

BOWNE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

ADOPTED MINUTES

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 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: JAMES 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
5 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

3. AGENDA: MOTION

Chairman Oosting inquired from 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 Fuss. Motion carried.

31 **4. MINUTES: MOTION**

32 Chairman Oosting asked if there were any changes, additions, or corrections to the April 1, 2025,
33 regular Planning Commission Draft Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Larson motioned to accept the
34 April 1, 2025, meeting minutes with one correction, and Commissioner Graham 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. There were no comments.

41 **7. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

42 No comments.

43 **8. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

44 a. None

45 **9. OLD BUSINESS:**

46 a. None

47 **10. NEW BUSINESS:**

48 a. Bowne Township Master Plan Update.

49 Chair Oosting asked the Planner Kotrba to introduce them to the master planning process in
50 the Township, what the Township Board has approved, the timeline, etc. Kotrba thanked
51 the Chair and began by mentioned that the Planning Commission has been discussing
52 updating the Master Plan for several months and really has had comments about things that
53 should potentially be updated in the Master Plan for the last couple of years. The previous
54 Master Plan was adopted in 2012 and was written by the Planning Commission and the
55 previous township planning consultant, so this will be the first time that Williams & Works
56 will be developing a master plan with Bowne Township, even though we have been
57 representing them as their planning and zoning consultants since 2019.

58 He explained that the Planning Commission had been concerned that the process would be
59 rushed and that they would like to concentrate on each chapter individually before it is
60 completed. Kotrba stated and Aman Pannu, a Community Planner at Williams & Works will

61 be handling the day to day project management of the Master Plan Update. She has worked
62 out a timeline and budget matching the proposal scope built around that timeline. Kotrba
63 then requested that Ms. Pannu be permitted to walk the Planning Commission through the
64 kick-off meeting memo that she had put together explaining the planning process, major
65 components of the Master Plan Update, the timeline, the overall budget, and the
66 community engagement that she has suggested in the scope. The Township Board has
67 agreed to the project scope, but Kotrba explained that minor alterations can be made to the
68 project scope, but that if major alterations were requested by the Planning Commission, it
69 would take away from some of the other areas that initially received more robust attention
70 to accommodate the changes or the project would have to have a change order in place to
71 add to the contract. Chair Oosting then asked Ms. Pannu if she would begin her discussion
72 with the Planning Commission.

73 Pannu introduced herself and asked if the Planning Commission they could go around the
74 table and each Commissioner could introduce themselves and how long they have been on
75 the Township Planning Commission. Each Planning Commissioner introduced themselves
76 individually and how long they have been on the Township Planning Commission, some with
77 only a few years experience and others with more than thirty years experience. Pannu
78 stated that this group sounds like they have a lot of institutional planning knowledge in the
79 Township and have even had one or more rounds of creating a Master Plan as well. This is
80 comforting to hear because having a Commission that has this much knowledge and
81 experience serving the Township provides the consultant team with valuable source of
82 Township land use history and also how the Community would like to see the Township
83 head towards in respects to recent land development patterns, rezoning requests, or other
84 zoning issues.

85 Pannu went through her memorandum with the Planning Commission following the kick-off
86 discussion agenda. She began with establishing a primary contact person that will be the
87 liaison between the consultant and the Planning Commission/Township. The Planning
88 Commission appointed the Township Clerk as the liaison for this master plan update
89 process. Pannu went through the major points and statutory requirements of the master
90 planning process. She noted that many of the Commissioners may remember going through
91 the same process in 2012. This discussion also covered the tentative schedule of the Master
92 Plan; it presently is scheduled for completion in roughly a year's time. She mentioned this
93 should be adequate, but that if the Planning Commission chooses to slow the process down
94 that would be acceptable, but alter the adoption timeline.

