



# Rochester Hills

## Minutes

### Planning Commission

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*Chairperson Greg Hooper, Vice Chairperson Deborah Brnabic*  
*Members: Sheila Denstaedt, Gerard Dettloff, Anthony Gallina, Dale Hetrick, Marvie*  
*Neubauer, Scott Struzik and Ben Weaver*  
*Youth Representatives: Oliver Blakeley and Siddh Sheth*

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Tuesday, March 17, 2026

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

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## CALL TO ORDER

*Chairperson Hooper called the March 17, 2026 Regular Planning Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., Michigan Time.*

## ROLL CALL

**Present** 8 - Sheila Denstaedt, Gerard Dettloff, Anthony Gallina, Greg Hooper, Marvie Neubauer, Dale Hetrick, Scott Struzik and Ben Weaver  
**Excused** 1 - Deborah Brnabic

## Others Present

*Chris McLeod, Planning Manager*  
*Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary*  
*Oliver Blakely, Youth Council Representative*

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2026-0115](#) January 13, 2026 Planning Commission Regular Minutes

**A motion was made by Neubauer, seconded by Struzik, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye** 8 - Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Hooper, Neubauer, Hetrick, Struzik and Weaver  
**Excused** 1 - Brnabic

[2026-0116](#) February 2, 2026 Joint Planning Commission City Council Minutes

**A motion was made by Neubauer, seconded by Struzik, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye** 8 - Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Hooper, Neubauer, Hetrick, Struzik and Weaver  
**Excused** 1 - Brnabic

## COMMUNICATIONS

*Chairperson Hooper provided updates regarding official's training, noting that training dates for planning and zoning through MAP are available and continuing through March 31, 2026. Commissioner Hetrick noted he had not received the training calendar.*

*Chairperson Hooper also shared a public hearing notice from the City of Troy regarding the potential rezoning of four parcels of property on the east side of Rochester Road and South Boulevard. Interested parties were directed to the City of Troy website for further details. Additionally, the Chairperson noted the receipt of the current issue of Michigan Planner magazine.*

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Chairperson Hooper opened the floor for comments on items not appearing on the agenda. A resident attempted to speak; however, Chairperson Hooper clarified that his topic pertained to an item already on the evening's agenda. The resident was asked to wait until that specific item was called.*

*Hearing no further comments for items not on the agenda, Chairperson Hooper closed Public Comment.*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### [2026-0117](#)

Public Hearing and Request for Recommendation for Proposed Administrative Zoning Ordinance Amendments

*(Staff Report dated 3/11/26, Proposed Amendments - Chapter 138, and Public Hearing Notice, Draft PC Minutes 01-13-26, PC Minutes 12-09-25 and PC Minutes 10-21-25 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)*

*Chairperson Hooper introduced the items and called for the staff report. Mr. McLeod thanked the Chairperson and noted that the proposed ordinance amendments, primarily focused on zoning, should be familiar to the Commission. He explained that these administrative updates have been in development since December of the previous year and include a specific modification to the land division ordinance concerning the overall timeframe for site condominiums. Regarding permissible uses, the amendments would introduce animal cafes as conditional uses within most commercial or business districts. Additionally, the proposal involves extracting automotive repair garages to place them separately within the land use table and modifying the sections for community facilities. Mr. McLeod also highlighted the inclusion of utilities in the land use table, noting that the city currently lacks a technical provision defining where utilities are permissible. Finally, he detailed the modification of automotive fueling station regulations to encompass both gasoline-powered vehicles and electric vehicles, which would include the establishment of additional design and consideration standards.*

*Mr. McLeod clarified that the proposed standards for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations would remain a conditional use within the city, specifically targeting locations where the chargers serve as a primary use rather than just*

*individual units. He reiterated that animal cafes would also be classified as conditional uses and would now have specific development regulations provided within the ordinance. Regarding golf courses, he explained that the city currently mandates a 200-foot setback from residential districts for any buildings. The proposed amendment would allow the Planning Commission or the Planning Department—depending on the reviewing authority for the application - to modify this standard, provided the applicant demonstrates proper screening and ensures no additional negative impacts occur. Mr. McLeod pointed out that this change is practical, as only one of the city's four golf courses currently meets the existing 200-foot requirement. Finally, he noted that the language for places of worship is being clarified to state they are permissible pursuant to the land use table, moving away from the broader phrasing that they are allowed in any zoning district.*

*Mr. McLeod explained that the proposed amendments would expand the title of community facilities and utilities to include nonprofit organizations, specifically limiting those uses to sites located on major roadways. He used the example of a church or similar facility to illustrate how a nonprofit organization could be permitted within that framework. Regarding residential districts, he noted a modification to the schedule of regulations to address a footnote that currently allows for adjustments to lot width and lot area below standard R4 requirements in areas with smaller platted lots. This footnote is slated for complete removal because it has caused significant administrative confusion during lot split reviews, particularly in determining the extent of existing neighborhood character. Following discussions between the administration and the Planning Commission, it was determined that all such lots must simply meet the standard R4 district requirements.*

