelling rental. As long as the operation of the short-term rental follows the regulations for short-term rentals as found in the zoning ordinance section 421 their occupancy should not have any bearing on public health, safety, or welfare.

   Roll Call Vote: LaCombe: Yes, Seaberg: Yes, Cadwell: Yes, Carr: Yes, Free: Yes

2. **The conditional use shall be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in a manner compatible with adjacent uses of land and the natural environment.**

   Discussion: Adjacent uses include full time single family dwellings, summer vacation homes and vacant lots. The Commission members felt the use was harmonious with adjacent land uses in that it would be used as a family dwelling.

   Roll Call Vote: Seaberg: Yes, LaCombe: Yes, Carr: Yes, Free: Yes, Cadwell: Yes

3. **The conditional use shall be adequately served by, and not place demand on, essential public facilities and services in excess of current or planned capacity, or**

it shall be demonstrated that the person responsible for the proposed conditional use shall be able to adequately provide for the facilities and services deemed essential to the conditional use under consideration.

Discussion: The Commission did not feel that any demands on public utilities or services would be any more than the current use. This parcel is also served by local trash pickup, though the owner would be responsible for placing the trash containers over on Arbutus Ave, as the contracted company doesn't travel up Oak St. for curbside pickup. The owner and neighbors take care of the road maintenance and plowing as this road is considered an unimproved township road and is not maintained by the Township nor the County Road Commission.

Roll Call Vote: Carr: Yes, Cadwell: Yes, LaCombe: Yes, Free: Yes, Seaberg: Yes

4. **The conditional use shall be consistent with the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and the objectives of the Au Train Township Master Plan.**

   Discussion: The Commission felt that the use aligns with both the Zoning Ordinance and the Master Plan's intent of providing a district for mixed uses serving both residents and tourists.

   Roll Call Vote: Free: Yes, Cadwell: Yes, LaCombe: Yes, Seaberg: Yes, Carr: Yes

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■ **APPROVED**

☐ **APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS**

☐ **DENIED**

MOTION: Motion by Carr, Second by Seaberg to approve the use of short-term rental for Johnny Ray Kroupa located at E5433 Oak St, Au Train, Parcel ID# 001-376-003-00. The application is found to meet all requirements of the Au Train Township Zoning Ordinance, Section 802A - Basis of Determination General Standards.

ROLL CALL: Carr: Yes, Seaberg: Yes, Cadwell: Yes, LaCombe: Yes, Free: Yes

Motion approved 5-0