

BOWNE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

ADOPTED MINUTES

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

The Bowne Township Planning Commission's regular monthly meeting was held at the Historic Bowne Township Hall, 8240 Alden Nash Avenue SE, Alto, Michigan, Kent County.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Member Oosting at 7:00 pm.

2. ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: JIM OOSTING – CHAIR
DAVE HOEKSTRA
JAY BARNHART
DAVID FUSS – TOWNSHIP BOARD REPRESENTATIVE
FRED OESCH
SHAWN WENGER
ROGER GRAHAM
LARRY WINGEIER
SARAH LARSON - SECRETARY

NOT PRESENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: BRADLEY KOTRBA – TOWNSHIP PLANNER, WILLIAMS & WORKS
AMAN PANNU – COMMUNITY PLANNER, WILIAMS & WORKS
6 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

3. AGENDA: MOTION

Chairman Oosting inquired of the Commission if any changes to tonight's agenda were required. After hearing none, Commissioner Larson motioned to accept the agenda submitted for the August 5, 2025, regular Planning Commission meeting, seconded by Commissioner Graham. Motion carried.

31 **4. MINUTES: MOTION**

32 Chairman Oosting asked if there were any changes, additions, or corrections to the August 5, 2025,
33 regular Planning Commission Draft Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Larson motioned to accept the
34 August 5, 2025, meeting minutes with one correction, and Commissioner Wenger supported it.
35 Motion carried.

36 **5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PUBLIC**

37 Chairman Oosting acknowledged and welcomed the members of the public.

38 **6. PUBLIC COMMENT AND CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

39 Chairman Oosting asked the public members if they would like to comment on any item not on
40 tonight's agenda. Kim Culverson had a question regarding the surveying that was happening on
41 Wingeier Avenue. Supervisor Wilcox from the audience that he is waiting for confirmation from the
42 County Road Commission, but he believes that it was a survey taking place for oil and gas
43 exploration. There were no other comments.

44 **7. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

45 No comments.

46 **8. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

47 a. None

48 **9. OLD BUSINESS:**

49 a. None

50 **10. NEW BUSINESS:**

51 a. Bowne Township Master Plan Update.

52 Chair Oosting asked the Project Manager from Williams & Works to introduce what she is
53 proposing this evening. Pannu thanked the Planning Commission and explained that the
54 memo briefly covered the first few chapters of the Master Plan, which would contain the
55 background information and how it has changed over the years for the Township. She
56 supplied the draft chapters to the Commissioners in this packet and requested that they
57 follow along as she outlined the finding from the background review. She also noted that
58 she would appreciate the Commissioners to read through the draft chapters because, while
59 Williams & Works has been working in the community for several years and have familiarity
60 with the Township, local residents have the local and background information through
61 experience that no consultant can replicate. So as part of this review process, Commissioner

and public feedback on the draft chapters and information provided in the review will further expand valuable information that will bolster the final product.

She then ran through each draft chapter and discussed the highlights with the Commissioners. Kotrba noted to the Commission that the Township is growing, as shown in the data provided in the review and draft chapters. Larson noted that it sometimes appears that the Township is growing, but other times it is hard to imagine that the growth actually matches the data. Oosting noted that this observation is important because it reinforces the reasoning behind the Commission's intention to develop a new Master Plan. The Commission would like to ensure that the future development of the Township is directed in the direction that the Township residents would like to see and not left to uncontrolled development patterns that would have negative impacts on the community.

Pannu noted that while the growth isn't dramatic, it is steady, so it grew more than 6% in the last ten years and over 12% over the last 25 years. Pannu noted that there are two significant age cohorts that are growing in the community, those of young family ages and also those entering retirement. So, while the community has seen growth in families and adults under the age of 35, those over the age of 65 or 70 have grown as well. This is important because noticing trends such as these indicates what types of land uses or public service demands may be required to be provided in the near future. For example, as the community ages and more people over the age of 70 reside in the Township, the need for senior care facilities, retirement communities, nursing homes, etc. may be required. Often, communities that lack these services or options will lose population because those residents have to relocate to another community to seek these opportunities. Another example would be communities that are gaining populations of new homeowners entering the years where they may be establishing families. As the number of school-age children is growing, services such as schools, daycare, recreation, etc. may be necessary to accommodate this population. Kotrba agreed and discussed that while those with families are growing, the aging population past retirement age is growing at a much faster rate.