*The proposal also includes a clarification for performance bonds, explicitly requiring developers or applicants to ensure that bonds remain valid and funded at the appropriate amount set by the city throughout the entire development process. Mr. McLeod mentioned that the city has encountered issues where a bond was no longer valid when it was needed. Regarding landscaping, the amendments would require a "Buffer C" screening for any new road construction adjacent to properties outside of a proposed development. This measure is intended to protect existing residents from the immediate impact of a road being built right outside their side door, front door, or backyard.*

*Further landscaping requirements include the addition of more plants and shrubs within parking lots, as well as mandatory foundation plantings at the base of non-residential buildings where the wall meets the sidewalk. Mr. McLeod also noted several amendments to various definitions intended to align the ordinance with current practices and the rest of the zoning code. Finally, he highlighted an administrative change to the land division ordinance that would extend the timeframe for site condominium approval to two years. This change is designed to sync the site condominium process with the timeframe established for other site plans last year.*

*Chairperson Hooper opened the public hearing for the zoning ordinance amendments, noting that no public comment cards had been submitted for this specific item. Finding no speakers present, he proceeded to close the public*

hearing.

During the subsequent discussion, Chairperson Hooper sought clarification regarding the maintenance bond language on page seven of the proposed amendments. He specifically questioned the phrasing in Part B, which suggested that an "unused balance" of a maintenance bond would be released after a two-year inspection. Drawing on his professional experience, the Chairperson pointed out that this does not reflect industry reality, as maintenance bonds are typically "one or done" rather than subject to partial releases or reissuances. He explained that bonding authorities require a formal letter from the city to fully release the bond once obligations are met. While he supported placing the responsibility on the applicant to keep bonds valid, he noted that the city's primary recourse is through the bonding company, which holds the funds and maintains accountability over the developer.

Mr. McLeod acknowledged the administrative difficulty in tracking down responsible parties when issues arise, noting it as a significant challenge for staff. Chairperson Hooper reiterated that the city's primary recourse is to the bonding company, as they are the entities "holding the bag" and are typically major companies.

To address the Chairperson's earlier point about industry reality, Mr. McLeod suggested a language correction for Subsection B to state that the maintenance bond will simply be released once inspection issues are addressed. Chairperson Hooper agreed, noting that bonds are not "recut" or partially released in practice. Mr. McLeod confirmed that this correction would be made for the version of the ordinance presented to the City Council, and the Planning Commission raised no objections to the change.

Ms. Neubauer questioned the "industry general" section on page nine regarding data centers, noting she did not see a formal definition for what a data center actually entails. Mr. McLeod clarified that data center regulations were part of a moratorium passed by the City Council and that a comprehensive ordinance amendment addressing data centers in their entirety is expected within the next six months. He explained that while the city does not anticipate large-scale data centers locating in Rochester Hills, staff intends to leave the current language in place for now and integrate the definition adopted during the moratorium into the future full-blown amendment.

Ms. Neubauer sought confirmation on leaving the term in the current document without a definition, to which Mr. McLeod replied that the existing moratorium provides sufficient coverage in the interim. Mr. Dettloff inquired if the city had received requests for data centers, and Mr. McLeod confirmed there have been none. Mr. Dettloff expressed support for being proactive on the issue, noting that data centers are a "hot topic" and that his office has seen significant interest from developers in other areas.

Ms. Neubauer followed up by asking if Rochester Hills already hosts an existing data center, which Mr. McLeod confirmed. She expressed concern regarding how the city would differentiate between small-scale existing operations and the massive, high-acreage "hyperscale" data centers often depicted in the media.

*Ms. Neubauer emphasized that the second set of ordinance amendments must be highly specific to avoid a "general umbrella" definition that fails to distinguish between ancillary data centers and primary-use facilities.*

*Mr. McLeod agreed with this assessment, suggesting that the future regulation would likely include three distinct parts: data centers that are ancillary to a primary use, standard standalone data centers, and hyperscale data centers. While the current moratorium provides a basic definition, Ms. Neubauer questioned if it was specific enough given the rapidly evolving nature of the industry. Mr. McLeod reassured the Commission that the upcoming dedicated data center ordinance would include "full-blown" definitions and regulations, noting that the draft is already several pages long to ensure technical accuracy.*

*Chairperson Hooper called for further discussion or a motion regarding the proposed zoning ordinance amendments. Ms. Neubauer moved to recommend approval of the amendments, specifically incorporating the correction previously stated by Chairperson Hooper regarding the maintenance bond language. The motion was supported by Commissioner Weaver. Chairperson Hooper noted that the motion covered the zoning ordinance amendments as detailed in the meeting packet and called for a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.*

