

Manistee County Planning Building • 395 Third Street • Manistee, Michigan 49660

**DRAFT**  
Thursday, January 22, 2026  
2:00PM

Manistee Planning Conference Room  
395 Third Street,  
Manistee, MI 49660

**MANISTEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

A. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Glenn Zaring at 2:00 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Glenn Zaring, Duane Jones, Phil Landis, Ted Batzer, Tyler Dula,  
and Jeff Dontz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mary Becker-Witt

OTHERS PRESENT: Katie Gruenberg Planning Director, Jodie Lynch Planner 1,  
Jessica Sorensen Assistant Planning Secretary/Assistant to Planner

B. Approval of the Agenda

**Mr. Dontz moved, seconded by Mr. Batzer, to approve the January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, agenda as printed. Motion passed with a voice vote.**

C. Public Comment.

Ms. Gruenberg introduced Scott Fraley, the Planning Departments new Clerical Assistant, to the Commission.

D. House Keeping Business

**Mr. Batzer moved, seconded by Mr. Landis, to approve the December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025, minutes as printed. Motion passed with a voice vote.**

E. Unfinished Business and Reports.

1. Planning Department Update

**Ms. Gruenberg Report** – Ms. Gruenberg added

- Budget status was reviewed and confirmed to be within target.
- Interviews for an open planner position are ongoing; a preferred candidate is visiting in person, with a potential start date following June graduation.
- Land Bank Authority projects
  - Progressing, with completed projects submitted for reimbursement.
  - One project (7780 Lake Street) faces cost challenges that may affect scope or outcome.
  - All grant-funded projects must be completed by September 1, with no extensions available.
  - Manistee County has received over \$3 million through the Blight Elimination Program.

**Ms. Lynch Report** – Ms. Lynch added

- Staff coordination with the new building inspector was discussed, noting strong communication and adherence to code.
- Updates were provided on zoning and building compliance issues.
- Ongoing efforts were described to balance enforcement with cooperation when working with townships and property owners.
- Staff emphasized the importance of working within authority while supporting township-preferred enforcement approaches.

**Mr. Surbrook Report** – Updates provided by Ms. Gruenberg & Ms. Lynch

- Code enforcement efforts were commended, particularly the emphasis on encouraging cooperation between property owners and local officials.

**Annual Address Report** – Ms. Sorensen added

- This year's report included minor methodology changes to better reflect housing units and avoid data misinterpretation.

Mr. Zaring prompted brief discussion on the soil erosion and sediment control program, including potential non-regulatory collaboration with the Manistee County Conservation District for technical guidance.

2. Meetings and Trainings Attended by Planning Commission Members

**Mr. Dontz attended:**

- Rail Relocation meeting
- County Board of Commissioners meeting
- Economic Development and Chamber meeting - discussion on data centers and infrastructure considerations.

**Mr. Dula attended:**

- Portage Lake Board meeting
- Green Team meeting
- Materials Management Planning meeting – going to monthly meeting

**Mr. Jones attended:**

- Manistee County Land Bank Authority meeting

**Mr. Zaring attended:**

- Manistee County Recreation Commission meeting

Mr. Batzer questioned data center zoning classifications, discussion followed regarding infrastructure needs, power requirements, and the importance of proactive planning.

F. New Business

1. City of Manistee Master Plan Review

Staff presented a review memo confirming compliance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Ms. Gruenberg noted minor typographical corrections.

**Mr. Jones moved, seconded by Mr. Landis, to approve the staff review memo for the City of Manistee's Master Plan as presented for distribution with Mr. Zaring's endorsement on behalf of the Planning Commission. Motion passed with a voice vote.**

2. Kaleva Village and Maple Grove Township Joint Zoning Ordinance Review  
Staff summarized the joint zoning ordinance review and noted minor land use alignment issues.

Mr. Zaring highlighted this ordinance as a joint ordinance and noted the potential as an example for future joint ordinances.

**Mr. Batzer moved, seconded by Mr. Landis, to approve and forward the staff report for the Kaleva Village and Maple Grove Township Joint Zoning Ordinance Review. Motion passed with a voice vote.**

3. Other Business from Planning Commission members or its staff.
  - a. Printed Copies of County Master Plan
    - Discussion was held regarding printing hard copies of the County Master Plan, including binding options, costs, and potential distribution.
    - Staff were asked to identify recipients and explore interest from local boards and agencies prior to ordering.

#### G. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by call of the Vice Chair Mr. Zaring at 2:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Duane Jones  
Manistee County Planning Commission Secretary