Pannu then began discussing the local features and community facilities located in the Township. She provided an existing land use map for the Commissioners to review, providing them with the different types of land uses found throughout the Township. Oosting had a question about public utilities and wondered if more housing expansion in the Alto village area would demand more public infrastructure. Kotrba responded that it likely would demand more public infrastructure that the Township would likely have to invest into their capacity levels because they are near capacity with the present sewage system in the village. So expansion, at least in the near future, is likely not going to happen. Hoekstra asked a question about the expansion of the sewage system to Alden Nash Ave. for the Brick's Marathon and vacant commercial property located across 64th Street, wondering if it is overextending the capacity of the present system. Wilcox responded from the audience that it does not because they are the only additional users of the systems and it had enough

101 capacity to accommodate that line extension down 64th Street. Because they are the only
102 users of the system on that end of the line, they have an accurate calculation of the total
103 volume produced and the capacity that the system can still receive.

104 Karen Hendrick, the Township Clerk, did comment from the audience that it was indicated
105 on Logan Lake that public property was located there, this is not necessarily for any purpose
106 such as parks and recreation, this is a small parcel that is used for dry wells for the fire
107 department connection when in demand. It also was noted that the old schoolhouse located
108 across the street from Township Hall is also owned by the Township. Pannu did discuss the
109 road conditions and average daily traffic counts. Some Commissioners felt that the numbers
110 on some counts that the County recorded appeared low and that they believed that there
111 were much higher counts that what was shown. Pannu noted that counts are taken often on
112 different days or at different times of the year from previous counts in earlier years.

113 This concluded the review of the background data and information for the Township. Pannu
114 then moved into the survey that will be created. She did discuss what options are presently
115 chosen in the project scope, which is performing an online community survey. This means
116 that a web link or QR code would be scanned and the survey taker would be able to enter
117 their information in a short survey, typically less than ten minutes in total length, to provide
118 feedback. The Commissioners asked about a mailed survey option, and Pannu and Kotrba
119 discussed the process of how Williams & Works had handled mail surveys in the past. They
120 provided typical costs, but noted that if added to the scope, a true quote and price estimate
121 would be obtained and provided to the Township for accuracy. However, online surveys can
122 also be conducted through the mail, and that it doesn't have to just be a paper survey that
123 someone checks the box or fills in the blank and returns. Often, Williams & Works will
124 develop a postcard mailer that will be eye catching and advertise the Master Plan and the
125 desire for community feedback. This postcard would then contain a QR code and website
126 link that would allow the property owner to then take the survey in a digital format. We also
127 provide traditional hard copies that we often leave at Township Hall in case people desire
128 filling out and submitting them in person.

129 Larson asked how the questions are typically structured and if the consultants would write
130 the survey for the Commission. Pannu responded that we do use different types of
131 questions, those that often ask a variety of questions. The typical survey is usually broken
132 into three main parts, background information gathering, anonymous survey responses
133 gathering background information about the survey taker. Planning/Land Use oriented
134 questions where specific questions are designed around master planning and future land
135 uses. Finally, there are typically specific questions that the local Planning Commission or
136 Township Board wishes to ask about topics that are of importance in the community, and
137 they would like to gather feedback for future planning purposes and decision making.

138 Hoekstra asked if we would write the survey and bring it back to the Commission for review
139 before distribution. Pannu answered that we will provide the Planning Commission with
140 example surveys and mailing materials that the consultants have used with other
141 communities, but that the Planning Commission will be the ones that will create the final
142 draft and choose what questions will be asked, how long the survey will be, etc. Larson
143 requested that the consultants provide some examples to the Commission before the next
144 meeting to get ideas about what to craft in Bowne Township's survey. Pannu responded
145 that she would certainly provide examples. Oosting asked if we could get a cost estimate for
146 a traditional mail survey for consideration. Pannu responded that she would contact our
147 partner that handles the processing, printing, and mailing of traditional bulk mail surveys.

148 Jeff Wheeler, a member of the public, did ask about how the master plan prepares for
149 growth in job markets and housing development. Kotrba responded that the data collected
150 will be analyzed with survey results, discussed with the Commission and then all future
151 planning for areas of the Township will be crafted around potential growth impacts and
152 demand. For example, if the Township is experiencing residential development growth
153 pressure in a particular area, but it presently doesn't appear conducive to the present
154 planning or even zoning. Consideration is given to identifying these pressures, the demands
155 they require, and strategies for future planning and zoning. This will help shape how
156 business and residential development in the community grow smoothly both through
157 proper planning with fact-based data, but also through translating that information into
158 developing or amending the local zoning codes, which actually regulate these developments
159 every day. Bonnie Lent-Davis, the Township Treasurer, did comment from the audience that
160 she and the Township do have the resources and manpower to handle a good portion of the
161 mailing and printing of surveys, whether in full format or just postcards. And would like the
162 Commissioners to consider that moving forward when working on the survey.

163 **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

164 a. There were no comments.
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166 **ADJOURN**

167 Commissioner Graham made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which Commissioner Oesch
168 supported. The motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.

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Bradley Kotrba
Recording Secretary