**A motion was made by Neubauer, seconded by Weaver, that this matter be Recommended for Approval to the City Council. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye** 8 - Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Hooper, Neubauer, Hetrick, Struzik and Weaver

**Excused** 1 - Brnabic

**Resolved**, that the Planning Commission recommends to City Council approval of the ordinances as presented, with the exception of the revision to the maintenance bond language as discussed, to amend Sections 138-4.300, 138-4.404, 138-4.405, 138-4.410, 138-4.427, 138-4.437, 138-5.100, 138-5.101, 138-12.108, 138-12.300, 138-12.301, 138-12.307, 138-12.308, 138-13.101 of Chapter 138, Zoning, of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Rochester Hills, Oakland County, Michigan to reflect other proposed changes to use standards as listed in other amendments, to include EV Fueling Stations with Automotive Gasoline Service Stations, to add design requirements and to delete the current Automotive Service Center provision, to replace Automotive Service Centers with Animal Cafes and to add requirements for Animal Cafes, to allow for a potential reduction in the required setback for buildings/structures if certain conditions are met, to reflect that Places of Worship or Assembly may be permitted subject to certain requirements, to expand a utilities provision to include Community Facilities and to add a provision to Nonprofit Organizations, to remove a caveat for front yard setbacks in the R-4 One Family Residential zoning district, to remove the option for a reduced minimum lot width and area in the R-4 One Family Residential zoning district, to require the developer to ensure a landscape bond remains valid throughout the development process, to add a provision to require a landscape buffer when a public or private road is proposed to be constructed parallel or generally parallel and within twenty (20) feet of an exterior property line of a development, to add a landscape requirement for landscape islands and parking lot divider medians, to add a section Foundation Plantings and renumber current and subsequent sections to add a requirements for foundation plantings, and to add and/or amend the following definitions: Automotive Gasoline Service Station; Automotive Repair Garage; Automotive Service Center; Community Facility; Industry, General; and State Licensed Residential Facility; of Chapter 138, Zoning, of the Code of Ordinances of the City of

Rochester Hills, Oakland County, Michigan, and to ensure consistency across various ordinance sections; to repeal conflicting or inconsistent ordinances, and prescribe a penalty for violations.

2026-0120

Public Hearing and Request for Recommendation for Proposed Administrative Regulatory Ordinance Amendments

*(Staff Report dated 3/11/26, Proposed Amendments - Chapter 122, Public Hearing Notice, Draft PC Minutes 01-13-26, PC Minutes 12-09-25 and PC Minutes 10-21-25 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)*

*Chairperson Hooper introduced the next item, a public hearing and request for recommendation regarding the proposed administrative regulatory ordinance amendments. He noted that Mr. McLeod had already touched upon this topic earlier in the meeting and asked if he had further comments. Mr. McLeod reiterated that the amendment's purpose is to bring the site review process in line with the standards for regular site plans, allowing developers two years to break ground.*

*Chairperson Hooper then opened the public hearing.*

*John Przybysz - 3120 Primrose, Rochester Hills - expressed strong opposition to the proposal to extend the application timeframe from one year to two years. He said that the original one-year stipulation exists for a "very good reason" and stated that developers should be required to reapply after one year because "things change". He concluded by requesting that the commission maintain the existing one-year requirement rather than eliminating it in favor of the two-year extension.*

*Chairperson Hooper sought clarification on whether the request for more time was driven by the permitting process, which Mr. McLeod confirmed. Mr. McLeod explained that while the current ordinance is set at one year, it is realistically impossible for developers to complete the engineering review and obtain necessary final approvals within that timeframe. He noted that obtaining a single water permit from the state can take eight to nine months, effectively exhausting the allotted time before other requirements are met.*

*Chairperson Hooper clarified that the delays are caused by state and other regulatory permits rather than city-level permitting. Mr. McLeod added that while city reviews for site plans are relatively fast - typically 15 business days for the first review and 10 for the second - outside agencies for road, wetland, and water permits move much slower. He cited an example of a storage facility on Hamlin that took nearly 10 months just to secure a water permit.*

*Mr. McLeod acknowledged that while some delays can be attributed to developers and their engineers not moving as quickly as they should, many are working steadily toward completion. He argued that it is a poor situation for a developer to expend significant money and effort only to lose the ability to proceed because of a one-year limit. Rather than requiring a formal extension for almost every project, the administration determined that a two-year allotment is more appropriate. He further noted that if a project was approved once, the*

city would likely approve it again upon reapplication anyway.

Chairperson Hooper concluded that this change would save the commission from making repetitive motions for individual extensions. He then officially closed the public hearing and called for further discussion among the commissioners.

