Au Train Township
Planning Commission Meeting

Tuesday, September 29, 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 6:00pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

- **ROLL CALL** – Members present: Chair Scott LaCombe, Vice Chair Jesse Cadwell, Secretary Alexandra Kirk, Member Wyatt Seaberg, Member John Carr. Others present: Zoning Administrator Donna Shields, Ryan Carrig of CUPPAD, Kathy Curtis, Paul Benko

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

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – **Motion by Carr, second by Kirk to approve minutes of the September 10, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting as presented. Motion carrie**d

- **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES –** ZA Shields gave a brief summary of the monthly zoning activity as presented to the Township Board at their September 14, 2026 meeting, a copy of which is on file at the Hall and on the Township website.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

- **BOARD COMMENTS** – None

- **NEW BUSINESS**
    - **a** **Resort Moratorium –** A discussion was held regarding resort uses. As with the recent Short-term rental temporary moratorium that was enacted while the PC further defined their use, it was suggested by ZA Shields that the Township also consider doing the same for resort use since there has been talk of multiple possible resort type developments in the Township recently. By allowing the Township time to review and consider regulations governing Resort uses before allowing any further resort uses, a temporary moratorium could mitigate the possibility of creating a future nonconformity.

      Secretary Kirk read aloud the draft resolution recommending the Township Board adopt an immediate temporary 6-month moratorium on resort uses.

      Further discussion was held regarding the timing of this moratorium**,** whereas Commissioner Seaberg felt that imposing a moratorium when the Township knew potential development requests were in the wind would make it look like we were discriminating against those potential developers. ZA Shields reminded the Commissioners of what Ryan Carrig's (CUPPAD) had stated in the past, that this is exactly when you would want to impose such to allow time to review those regulations and to determine necessary changes to the existing regulations. This was reconfirmed by Carrig.

Motion by Carr, second by Cadwell to adopt resolution 2026-002 recommending the Township Board adopt a temporary 6-month moratorium on new resort uses and resort use applications. (Attachment A)

Roll call vote: Carr: Yes, Cadwell: Yes, LaCombe: Yes, Seaberg: No, Kirk: Yes
Motion passed 4-1. The Chair declared the resolution adopted.

- **OLD BUSINESS** –
  Continuation of Review of Zoning Ordinance Edits –

  Commissioner Carr opened with a discussion on section 807 item G. While the Planning Commission has held previous discussions about shifting some duties of the PC over to the ZBA, he wanted to question again the allowance of an appeal of a planning commission decision to be directed to the Zoning Board of Appeals rather than to Circuit Court. Positives about shifting the appeal process to the ZBA were that it offered an opportunity for reconsideration for both parties without the expense of attorneys and court costs. The negatives discussed were the fact that that the ZBA is only a 3-person board with one of the three also being a member of the PC. That person wouldn't be able to participate in the appeal for a decision they helped make, necessitating the need to always have an alternate ZBA member. Past history shows, that's a position that's often unfilled.

  Motion by Carr, second by LaCombe to change section 807 item G to read: "….may appeal the decision to the Circuit Court."

  Roll call vote: Carr: Yes, LaCombe: Yes, Kirk: Yes, Cadwell: Yes, Seaberg: No
  Motion carried 4-1

  The commission continued to review the draft ordinance starting with Section II, moving forward. Other notable changes include the removal of short-term rentals from LS/R2 district with the understanding that there will be some rezoning recommendations tied to this change such as rezoning the 16-mile lake area from LS/R2 to LS/R1.

  ZA Shields asked for discussion on Wireless Communication facilities (towers) as this has been a topic of discussion between land scouts working for Verizon and herself recently. Our current setbacks on towers are that equal to the height of the tower, thus a 300 ft tall tower requires a setback of 300 feet to ensure a safe fall zone. Chris Barton of the Concordia Group (land scouts) pointed out that in Wisconsin, there is a Statute that requires the allowance of setbacks less than the height of the tower if the tower is engineered with a smaller fall zone. It requires a signed affidavit from the engineer. ZA Shields strongly suggested we consider adopting similar regulations as suitable locations for towers in the UP are few and far between. The placement of a wireless tower requires private land with access from a public road that is maintained year-round. With much of the Township seated in the heart of the Hiawatha National Forest and many seasonal roads, suitable land choices are slim as it is. These small adjustments in regulations could prove helpful to bring better wireless coverage to the Township. Also discussed were the zoning districts in which wireless facilities would be permitted.

  Motion by Cadwell, second by Carr to permit wireless communications facilities as a special land use in all zoning districts and to allow a setback equal to the engineered fall zone of the particular tower as provided by affidavit of the designing engineer.

Motion carried.

