

# MINUTES OF THE AUGRES TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

APRIL 27th, 2026

**DRAFT**

9:00 A.M.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chairman Jesse Young, Patricia Tremble, Donna Wilson, Aurette Gates, Robert Cotter and Art Gallop (Zoning Administrator)

**ABSENT:** None

**PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:** Jim Herzog and Michael Oxley

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 9:00am with the Pledge of Allegiance

**APPROVAL of AGENDA:** Motion made by Robert Cotter to approve the agenda as presented. Motion supported by Patricia Tremble. Voice vote. All Ayes. No Nays. Agenda approved.

**BOARD COMMENT:** Cotter on the flooding situation along US-23 and his home (460 E Huron Road). Commenting that, according to the County Drain Commissioner, the Drain Map on the wall in the township hall was not the map being used by the state, nor the county drain office. Rather a map which goes back to the 1800's. Specifically with respect to the Prairie Creek drain (which services Cotter's property) instead of running through his property, actually runs along US-23. The county says that our map does not exist, even though it is clearly dated October 2000.

Township Supervisor Jim Herzog, along with Zoning Administrator Art Gallop, walked the drain and that there was a lot of cleanup needed.

Tremble suggested that a future planning commission meeting be held at 7:00pm to see how many people might show up to a night meeting. Chairman Jesse Young asked if any board member had any issues with doing so. All agreed it was a good idea.

**APPROVAL of the MINUTES:** Motion made by Tremble to approve the minutes of the March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 - 1st Quarterly Planning Commission meeting. Motion supported by Cotter. Voice vote. All Ayes. No Nays. March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 Minutes approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None at this time.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Moratoriums: Solar Farms, Data Centers and Large Battery Facilities:**

Tremble explained that, since the March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, where the PC recommended to the Township Board of Trustees to adopt these moratoriums, she read that MTA (Michigan Township Association) stated these moratoriums should be adopted as township ordinances. At the April 14<sup>th</sup> 2026 township board meeting, these ordinances, placing moratoriums against Solar Farms, Data Centers, and Large Battery Facilities in Au Gres Township were adopted by resolution. Clerk Michael Oxley had included the three ordinances in the agenda packets for PC members to put in their Zoning Ordinance notebooks.

**Defining Grass Mowing on Residential Properties:** "This discussion had been tabled at the last Planning Commission meeting.

Donna Wilson, having done a lot of reading of state and local policies, suggested the previously defined Lakeshore/Residential definition be applied to Commercial properties, Realtor properties for sale, and Rental properties. Making the property owner responsible for grass mowing.

Aurette Gates states that fines for non-compliance should be designated, which non-payment going on an owner's taxes. Gates further suggested, if a notification letter is sent, 10 days to comply, as grass grows fast and summer passes by just as quickly. Notifications should begin as of May 1<sup>st</sup> forward, as well.

Tremble read from ordinances which she researched, noting the challenges to regulating grass mowing.

"On all residential lots of one acre or less in area, any Residential or Agricultural Zone where the lot is adjacent to an established public street, and further is adjacent to an occupied or developed Residential property on at least on side, weeds and grasses shall be maintained below the height of eight inches maximum. This ordinance shall apply and require cutting of weeds and grasses for at least the first two hundred feet fronting from any roadway.

Following this, there was much back and forth discussion amongst board members, including input from Township board members Herzog and Oxley (as allowed by Chairman Jesse Young). There was concern on how to designate residential properties from agricultural or forest. Tremble suggested language where a property owner would have to mow within so many feet of a dwelling. Wilson asked how many complaints has the township received. Herzog said there are three properties, one on Court Street and two on Booth Road. Oxley stated that not everyone wants 'golf course lawns' but would rather have wild flowers and wild life. It was brought up that not all residents able to mow their lawns, or can they afford a lawn service. Cotter cautioned against putting something in zoning which would end up badly for the township board. Young noted that it is near impossible to please on property owner without hurting another. These considerations were discussed for twenty minutes or more when Chairman Young suggested the topic be tabled indefinitely. Tremble made a motion to leave mowing as it currently stands in the Zoning Ordinance. Wilson supported the motion. Voice Vote: All Ayes. No Nays. Motion approved.

**Ditch Cleaning Where Drains Empty into Saginaw Bay:** Cotter brought up the topic for discussion after visiting the ends of county drains/township ditches. Watching drone footage during the spring flood caused by so many days of rain. He noticed that many of the drain ditches were hampered with standing Phragmites and cattails, as well as clogged with debris, weeds, grasses, sticks and logs being brought down a flowing drain. He wondered if the township could clean out the ends of some of these using township ditching funds. Herzog reported that he and Dale Dittenber (resident and foreman of the Arenac County Road Commission) have surveyed many of the drains, especially since the flooding. Herzog to follow up on the legality of digging out county drains with the Drain Commissioner and also with EGLE and the Corps of Engineers.

**BOARD COMMENT:** Tremble asked about checking on the Crawford Road Bridge, as it is very near a danger on Crawford. And also what is the progress on opening up the Noggle Road bridge on Lenter road?

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** TIME – 10:10am. Motion made by Tremble to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Gates. Voice vote. All Ayes. No Nays. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes approved at the Planning Commission Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Jesse Young, Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Michael Oxley, Clerk \_\_\_\_\_