Commissioner Dettloff inquired about how other municipalities handle application timeframes. Mr. McLeod responded that practices vary; while one-year terms are common, some communities allow unlimited extensions or have already moved to longer initial periods due to regulatory delays from the state. He specifically noted that interactions with state agencies can take months, often leading to a total delay of six to 12 months for projects like Pine Trace.

Mr. Dettloff agreed that the extension made sense, clarifying that the delays were largely due to "extracurricular entities" rather than the city or the developers. He observed that recent cutbacks have made these agency reviews even slower. Mr. McLeod added that moving to a two-year timeframe prevents the unnecessary public expense and administrative burden of bringing developers back for a "two-minute decision" on an extension. Commissioner Weaver moved to recommend approval of the administrative regulatory ordinance amendments, and the motion was supported by Commissioner Neubauer. The motion passed unanimously.

**A motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Neubauer, that this matter be Recommended for Approval to the City Council. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye** 8 - Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Hooper, Neubauer, Hetrick, Struzik and Weaver

**Excused** 1 - Brnabic

**Resolved**, that the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby recommends to City Council approval of an ordinance to amend Section 122-367 of Chapter 122, Land Division, of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Rochester Hills, Oakland County, Michigan to extend the length of preliminary condominium approval before expiration to two years from one year, and to repeal conflicting or inconsistent ordinances, and prescribe a penalty for violations.

## DISCUSSION

### 2026-0127

Current Proposed State Housing Reform Bills

Chairperson Hooper introduced the discussion regarding the current proposed state housing reform bills and invited Mr. McLeod to lead the presentation. Mr. McLeod characterized the proposed "Housing Readiness Legislation" as a

*package of nine bills that would fundamentally disrupt local planning and zoning authority throughout the state. He explained that the legislation targets communities located within a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that are served by municipal sewer and water, noting that Rochester Hills specifically meets both of these criteria. According to Mr. McLeod, the bills would essentially eliminate local control over residential density by mandating that any area zoned for residential use must allow for lots as small as 1,500 square feet. This requirement would override the city's existing standards for 9,600 square foot and one-acre lots, shifting the decision-making power regarding lot sizes entirely to developers.*

*Additionally, Mr. McLeod detailed the proposed changes to minimum dwelling sizes under the state act. He pointed out that while Rochester Hills currently maintains a zoning ordinance requiring minimum house sizes ranging from 912 to 1,500 square feet, the state mandate would force a reduction of the minimum house size to 500 square feet. He emphasized that this change would effectively reduce the city's local house size designations by a half to a third of their current requirements.*

*Mr. McLeod continued the overview of the proposed state legislation by detailing mandates related to housing diversity, specifically concerning Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). He explained that the state would require any property with single-family housing to be permitted an attached or detached ADU as a matter of right, leaving the city with no discretion or options to deny such units. These units would be limited to a maximum size of 800 square feet or 75% of the size of the main structure, whichever is applicable. Furthermore, the state would mandate that duplexes be allowed wherever single-family housing is currently permitted. Mr. McLeod noted the theoretical possibility of having three dwelling units on a single piece of property, a duplex plus an ADU, and pointed out a perceived lack of logic in the state's requirement that duplexes be at least 1,000 square feet per side, making them larger than the mandated single-family minimums.*

*He further observed that, in theory, these duplexes and ADUs could be placed on the previously mentioned 1,500 square foot lots if they could physically fit. Regarding approval timelines, Mr. McLeod stated the state intends to mandate shorter review periods for site plans, often referred to as a "shot clock". While he expressed confidence that the city could meet these speeds administratively, he warned that such a mandate might force the city to deny more applications because developers and their engineers are often not prepared to move that quickly. Additionally, the legislation would impose significant setback reductions for every lot within the city, establishing a 15-foot front yard setback and five-foot setbacks for both the side and rear yards.*

*Mr. McLeod detailed that under the proposed state mandates, there would be no variation in yard requirements; while a developer could choose to provide more space, the city would be prohibited from requiring larger yards than the state-mandated minimums. Regarding parking, the legislation would cap requirements for multi-family dwelling units at no more than one parking space per unit, effectively allowing developers to dictate the amount of parking provided for such developments.*

*He also addressed significant modifications to the protest petition requirements for zoning decisions. The proposal would increase the required signature threshold from the current 20 or 30% up to 60% of impacted residents, while also expanding the petition area from only abutting properties to a 300-foot notification ring. Mr. McLeod noted that acting on such a petition would require a two-thirds vote from the City Council. He argued that this process puts the city on the defensive by making it more difficult for residents to protest and shifting the legal onus onto the city rather than the developer.*