- **CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Correspondence was received from Duane Newton and was forwarded to the Planning Commission members upon receipt for their review.
- **PUBLIC COMMENT** – None
- **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR COMMENT** – None
- **BOARD COMMENT** – None
- **NEXT MEETING** – Tuesday, October 13, 2026 at 6:00 pm, work session on the Zoning ordinance
- **ADJOURN** – Motion by Carr, second by Seaberg to adjourn at 8:18pm. Motion Carried

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

Approved: October 13, 2026 Signed: _____on file_____
Donna Shields – Recording Secretary

Signed: _____on file_____
Alexandra Free - Secretary

ATTACHMENT A

AU TRAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
ALGER COUNTY, MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-002

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING A SIX-MONTH MORATORIUM ON NEW RESORT USES AND RESORT-USE APPLICATIONS

WHEREAS, Au Train Township, Alger County, Michigan (the "Township"), has adopted a Zoning Ordinance pursuant to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, 2006 PA 110, as amended, MCL 125.3101 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Au Train Township Planning Commission serves as the Township's zoning commission and has responsibility for reviewing and recommending zoning regulations, zoning districts, and amendments to the Township Board; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has determined that additional review and consideration of the Township's regulations governing **Resort uses**, including the definition, location, intensity, dimensional requirements, site design, access, parking, density, occupancy, water and wastewater considerations, compatibility with surrounding properties, and impacts upon natural resources and neighboring land uses, is warranted; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has determined that accepting and processing additional applications for new Resort uses during the period of such review could result in development being approved under regulations that may be subject to revision; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission desires to use a limited and temporary moratorium to provide sufficient time to study the existing regulations, consult with Township officials and planning professionals, consider the Township's adopted Master Plan, and formulate any appropriate amendments to the Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recognizes that a temporary moratorium should be limited in duration and scope and should not be construed to terminate, impair, or otherwise eliminate lawful existing uses, vested rights, or lawful nonconforming uses or structures; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act provides for the Planning Commission to formulate and recommend zoning regulations and amendments to the Township Board, including after appropriate public participation and hearings; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission believes that a temporary six-month pause on new Resort-use applications will provide a reasonable period in which to complete the necessary planning and zoning review while avoiding unnecessary delay beyond the period reasonably required for that review.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Au Train Township Planning Commission hereby **recommends that the Au Train Township Board of Trustees adopt a six-month moratorium on new Resort uses and applications for new Resort uses within Au Train Township**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that during the moratorium period, the Township shall not accept for processing or approve an application seeking approval of a new Resort use, including an application for a zoning compliance permit, conditional use permit, special land use approval, site plan approval, or other zoning approval when the principal purpose of the application is to establish a new Resort use, to the extent permitted by law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the moratorium shall commence upon adoption by the Au Train Township Board of Trustees and shall remain in effect for **six (6) months**, unless earlier terminated or extended by lawful action of the Township Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the moratorium shall not apply to:

1. A Resort use that was lawfully established before the effective date of the moratorium;
2. A lawful nonconforming use or structure, except as otherwise permitted by applicable law;
3. An application for a use that was lawfully approved or vested before the effective date of the moratorium;
4. A development or application for which the applicant has acquired vested rights under applicable law; or
5. Routine permits or approvals that do not establish or authorize a new Resort use.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that during the moratorium the Planning Commission shall review the Township's existing regulations governing Resort uses and shall consider whether amendments are appropriate, including but not limited to:

- The definition and classification of Resort uses;
- The zoning districts in which Resort uses may be permitted;

- Whether Resort uses should be permitted by right or subject to conditional/special land-use approval;
- Minimum lot area and density;
- Maximum number and type of lodging units;
- Building size, height, setbacks, and site coverage;
- Parking and access requirements;
- Private roads and emergency access;
- Water supply and wastewater/septic capacity;
- Shoreline and natural-resource impacts;
- Noise, lighting, traffic, and compatibility with neighboring properties;
- Distinction between Resorts, campgrounds, short-term rentals, recreational structures, and other transient or seasonal accommodations; and
- Any other standards the Planning Commission determines necessary to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of Township residents and to implement the Township's planning objectives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission shall provide its findings and any recommended zoning amendments to the Township Board for consideration before expiration of the moratorium, to the extent reasonably practicable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution constitutes a **recommendation of the Au Train Township Planning Commission** to the Au Train Township Board of Trustees and shall not itself impose a moratorium unless and until the Township Board takes the appropriate legislative action.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission recommends that the Township Board direct the Township's zoning administrator, planning consultant, and/or legal counsel, as appropriate, to implement the moratorium consistent with applicable Michigan law and the final action of the Township Board.

Adopted by the Au Train Township Planning Commission at a meeting duly held on the 29th day of September, 2026.

AU TRAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

By: _____
Chairperson – Scott LaCombe

By: _____
Secretary – Alexandra Kirk

Roll Call Vote

AYES: Carr, Cadwell, LaCombe, Kirk

NAYS: Seaberg

ABSENT: _____

ABSTAIN: _____

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.