95 Pannu then discussed that public engagement process and that she has proposed an online
96 public survey and a community open house as the chosen options for community
97 engagement. Kotrba explained that the method proposed was intended to both be
98 economical and efficient for the Township. He discussed that this process is more efficient
99 that traditional postal surveys. He explained the process of created and postal survey and

100 that they are typically sent to the Treasurers property owner list. It does effectively reach
101 out to all property owners in the Township, however, because survey's tend to be open for a
102 lengthy period, they may be misplaced, thrown away, or simply forgotten and not returned.
103 Kotrba also explained that in addition to developing the survey questions with the Planning
104 Commission, the consultants have to lay out an orderly, check the box format for the survey
105 copy. It is then sent, along with the property owner mailing list obtained from the Township,
106 to a bulk mailing service provider in Grand Rapids. This company then orients the draft copy
107 supplied by the consultants so it may be properly oriented for doubled sided printing and
108 folding, printed, folded, and then postage is applied, then they drop it off with the post
109 office. The surveys are received by the property owners and then after filing it out, the
110 survey they completed already contains pre-paid postage that they can then drop into any
111 mail box and it is returned to Williams & Works for our recording free of charge to the
112 survey taker.

113 After discussion and a few comments from members of the public, many agreed that a
114 postal survey would be more successful than the online version, however, they felt the
115 online version would still be valuable to have. The Township Treasurer did comment that
116 that if the Planning Commission and the consultants could get a draft copy of the master
117 plan survey ready for final printing, it could be added to the December 2025 tax bills and
118 mailed. This way, the Township could print the surveys, fold, and stuff them into the
119 envelopes and pay the postage expense to mail them to the property owners. This however
120 would require the survey taker to pay the postage to return them to Williams and Works.
121 But many felt that the cost of a stamp is inconsequential and that the Township would
122 receive a higher return rate using this process.

123 Pannu thanked the Treasurer and noted that this option would be very valuable and more
124 cost effective with respect to the project budget. She recommended that we still keep an
125 online option available for those that would prefer to take it this way and not have to pay
126 postage. Therefore, the Township can post information with a QR Code for easy access
127 directly to the master plan survey. The Planning Commission agreed and even suggested
128 that it may be an option to add the QR Code to the online version to the postal version in
129 case the survey taker didn't want to pay for the postage, while still participating in the
130 process.

131 Pannu then discussed the process of deliverables for the Master Plan, she noted that the
132 budget will supply a digital Microsoft Word, Adobe PDF, and one hard copy for the
133 Township. This digital supply will also include all the maps included in the Master Plan for
134 Township use, if desired. The consultant is also capable to print out copies of maps, such as
135 the Future Land Use map, in case they would like full size copies for the office. Any
136 additional printed and bound copies could be supplied to the Township at the cost. Pannu
137 then walked the Planning Commission through the deliverable process and that the Plan will
138 be worked on in sections or chapters. This will allow the Planning Commission to focus on

139 one specific item. The consultant will draft these chapters, sections, maps, and other figures
140 and supply them to the Planning Commission before each meeting that is scheduled to
141 discuss that topic. This way the Planning Commission will have the draft beforehand and will
142 be able to digest the material and take notes and provide feedback on observations,
143 alterations, additions, or edits that should be made. She then closed again by thanking the
144 Planning Commission and noted that she looked forward to work with them over the next
145 year. Chair Oosting thanked Pannu for her memo and walking the Planning Commission
146 through the process.

147 **11. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- 148 a. The Township Treasurer, Bonnie Lent-Davis, did want to reiterate that she would be happy
149 to assist the Planning Commission with printing, stuffing, and mailing the community
150 engagement survey. She felt this would satisfactorily reach all residents in the Township.
151 She also did want to mention that it may be helpful for the Planning Commission to consider
152 hosting at least one joint meeting with the Township Board or Alto DDA to allow other
153 residents, officials, and stakeholders to provide their valuable information and offer
154 suggestions. She thanked the Planning Commission for beginning the Master Planning
155 process in the Township recognizing that it is probably an appropriate time to do this and
156 that the present Plan is more than ten years out of date.

157
158 **ADJOURN**

159 Commissioner Graham made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which Commissioner Oesch
160 supported. The motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 PM.

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163
Bradley Kotrba
Recording Secretary