*While these measures are intended to address housing affordability across the state, Mr. McLeod questioned whether there was any proof that such broad, sweeping changes would actually achieve that goal. He emphasized that the removal of any "opt-in" or modification ability represents a vast departure from current planning practices in Rochester Hills. He encouraged the Commissioners to read and understand the bills and to contact their state representatives. He added that the city administration is currently working through the Michigan Municipal League (MML) and SEMCOG to address these concerns at the state and regional levels.*

*Chairperson Hooper shared that he had reviewed Senator Tisdale's 30-page proposed bill, noting that while he is not a lawyer, the "legalese" appeared similar to Section 8 housing. He observed that the bill requires certain income levels to qualify for housing and involves a two-stage reimbursement process. He expressed skepticism regarding its ability to address affordability, specifically questioning the impact of a \$100,000 state contribution toward building costs.*

*Mr. McLeod contrasted this approach with the housing mandates discussed earlier, noting that communities are generally more supportive of Senator Tisdale's bill because it is an "opt-in" program. He explained that it provides alternatives and solutions without mandating a specific path for every community, though state officials have shown some resistance because it requires the state to provide funding. Chairperson Hooper concluded that such mandates would essentially make the Planning Commission obsolete.*

*Ms. Neubauer noted that several Commissioners had already signed a petition and been in communication with representatives Tisdale and Webber regarding the legislation. She shared her understanding that the bills had already passed a major committee and were moving through a "fast forward" committee, leading her to question what actions could still be taken to prevent Lansing from overriding local discretion.*

*In discussing Senator Tisdale's alternative bill, Ms. Neubauer agreed with Chairperson Hooper's assessment of its complexity, describing the "legalese" as difficult to navigate. She expressed her belief that Senator Tisdale was attempting to provide an alternative to state mandates - using the analogy of "dangling carrots" rather than "whipping the horse" - but observed that even the incentive-based approach did not seem to be gaining significant traction. She concluded by asking for specific guidance on how to effectively stop the mandatory legislation from proceeding.*

*Mr. McLeod provided an update based on recent discussions, noting that while the activities behind closed doors in Lansing remain uncertain, the head planner at SEMCOG indicated that the collective efforts of cities and townships appear to be effective. He reported that the legislative process has slowed, with additional hearings and testimony being delayed as the bill's backers recognize the significant mounting pressure against the proposal. According to Mr. McLeod, the bills have been transferred to the Government Operations Committee, a move typically intended to facilitate the search for a middle ground or a potential deal.*

*He further shared that the Mayor, in a text message earlier that day, concurred that the process is slowing based on information from Midwest Strategy Group and other channels. Lobbyists have indicated that legislators are now beginning to read and understand the specific details of the bills rather than simply supporting the general concept of affordable housing. Mr. McLeod emphasized that while there is general support for housing affordability, the specific methods proposed for achieving it are the primary point of contention.*

*Ms. Neubauer noted that she and Mr. McLeod had discussed before the meeting how there is no data supporting the idea that the state's proposal will actually provide affordable housing, suggesting it could even have the opposite effect. She emphasized her concern as a "definitions nerd" that the term "affordable housing" has not even been defined in the legislation. She observed that while the Planning Commission already receives significant complaints regarding overdevelopment and high density, the proposed state mandates are moving 100% in the wrong direction by taking away a community's right to decide for itself. Mr. McLeod added that the current level of complaints would likely pale in comparison to those received if these mandates were to take effect.*

*Ms. Neubauer urged the Planning Commissioners to take a proactive role in notifying their neighbors and encouraging them to contact their representatives and the "powers that be". She suggested that they should even write to the bill's supporters to warn them that pushing through legislation that makes local government obsolete could affect their reelection. She argued that because Planning Commissioners understand these issues at a deeper level and are exposed to them constantly, they have a responsibility to get the word out. Mr. McLeod noted that most people do not follow bills moving through the legislature, pointing out that news coverage had been limited and "pretty weak," even around the time of the SEMCOG meeting.*

*Mr. McLeod lamented that, similar to the process for developing master plans, it is often difficult to secure public input until a situation directly affects a resident's "front door". He suggested that Planning Commissioners take the information to their Homeowners Associations (HOAs) to explain the potential results of the legislation. According to Mr. McLeod, individuals outside of the planning profession typically react with disbelief, questioning why anyone would propose such laws and asking if the threat is "for real". He warned that if the bills are not stopped, residents will only realize what has happened once the impacts are already affecting them directly.*

*Ms. Neubauer compared the situation to millages that are passed without full public understanding of the financial return. She emphasized the need to ensure the community understands that while "millage" translates to taxes, this specific legislative package translates to "over development and high density".*

