



# Plymouth Planning Commission

## Regular Meeting Minutes

### Wednesday, November 12, 2025 - 6:00 p.m.

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City of Plymouth  
201 S. Main Street  
Plymouth, Michigan 48170

[www.plymouthmi.gov](http://www.plymouthmi.gov)  
734-453-1234

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hollie Saraswat called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Hollie Saraswat, Vice Chair Kyle Medaugh, Marni Schroeder, Trish Horstman, Zach Funk, Dave Scott, Sidney Filippis, and Katie Rossie

Excused: Commissioner Joe Hawthorne

Also present: Planning and Community Development Director Greta Bolhuis and Planning Consultant Sally Elmiger

#### 2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

#### 3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Funk moved to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2025 meeting as written. Horstman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Filippis made a motion to approve the agenda as written for the November 12, 2025 meeting. Medaugh seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 5. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Chair Saraswat applauded the Commission for the passage of the Master Plan by the City Commission, highlighting the engaging discussions and commending their dedication and hard work put into the document through numerous meetings and sub-committee sessions.

#### 6. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

#### 7. NEW BUSINESS

##### a. Planning Commission Training – Presented by Doug Lewan, Carlisle-Wortman

Planning & Community Development Director Greta Bolhuis introduced Doug Lewan from Carlisle Wortman, who presented training on "Making Sound Zoning Decisions." She noted the training had been well received by the Commission in the past. Commissioners were encouraged to ask questions throughout or wait until the end.

Mr. Lewan introduced himself, mentioning he has been a city resident for 29 years and has worked in planning since 1988, with Carlisle Wortman Associates since 1993.

The training covered several key areas:

**Planning and Zoning Basics in Michigan:**

- Mr. Lewan explained the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110) and the Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33)
- He emphasized that planning should always come before zoning decisions ("plan first, zone second")
- He described the history of these laws, which were consolidated in 2006 and 2008 from previous separate acts for cities, townships, and counties
- Mr. Lewan noted that zoning is not required by law but is enabled by state legislation

**Master Plans:**

- Mr. Lewan congratulated the Commission on their recently adopted Master Plan
- He explained that master plans are policy documents, while zoning ordinances are regulatory documents (the law)
- The master plan must be reviewed at least every five years, though it doesn't have to be updated if still valid
- Chair Saraswat asked about the five-year review process and how to evaluate what needs updating
- Bolhuis asked about timing when updates take longer than expected

**Decision-Making Process:**

- Mr. Lewan differentiated between discretionary and non-discretionary approvals:
  - Non-discretionary approvals (must be approved if standards are met): administrative decisions, site plans, amendments
  - Discretionary approvals: special land use permits, PUDs
- Commissioner Horstman asked about balancing community input with ordinance requirements
- The discussion covered how to handle public comments that provide new information versus general opposition

**PUDs (Planned Unit Developments):**

- Chair Saraswat asked about PUD requirements in the law
- Mr. Lewan explained that PUDs are mentioned in Public Act 110, but communities aren't required to have them
- Bolhuis asked about interpreting master plan language when applying it to PUDs
- The commission discussed challenges with "designing from the bench" during PUD reviews

**Legal Issues and Decision-Making Best Practices:**

- Mr. Lewan stressed the importance of making decisions based on standards in the ordinance
- He recommended using model motions to ensure decisions are properly documented
- He explained that motions must include not just the standards but how a project meets or fails to meet them
- Mr. Lewan noted that courts generally defer to local decisions unless there's a poor record or improper conduct

**b. Quick Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

Bolhuis introduced the initial quick zoning ordinance amendments, aimed at aligning with federal and state law requirements. These are the first of numerous amendments the Commission will review in the coming months.

Vice-Chair Medaugh, a sub-committee member, stated they have met since June to address the "easiest" amendments focused on law changes, intentionally dividing the work into sections.

The Commission discussed the process for amendments:

- Bolhuis proposed discussing them at a regular meeting before scheduling public hearings.

- Commissioner Horstman pointed out that the sub-committee began with easier items, with tougher topics ahead.
- Chair Saraswat raised concerns that the timeline could stretch into 2027.
- Vice-Chair Medaugh acknowledged the goal of finishing "quick changes" in a year was ambitious.

The Commission deliberated on grouping amendments for public hearings, aiming to balance necessary public input with efficient progress. Commissioner Filippis recommended having agenda items monthly, while others stressed the importance of thoroughly discussing more complex topics.

Bolhuis offered to create a work plan with timeline and deadlines to help organize the process moving forward.

## **8. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

City Commissioner Minton reported that the City Commission approved the Master Plan with a 6-1 roll call vote. He also noted that the next City Commission meeting on Monday would include Nick Moroz and Suzi Deal leaving the commission, with Joe Elliott and Karen Sisolak joining, followed by voting on mayor and mayor pro-tem positions.

Bolhuis distributed printed copies of the newly adopted Master Plan to all Planning Commissioners.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Filippis made a motion to adjourn. Schroeder seconded.

There was a voice vote.

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.