

## Planning Commission – Minutes

**When:** Wednesday, December 17, 2025  
5:30 PM

**Where:** Hillsdale City Hall  
Council Chambers  
97 N Broad St  
Hillsdale, MI 49242

### 1. Call to Order

- a. Chair Laycock called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.
- b. Roll call taken by Zoning Administrator Smith
  - i. Commissioners Present: Kelemen, Coykendall, Laycock, Morrisey, Winter, and Shelley
  - ii. Members Absent: Kniffin (excused)
- c. Others in Attendance: Penny Gimenez, Douglas Price, Dorothy Price, Bob Norton Sr, Bob Norton II, Matthew Bentley (City Council), Scott Sessions (City Council, Mayor), and Olivia Smith (Zoning Administrator)

### 2. Public Comment on Agenda Items

- a. None

### 3. Housekeeping Business

- a. Other
  - i. New Member Welcome – Cathy Kelemen
    1. Chair Laycock welcomed Commissioner Kelemen
  - ii. Selection of Officers
    1. Motion by Winter for the 2026 Officers to be the following selected by the Commission: Chair – Laycock, Vice Chair – Kniffin, and Secretary – Winter. Second by Morrisey. Motion passed 6-0.
- b. Consent Business
  - i. Approval of Agenda
  - ii. Approval of Minutes from November 19, 2025 meeting
    1. Morrisey noted that Kniffin, as Secretary, neglected to include his name in the roll call. The minutes will be amended.
  - iii. Motion by Morrisey to approve the amended consent business. Second by Winter. Motion passed 6-0.

### 4. New Business

- a. Public Hearing – Rezoning of 244 E Bacon St

- i. Smith introduced the agenda item
- ii. Norton II, on behalf of Chase Residence LLC, took to the podium to further detail the request and answer any questions or concerns from the Commissioners
  1. Winter – Inquired about the project timeline
    - a. Norton II – Approximately two years for the quadplex. Infrastructure installation for the condominiums would come after. 4-5 year horizon.
- iii. Chair Laycock opened the public hearing at 5:45 PM
- iv. With no public comment, Chair Laycock closed the public hearing at 5:46 PM and opened the floor for further Commissioner comments or questions for the Applicant.
  1. Winter – Concerned about resale following rezoning and a large complex being built by a new owner
  2. Coykendall – Asked for clarification on future site plan approvals
  3. Morrissey – Answered Coykendall question
  4. Winter – Asked if Applicant spoke with neighbors about the proposed project
    - a. Norton II – Quelled concerns of adjacent neighbors
  5. Laycock – Proposed plan is consistent with goals in the Master Plan. Encouraged by what is presented and the development to take place. Hopes that it encourages development in the area. Not concerned about over development.
- v. Motion by Morrissey to recommend the ordinance amendment to City Council. Second by Kelemen. Chair Laycock requested a roll call vote:

Kelemen – Yes  
 Coykendall – Yes  
 Laycock – Yes  
 Morrissey – Yes  
 Winter – Yes  
 Shelley – Yes

Motion passed 6-0

- b. Public Hearing – Rezoning of 350 Hillsdale St Parcel B
  - i. Smith introduced the agenda item
  - ii. The Applicant or a Representative was not present
  - iii. Chair Laycock opened the public hearing at 5:55 PM
    1. Penny Gimenez, owner of 17 Griswold St, approached the podium with questions regarding the rezoning of 244 E Bacon St.
      - a. Smith let Gimenez and Commission know that her concerns were for the previous public hearing, but answered her questions. Gimenez apologized.
  - iv. Chair Laycock closed the public hearing at 5:58 PM and opened the floor for further Commission comment or questions.
    1. Coykendall – Inquired why this property had been brought before the Commission numerous times

- a. Smith clarified the need for the property to be split, the conditions applied to the split by Planning Commission and City Council, and the rezoning fulfilling that condition.
- v. Motion by Winter to recommend the ordinance amendment to City Council. Second by Coykendall. Chair Laycock requested a roll call vote:

Kelemen – Yes  
Coykendall – Yes  
Laycock – Yes  
Morrissey – Yes  
Winter – Yes  
Shelley – Yes

Motion passed 6-0

- c. Public Hearing – 5-Year Recreation Plan
  - i. Smith introduced the agenda item
  - ii. Chair Laycock asked the public if any were present for this public hearing. None approached. Chair Laycock opened the floor for Commissioner comment and questions.
    - 1. Winter – Appreciated the improvements made to previous versions.
    - 2. Kelemen – With being new to the Commission, was not aware of all the work the Recreation Department put into the Plan. Appreciated the effort.
    - 3. Coykendall – Plans without funding are not plans. Concerned about the City being held to the goals within the Plan. Hoped that would not be the case.
    - 4. Laycock – Clarified that the Plan was a guiding and not binding. Believed that it was a statutory requirement.
    - 5. Winter – Requested that future Plans clearly separate “plausible” from “wish list” items for better guidance.
  - iii. Motion by Winter to recommend the draft of the 2025-2030 City of Hillsdale Recreation Plan to City Council. Second by Coykendall. Chair Laycock requested a roll call vote:

Kelemen – Yes  
Coykendall – Yes  
Laycock – Yes  
Morrissey – Yes  
Winter – Yes  
Shelley – Yes

Motion passed 6-0

- d. Ordinance Review – Sec. 36-596
  - i. Smith introduced the agenda item

- ii. Winter – Essentially unenforceable as written. Discussed the “spirit of the ordinance.”
- iii. Morrissey – Echoed the lack of clarity as currently written. Should be split up into different requirements.
- iv. Coykendall – Potential intent to prohibit junk car storage in residential areas.
- v. Laycock – Cannot interpret for enforcement purposes. Intent needs to be clarified by rewriting the ordinance. Requested that proposed language be submitted to Smith for January meeting.

## **5. Zoning Administrator Report**

- a. Plan for 2026 Ordinance Review – Monthly workshops to review ordinances. One public hearing and one ordinance amendment to City Council at the end of the year.
- b. Annual Planning Commission Report will be available for January meeting
- c. Annual CIP Update – Departments are reporting numbers. Draft will be available for Planning Commission review and action soon.
- d. Review or complete rewrite of the Master Plan in 2026.

## **6. Commissioner Comments**

- a. Laycock – Thanked the Commission for their vote of confidence in selecting him as Chair for 2026. Wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

## **7. Public Comment on Commission-Related Items**

- a. Mayor Sessions – Thanked the Commissioners for serving. Wished them all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## **8. Adjournment**

- a. Chair Laycock made the Commission aware of the 2026 meeting schedule
- b. Next meeting: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 5:30 PM
- c. Motion by Winter to adjourn. Second by Morrissey. Motion passed 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:23 PM.