*Mr. Struzik inquired about how the proposed state legislation would impact existing neighborhoods, specifically asking if an existing home could be torn down and replaced with a duplex, or if a home could be converted into a duplex. Mr. McLeod confirmed that from both a zoning and state law perspective, these actions would be possible, including the addition of an accessory dwelling unit to any house. He noted a potential caveat: most subdivision master deeds established since approximately 1997 or 1998 restrict lots to single-family purposes, which might privately prevent a duplex from being built. He anticipated that such deed restrictions would ultimately be challenged in court, creating an enforcement complication for the city regarding Homeowners Association (HOA) approvals.*

*Mr. Struzik also asked if the legislation would impact lot split requests. Mr. McLeod explained that House Bill 5529 would amend the Land Division Act, mandating that any residential property served by sewer and water be subject to a 1,500 square foot lot size. Consequently, the city would be forced to amend its ordinances to align with this state law, making any land division eligible for the 1,500 square foot standard.*

*Mr. Hetrick stated that his neighborhood's HOA meeting was approaching and he intended to use that forum to share information about the proposed legislation, particularly since his subdivision's master deed was established before 1997. He expressed agreement with the concerns regarding the lack of a clear definition for affordable housing and questioned how the city's infrastructure would handle the increased load if five new homes were built on a single quarter-acre lot.*

*Mr. McLeod explained that the city's water and sewer pipes were sized based on current planned densities. If those densities were to quadruple or quintuple under the new state mandates, the existing infrastructure would lack the capacity to carry the load, necessitating either the addition of more pipes or the complete replacement of existing pipes with larger ones throughout the city.*

*Mr. Hetrick argued that such a mandate would impose an incredible and un-funded expense on the city to update its infrastructure. He characterized the legislation as poorly conceived and "incomprehensible," asserting that the state representatives and senators behind the bills should be aware of these practical infrastructure requirements. Chairperson Hooper added that the resulting increase in traffic would be another significant consequence of the proposal.*

*Ms. Denstaedt questioned whether the proposed legislation takes into account the actual cost of building a house, observing that construction prices are not decreasing. Mr. McLeod responded that there are several glaring omissions in the bills, most notably that they do not deal with actual construction costs.*

*He pointed out that while proponents of the legislation claim it costs between*

*\$94,000 and \$95,000 to get a house permitted based on national figures, developers working within the city have confirmed the local cost is actually less than \$20,000. Mr. McLeod also noted that the act fails to address the impact of mortgage rates, which have recently been near 6%, on the housing slowdown. He characterized the state's approach as trying to use an "elephant gun" on one small segment of the issue rather than providing the holistic solution required across a multitude of different areas.*

*Ms. Denstaedt mentioned that she had recently engaged in a discussion regarding these issues with a fellow commissioner from the City of Troy. She requested that staff provide simplified verbiage of the legislative impacts that could be easily shared with neighbors and Homeowners Associations. Specifically, she suggested that a list of standout bullet points would make the information significantly easier for residents to digest and distribute. Chairperson Hooper expressed support for the suggestion, describing it as a good idea.*

*Mr. Weaver echoed the sentiment that Homeowners Associations are an ideal platform for disseminating this information and expressed his intention to reach out to his own neighborhood representatives. He noted that overdevelopment is a top concern in the city and warned that while current growth is often more accurately described as redevelopment, the proposed legislation would lead to genuine overdevelopment. Mr. Weaver shared that a colleague on the MAP Law Council is currently "fielding calls all day long" about the "mess" created by these bills as they seek a resolution.*

*He emphasized that while the impact might not be immediate, the legislation could initiate a "slow burn" that dramatically alters the character of the city, such as a single-family home being replaced by six neighbors instead of one. He urged others to share how detrimental these changes could be not only to Rochester Hills but also to neighboring cities and secluded areas in northern Michigan.*

*Commissioner Dettloff expressed total confidence in Midwest Strategy Group but noted his surprise at the lack of media coverage regarding the proposed housing bills. He reiterated the need for talking points and inquired if any neighboring communities supported the legislation.*

*Mr. McLeod stated that very few communities would likely support the bills as currently written, noting that while cities like Ann Arbor or Grand Rapids might find certain elements acceptable, the "across the board" application of these regulations without local input is the primary issue. He highlighted the significant bipartisan opposition demonstrated at a recent SEMCOG meeting, where leaders from approximately 120 cities and townships, primarily from Southeast Michigan and Lansing, gathered on short notice in Detroit to hold a press conference against the mandates.*

*Mr. Dettloff asked for confirmation that the Mayor's resources indicated the legislative process was slowing down. Mr. McLeod stated that while he hopes that is the case, one can never be certain with such matters. He gave credit to the proponents of the bills for their ability to organize a consortium of backers*

*and launch the legislation with such "veracity" without others knowing it was coming in this specific form. He reiterated that based on reports from SEMCOG and the Mayor, the process appears to be slowing, though he cautioned that the legislation is not necessarily going away.*

