

**Minutes of the Sparta Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting of Tuesday, February 10th, 2026, 7PM
Sparta Township Hall, 160 E Division ST., Sparta MI**

This meeting can be viewed live or recorded at <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu9bOagfR6m02k7rdmX3TLA>

Present: Chairperson Terry Hartman (9/28), Vice Chairperson Tim Driscoll (9/28), Commissioners Don Doyle (9/27), Ken Humphreys (9/27), Secretary Linda Anderson (9/28) and Township Board Trustee Barb Johnson (12/28).

Also Present: Zoning Administrator/Planner Kevin Yeomans of Fresh Coast Planning, Sparta Township Supervisor Dale Bergman, and recording Secretary Sarah Fischer.

Absent: Commissioner Dale Flanery (9/27)

I./II. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance: Chairperson Hartman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Additions or Corrections to the Agenda: Motion by Johnson, second by Discoll to approve the Agenda as written. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Minutes of January 13, 2026, Regular Meeting: Motion by Doyle, second by Humphreys to approve the Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Public Comment (for items on the Agenda):

Brooks Burg of 10870 Phelps Rd. emphasized his concern that the proposed data center project represents "too much, too fast, too soon." He reminded everyone that township citizens and voters are calling for a moratorium on data centers while the community takes time to learn more about their potential impacts.

VI. Business Items:

A. Public Hearing – Moratorium Amendment

No public comments were received, the public hearing was closed, and the Commission moved into deliberation. The Planning Commission reviewed a proposed zoning ordinance amendment intended to streamline the process for adopting future moratoriums based on legal counsel's recommendation to better address rapidly evolving technologies. Johnson made the motion to recommend that they adopt the moratorium ordinance as presented to the Township board, second by Doyle. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Public Hearing – Master Plan Review Adoption & Accessory Dwelling Unit

Regulations No public comments were received, the public hearing was closed, and the Commission moved into deliberation. The Planning Commission reviewed proposed

updates to the Master Plan, including clarifying language for the Mixed Use Residential Commercial designation. The revisions maintain the original intent but remove reference to a specific development method, allowing flexibility through future zoning ordinance updates.

Discussion centered on the commercially zoned strip along Sparta Avenue, where several existing homes are legally non-conforming. Concerns were raised about limitations on rebuilding or expanding these properties. The Commission agreed that revisions to the future land use map and related text were needed to better reflect the corridor's mixed residential and commercial character. Johnson made a motion to table the discussion until the Master Plan is updated with the proposed revisions. The motion was supported with all members in favor.

C. Accessory Dwelling Units

The Commission also revisited proposed amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations. The revisions require Special Land Use approval and limit occupancy to the property owner and family members. Johnson made a motion to accept the amendments as written. The motion was supported with all members in favor, and the Commission is forwarding the recommendation to the Township Board for consideration.

D. Data Center Regulation Review

The Planning Commission began initial discussions on a proposed zoning ordinance amendment addressing data centers. Legal counsel prepared a draft ordinance that outlines key considerations such as power and water usage, emergency preparedness, decommissioning requirements, and financial guarantees.

Commission members provided preliminary feedback and identified additional areas for research and potential regulation, including but not limited to:

- Minimum lot size and increased setbacks
- Generator placement and noise standards
- Screening, landscaping, and architectural design requirements
- Distance from schools
- Impacts on farms, livestock, and pollinators
- Clear definitions distinguishing small-scale facilities from large "hyperscale" data centers
- Classification as industrial vs. commercial uses
- Infrastructure and potential legacy costs to the Township

Public comment raised concerns about allowable noise levels and recommended stricter standards. The discussion focused on gathering direction and research topics before further refining the ordinance. Staff will continue reviewing best practices from other

communities, participate in upcoming training/webinars, and return with additional information and recommendations.

VII. Public Comment (for items on or not on the agenda): None

Brooks Burg of 10870 Phelps Rd. raised concerns about potential **electromagnetic field (EMF) impacts** associated with data centers, including effects on electronics, people, and nearby animals.

VIII. Staff and Commissioner Comments

Land Division Act Amendment

Kevin provided an update on the upcoming Land Division Act changes effective March 2027. The amendments will allow more lot splits, particularly affecting A2 and R1 districts, while minimum lot sizes in A1 remain unchanged. Larger private roads may be required for parcels with multiple splits, and additional guidance from legal counsel and the Michigan Townships Association is still pending.

The Planning Commission's worklist includes 15 items, with priorities such as home occupation regulations, duplexes, master plan updates, and data center rules. Other key areas under review include zoning clarifications, setbacks, stormwater standards, solar and battery regulations, and private road requirements, with a broader zoning ordinance restatement planned to streamline and simplify processes.

IX. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 7:59 pm EST by Humpheys, second by Anderson. The motion passed unanimously, with all members in favor.

Submitted by: Sarah Fischer