

WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP
7644 Durham Rd., Whitehall 49461
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2026

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order promptly at 6:00pm by Carmen Rodriguez, Chairperson

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Planning Commission Members Present: Carmen Rodriguez, Al Wheeler, Tim Hicks, Tom Zmolek and David Holly

Planning Commission Member Absent: Kathy Dusseau

Guests Present: Dennis Kroll, Twp. Supervisor; John Duff,

IV. Approval of Agenda

- A. Chairperson Rodriguez requested review and a motion to approve the agenda. After a minor correction pointed out by Mr. Wheeler was made, Mr. Holly made the motion to approve. Mr. Holly made the motion to approve. Mr. Wheeler seconded. Motion carried.

V. Approval of Minutes

- A. Chairperson Rodriguez noted that minutes were from the November meeting were not available, but would be placed on the agenda for approval in February.

VI. Election of Officers

- A. After a debate about whether to table the election, a quorum of the commission was present and Mr. Hicks made a motion to nominate the current slate of officers for another term: Ms. Rodriguez as Chairperson, Mr. Wheeler as Vice Chair, Mr. Zmolek as Secretary. The motion was seconded by Mr. Holly. Motion carried.

VII. Public Comment

- A. Ms. Rodriguez opened up the meeting for public comment clarifying that this would be the only opportunity to comment, including comment on the proposal put forth to the commissioners under new business.
 - 1. Mr. Bill Kempf of 1726 Silver Creek expressed concern about having to comment without hearing what is proposed. He questioned the purpose

of the proposed construction at 1769 Silver Creek Road, citing the lack of information about the proposed use—farming? A commercial business?

2. Mr. Robert D. Meloche, father of the owner of 1769 Silver Creek, clarified that his son planned to use the proposed construction to work on and house classic cars. He pointed out that both the home and the proposed building are far (686' according to the diagram) from Silver Creek Road and therefore not visible from the road.
3. Members asked various questions of Mr. Meloche.
4. Being no other public comment, Ms. Rodriguez closed this part of the meeting.

VIII. New Business

A. Special Use Permit – 1769 Silver Creek

1. Ms. Rodriguez clarified that a special use permit was required as the location of the new construction was not “behind” the home as required by township zoning ordinance.
2. Ms. Rodriguez walked the commission through the five board guidelines for approval of a special use permit (see attached).
3. Mr. Hicks made a motion to recommend, to the full township board, approval of the special use permit based on successful review of the board guidelines. Mr. Holly seconded the motion. Ms. Rodriguez called for a Roll Call Vote: Hicks, Dusseau, Holly, Wheeler, Zmolek. Motion carried—Unanimous.

IX. Site Plan Approval – Hickory Place

1. Ms. Rodriguez clarified for the commission that the question on the table is an alteration to the original site plan. The Muskegon County Road Commission (MCRC) vetoed the original plan regarding the sidewalk/bike trail along Durham Road.
2. Mr. Kyle Johnson, representing Hickory Place, that the MCRC pointed out several problems with the original plan including: the existence of underground fiber optics cabling which would need to be moved at a prohibitive cost. In addition, each neighbor would need to be contacted and polled.
3. Mr. Johnson, accompanied by Mr. Dan Wilson, shared the alternative plan proposed by MCRC (revised drawings were shared with the commission). He pointed out several advantages to the revised plan, including:
 - The revised paths connect to existing bike trails which cross the township.
 - The alternate proposal makes grant approval more likely.
 - It supports the activity of the many children likely to be living in the new development.
4. Mr. Dennis Kroll, Township Supervisor, shared that he had a conference call with representatives of MCRC and confirmed that the new plan called for a

"four foot shoulder paved."

5. After a short discussion, Mr. Holly made the motion to recommend, to the full township board, approval of the site plan alteration as shown. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wheeler.
6. Ms. Rodriguez called for a roll call vote. Roll Call Vote: Hicks, Holly, Wheeler, Zmolek, Rodriguez. Motion carried—Unanimous.

X. Unfinished Business

A. Review Master Plan Memo

1. Ms. Rodriguez drew the commissioners attention to the correspondence from Mr. Hicks which continued the discussion about the township Master Plan and raised several excellent questions. Mr. Hicks summarized these issues for the members.
2. A lengthy discussion ensued including the benefits of maintaining an updated Master Plan, the many assets available to citizens of the township (Hilts Landing, Pickle Ball, Disc Golf, etc. Mr. Hicks shared a recent survey of residents showing the popularity of various offerings by the township.
3. Mr. Kroll shared some of the many challenges facing the township and discussion about methods of increasing revenue followed.
4. Ms. Rodriguez indicated she would talk with Rachael Novak about the process for strategically rezoning specific plots of land (with the transfer station on the corner of Whitehall Road and Benston being the prime example) for sale and development.
5. Mr. Duff suggested looking at the Master Plans of other townships like Fruitland and Blue Lake to gain ideas.
6. Mr. Hicks reiterated his recommendation to explore the use of a consultant to bring together the various parts of past master plans in order to move forward.

XI. Correspondence

A. No new correspondence.

XII. Other

XIII. Announcements.

A. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 6pm.

XIV. Adjournment

A. Mr. Wheeler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hicks seconded. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Carmen Rodriguez, Chairperson

Date

Thomas Zmolek, Secretary

Date