*Mr. McLeod highlighted the necessity of allowing more time to digest and communicate the impacts of the legislation, noting that public understanding is the most effective tool in the legislative process. He pointed out that there is currently a lack of public awareness regarding what the bills are actually intended to do.*

*He echoed Commissioner Neubauer's earlier point, emphasizing that the argument against the bills is delicate; simply opposing them can make a community appear as though it is against housing affordability. Mr. McLeod noted that proponents of the bills have already framed local opposition as "part of the problem," accusing communities of not wanting people to be able to live there. To counter this, he suggested shifting the terminology away from the politically charged "affordable housing" toward terms like "more obtainable housing," as was used in the city's master plan.*

*Mr. McLeod stressed that the correlation the state is attempting to draw, that local opposition equals an opposition to affordability, must be broken. Commissioner Dettloff expressed hope that the grassroots efforts through HOAs would have a positive impact. Chairperson Hooper concluded by stating that while he wants to keep his own housing affordable, he does not want it to become "unaffordable in the wrong direction".*

*Mr. Hetrick raised concerns regarding form factor and architectural standards, noting that Rochester Hills has specific requirements, such as brick exteriors, to maintain community character. He pointed out that the proposed legislation fails to define form factor, which could theoretically allow for the construction of unconventional structures, such as concrete homes with Quonset hut roofs, that would be completely unacceptable under current local standards. He emphasized that the bills lack any language ensuring that new builds remain aesthetically compatible with existing homes in a neighborhood.*

*Mr. McLeod clarified that the legislation does touch on this, but in a way that further limits local control. He highlighted a significant provision that would allow mobile homes on any single-family lot. This would shift the applicable building standards from the local residential code to the federal HUD code. Mr. McLeod noted the irony that while these homes might be more "affordable" to purchase, they are often less energy-efficient, placing a higher long-term financial burden on residents for heating and cooling. Additionally, he noted that for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), the acts specifically prohibit any architectural guidelines or restrictions that are more stringent than those applied to a primary residence.*

*Mr. McLeod noted that state proponents often argue that local requirements for amenities, such as four-sided brick facades, contribute to the high permitting and construction costs they cite. Commissioner Hetrick recalled a previous developer who argued that density and facade requirements were escalating costs, but he questioned the feasibility of placing manufactured homes on*

1,500-square-foot lots. He reiterated that such homes, governed by HUD building codes rather than local residential codes, would place even greater pressure on the city's electric and water infrastructure due to their relative inefficiency.

Mr. McLeod emphasized the complexity of the issue, noting that new concerns arise each time the legislation is reviewed. He shared that he and Sara had provided testimony to SEMCOG for Lansing, but he had already identified several additional concerns since that submission. As an example of the far-reaching implications, he mentioned that the Historic District Commission (HDC) has begun questioning whether they would still have the authority to regulate a 500-square-foot house if one were proposed in Stony Creek Village. Commissioner Hetrick concluded by reiterating his stance that the legislation is clearly not well thought through.

Mr. Weaver inquired whether Homeowners Association (HOA) boards could preempt the proposed state mandates by proactively rewriting their bylaws to restrict properties to single-family use and explicitly prohibit Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or duplexes. Mr. McLeod noted that while the state cannot initially preempt private regulations, such a move would likely result in legal challenges as "two trains on the same track". He suggested that while HOA bylaws might provide a temporary safeguard, the ultimate resolution would likely be determined in court.

Mr. Weaver expressed concern that since the legislative process is moving toward a "happy medium" rather than a full stop, some form of the mandates will likely pass. He questioned if there were "loophole" strategies the city could employ, such as designating specific architectural styles for higher-density buildings, similar to developments in Walton Oaks, that maintain the appearance of single-family residences despite containing multiple units. Finally, Mr. Weaver questioned the underlying motives and financial backing of the legislation, asking who ultimately stands to benefit from such a dramatic shift in housing policy.

Mr. McLeod identified developers and several national organizations as the primary proponents of the legislation, specifically noting that the National Association of Home Builders is in favor of the bills. He described a recent committee hearing where multiple individuals testified that the package would significantly increase the availability of housing for lower-income populations. However, Mr. McLeod noted a divide within the industry, stating that some developers who currently do business in Rochester Hills have expressed significant skepticism regarding the proposal.

He further critiqued the economic theory driving the legislation, which suggests that increasing housing supply will naturally decrease costs. While this theory works in the abstract, Mr. McLeod argued that it does not guarantee actual affordability in practice. He presented a hypothetical scenario where a 500-square-foot house in Rochester Hills might sell for \$400,000 instead of \$500,000 for a traditional home; while technically cheaper, he questioned whether such a price point truly constitutes "affordable" housing.

