Keene Township Planning Commission

Minutes from Meeting dated September 28, 2026.

Briggs called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present - Denny Briggs, Matt Stahlin, Nancy Solomon, Cori Wilber, Nate Wolff

Recognition of Visitors: Eleven members of the community were present along with new Zoning Administrator, David Kelsey.

Approval or Changes to the Agenda: Wolff motioned to approve the agenda with correction to his last name from Wolfe to Wolff. Motion seconded by Stahlin. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: Wilber motioned to approve the last meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Wolff. All in favor. Motion carried.

Board Report: Wolff presented his report from the last Township Board Meeting.

Report from Zoning Administrator: New ZA, David Kelsey was introduced. Supervisor, Smiley, stated she is currently helping Briggs with zoning requests which include the following:

- Letter was sent regarding multiple piles of discarded material and a rooster crowing
- Resident at 1751 Whites Bridge is working to be compliant by cleaning up the property and purchasing a new shed.
- New home application for 1405 Shagawa Trail was approved and sent to the county.
- New pole barn and livestock shelter at 1395 Flat River Point was approved and sent to the county.
- Permit to rebuild a home destroyed by fire is in process. Address is 10620 Sparks Rd
- Permit for a deck at 8543 was processed.
- Application to build a new barn and garage addition was submitted for 775 N Marble Rd
- Application to build a new pole barn and arena was submitted for 11300 Sayles Rd

Public Comment - Topics Not on Agenda:

- More notice is requested for road chipping
- A representative from the Road Department will attend the October 13, 2026 Board Meeting

PUBLIC HEARING - H. Melton Special Use Application for Private Drive:

- Melton explained the timeline of the application.
    - Private drive consists of seven parcels with an estimated increase in taxable value of approximately 3.5 million dollars.
    - Property is not USDA prime farmland and has presented challenges as a hay field.

- Public Comments:
    - Resident questioned why a public hearing was being held for a project that is largely completed
    - Neighbor expressed concerns about privacy, safety, and potential trespassing now that it is being developed for housing. She expressed concern about their property and pond. The developer stated they plan on marking the boundaries with “T” posts.
    - Concerns were raised about the impact of construction traffic. It was explained that Pinckney is a county road, and its maintenance and capacity are handled by the Ionia County Road Commission and not the township. The Road Commission already approved the application, implying they deemed the road sufficient.
    - Several neighbors expressed concern about privacy and losing their country space from nearby neighbors.
    - One neighbor mentioned how the property was marketed because of family interest in purchasing it as a whole.
    - Neighboring residents voiced concern they were not adequately informed. The property owner apologized for the lack of transparency.
    - A neighboring resident was concerned about setbacks for Rural Residential.
- Comments from Planning Commission:
    - PC recognized a need to update the township’s private road ordinance, which was last updated in 1998. The current ordinance does not have a clear checklist for applicants.
    - PC reviewed an application for a private drive. It was noted that while the process has been confusing and out of order, the application itself appears to meet all ordinance requirements for rural residential areas.
    - One member stated that the applicant “checks all the boxes” and another acknowledged that this is the type of area where the township should encourage growth.
    - Former Zoning Administrator, Jeanne Vandersloot, submitted public comments which noted inconsistencies in the process but ultimately concluded the project is allowable under the ordinance.
    - PC decided the new Zoning Administrator, David Kelsey should review the project to ensure all paperwork and previous steps were handled correctly, given the circumstances of staff turnover. ZA will look into violation.
    - Motion made by Stahlin to give preliminary approval for private drive project. Motion seconded by Wolff. Roll call vote: Wolff - yes, Solomon - abstain, Briggs - yes, Stahlin - yes, Wilber - yes. Motion carried with 4 yes and 1 abstain.

Old Business:

- Tabulation of Master Plan - Select Vendor
    - Master Plan Surveys have been opened and consolidated into a box by Solomon, Hendrick, and Wolff for further tabulation.

    - PC has decided to select Josh Belfer, Data Analyst from Wolverine to tabulate the Master Plan Survey results.
    - Wolff motioned to go with Wolverine employee, Josh Belfer to tabulate the results of the surveys which will be scanned by Wolff, Solomon and resident, Edee Kornoelje. Motion seconded by Stahlin. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Data Center Ordinance
    - Keene currently does not have a moratorium on Data Centers.
    - Due to time restraints, Wilber motioned to table the Data Center Ordinance. Motion seconded by Stahlin. All in favor. Motion carried.

New Business:

- Review next items list - What to work on next.
    - Next Board meeting is on October 13th. A representative from the Road Department will be present. Residents were encouraged to attend and voice their concerns about the roads.
    - Next Planning Commission meeting is on November 5th.
    - Main agenda for this meeting is to work on the Data Center Ordinance and potentially review the Master Plan Survey results if available.
    - Motion to table reviewing next items list by Wolff. Motion seconded by Stahlin. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment - Any Topic:

- It was mentioned that the PC might need to add another meeting to work on the results from the survey and the Data Center Ordinance and/or Moratorium
- Liability for having a pond on private property was discussed.
- No trespassing signs were suggested.

Adjournment:

Wolff motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:43. Motion seconded by Stahlin. All in favor. Motion carried,

Minutes documented by Nancy Solomon.