Commissioner Weaver suggested that the proposed mandates could reach a "saturation point" where the resulting overdevelopment causes residents to leave the community, eventually leading to lower property values. Mr. McLeod agreed, pointing to a contradiction in Governor Whitmer's 2026 State of the State address. He noted that while the Governor spoke about the importance of each community's unique and diverse character, her endorsement of statewide zoning reforms, including setting lot sizes and setbacks, would effectively homogenize communities.

Mr. McLeod argued that this approach risks stripping cities of their distinct identities and character. Commissioner Weaver added that neighboring communities would likely lose their individual identities as well, potentially merging into a single, indistinguishable area.

Ms. Neubauer inquired whether other states have implemented similar statewide zoning mandates, leading Mr. McLeod to confirm that several states, including Florida, Texas, Oregon, and California, utilize various forms of state-level zoning or planning. He noted that Michigan's current proposal is most frequently compared to the system used in Oregon regarding mandated lot sizes.

However, Mr. McLeod highlighted two critical differences between those states and the current proposal for Michigan. First, he noted that states with centralized zoning typically have established mass transit systems in the areas where high-density mandates are applied. Second, he explained that every one of those states utilizes "impact fees," which require developers to pay a specific amount to the state, county, or city to offset the costs of the infrastructure and services their developments absorb.

Mr. McLeod emphasized that Michigan does not currently have a system for impact fees to mitigate these costs. Ms. Neubauer observed that without such fees, the city would be unable to absorb the massive infrastructure costs required to support the increased density. She further pointed out that despite these mandates, she has not seen evidence of housing becoming genuinely affordable in those other communities.

Ms. Neubauer raised concerns about the city's current infrastructure, noting that a recent power outage highlighted existing vulnerabilities that could not sustain the density proposed by the state mandates. She suggested that residents with second homes or lake properties should contact representatives in those specific districts to voice their opposition. Regarding housing affordability, Ms. Neubauer argued that existing local policies, such as the non-homestead tax millage on secondary properties, already increase the cost of housing. She advocated for targeted, small-scale moves-such as addressing the property tax "uncapping" that prevents seniors from downsizing - rather than the state's "bulldozer approach". She characterized Governor Whitmer's State of the State comments on community diversity as disingenuous, arguing that the proposed mandates would actually strip away that diversity.

Chairperson Hooper expressed his support for these concerns and suggested that the city consider dropping its membership with the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) if the organization continues to support the legislation. Mr.

*McLeod noted that MAP has been relatively quiet but is likely facing pressure from its membership. He recommended that the Planning Commission wait to see how the organization's formal position evolves before making a final decision on the city's affiliation.*

**Discussed**

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 2026-0118

Request for recommendation of a Planning Commission representative to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a one-year term to expire March 31, 2027

*Chairperson Hooper introduced the annual one-year recommendation for appointment of a Planning Commission representative to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). He noted that Deb Brnabic has served as the representative for approximately 20 years. Ms. Neubauer stated that she had spoken with Ms. Brnabic prior to the meeting and confirmed her interest in continuing her service in this capacity.*

*Chairperson Hooper asked if any other commissioners wished to serve on the ZBA, and finding none, a motion was made by Neubauer, supported by Struzik, to recommend to City Council that Deb Brnabic serve as the Planning Commission representative on the Zoning Board of Appeals for a one-year term expiring March 31, 2027.*

**Approved**

**Aye** 8 - Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Hooper, Neubauer, Hetrick, Struzik and Weaver

**Excused** 1 - Brnabic

**Resolved**, that the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby recommends to City Council that Deb Brnabic shall serve as its representative on the Zoning Board of Appeals for a one-year term to expire March 31, 2027.

### 2026-0119

Request for appointment of two representatives to the CIP Policy Team

*Chairperson Hooper introduced the request for the appointment of two Planning Commission representatives to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) policy team. He noted that Anthony Gallina and Dale Hetrick had served as the representatives during the previous year and invited them to continue if they were inclined.*

*Both Mr. Hetrick and Mr. Gallina expressed their willingness to serve another term. A motion was made by Neubauer, supported by Gallina, to appoint Anthony Gallina and Dale Hetrick to the Capital Improvement Plan policy team for the 2027-2032 term.*

**A motion was made by Neubauer, seconded by Dettloff, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye** 8 - Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Hooper, Neubauer, Hetrick, Struzik and Weaver

**Excused** 1 - Brnabic

**Resolved**, that the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby appoints Dale Hetrick and Anthony Gallina to serve on the CIP Policy Team for the 2027-2032 Capital Improvement Plan.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

*April 21, 2026*

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Hearing no further business to come before the Planning Commission and upon motion by Neubauer, seconded by Denstaedt, Chairperson Hooper adjourned the Regular Meeting at 8:19 p.m.*

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*Greg Hooper, Chairperson  
Rochester Hills Planning Commission*

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*Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary*