

Ganges Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes for October 28, 2025
Ganges Township Hall
119th Avenue and 64th Street
Fennville MI, Allegan County

I. Call to Order - Roll Call

Chair: Jackie **DeZwaan** called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call: Chair: Jackie **DeZwaan** - Present

Vice Chair: Dale **Pierson** - Present

Secretary: Phil **Badra** - Present

Commissioner: Edward **Gregory** - Present

Commission Trustee: Dick **Hutchins** - Present

Zoning Administrator: Tasha **Smalley** - Absent

Recording Secretary: Katie **Wolfe** - Present

II. Additions to the Agenda and adoption

Gregory made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. **Badra** seconded the motion.
Motion passed.

III. General Public Comments

Sue **Mackey** asked for clarification on the SLU requirements for campgrounds. She wondered what district campgrounds would be permitted in and if there would be any building requirements for entertainment events. She also asked if the campground requirements discussed would apply to current campgrounds or any expansions of current campgrounds.

Marsha **Maslanka** – 1811 66th St. encouraged the PC to have more requirements in the ordinances even if it may be hard to enforce. She also noted that she supports the idea of prohibiting glamping.

IV. Correspondence and Upcoming Seminars

Phelps to **PC** and **Smalley** Re: FOIA request from Cunningham Dalman

Smalley to **PC** Re: Zoning update

Smalley to **PC** Re: Zoning update

Smalley to **PC** Re: Definitions from EGLE

Badra to **PC** Re: driveways

V. Public Hearing – None

VI. Approval of Prior Minutes

Motion made by **Gregory**, seconded by **Pierson** to approve the October 20, 2025, Special Meeting minutes, with corrections. Motion passed.

VII. Old Business – None

VIII. New Business – Zoning Ordinance Discussion

The **PC** decided to go through the ordinance corrections that **Badra** and **Smalley** shared and make edits as necessary.

Add the Ordinance amendments details on page 2.

Page 2-7, Edit the Driveway definition to say: ‘A property entry point for vehicles running from a street to any building or to within ten (10) feet of a residence. Driveway shall be properly leveled and prepared, with a top surface composed of concrete, asphalt, gravel, or other commonly accepted driveway material. Grass, sand, or dirt will not be considered as appropriate material.’

Page 2-12, Edit the Lot Coverage definition to say: ‘The part or percent of the lot occupied by buildings or structures, including accessory buildings, structures, decks, patios, driveways and parking lots paved or unpaved. For the purposes of lot coverage calculation, a driveway shall have a minimum width of eight (8) feet and is measured up to any garage or building, or within 10 feet of the dwelling.’

Page 2-12, Edit the Front Lot Line definition to say: ‘In the case of an interior lot, the front lot line shall mean the line separating such lot from the ROAD right of way.’

Page 2-15, Change the definition of Recreational Vehicle to the Michigan Vehicle Code definition which states, ‘a new or used vehicle that has its own motive power or is towed by a motor vehicle; is primarily designed to provide temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, travel, or seasonal use; complies with all applicable federal vehicle regulations; and does not require a special highway movement permit under section 719a to be operated or towed on a street or highway. The term includes, but is not limited to, a motor home, travel trailer, park model trailer that does not require a special highway movement permit under section 719a, or pickup camper.’

Page 2-16, Remove the setback diagram.

Page 2-19, Street Related Definitions, D. Private roads should say ‘1 to 4 lots or parcels’, instead of ‘2 or more lots or parcels’.

Page 3-6, Section 3.9 Fences. The following will be added: (Badra will edit so it fits into the current ordinance verbage)

- Only chain-link, metal, wood, composite or vinyl fences are permitted. The finished side must face forward.
- Fences shall not be placed within forty (40) feet of the water’s edge of Hutchins Lake.
- Fences are not permitted in the submerged lands of Lake Michigan or from the Ordinary High Water Mark to the bluff edge of Lake Michigan.
- No person shall string, place or maintain razor wire, single strand barb wire or single strand cable as part of any fence or structure at the property lines in any Zoning District unless associated with required Homeland Security measures.
- Barbed wire or electric fencing may only be used as part of a farm operation as defined in the Michigan Right to Farm Act, PA 93 of 1981 as amended or when required by ordinance.

Page 3-10, Ponds, add: ‘D. Ponds must be constructed and maintained with gradual slopes to depths up to either five or six feet with no sudden drop offs.’

Page 6-2, Eliminate campgrounds from the table of uses in the Res/Ag District.

Have the Planner fix any gaps that are in the Ordinance book. For example, Section 6.3 B should start on Page 6-3.

Page 10-1, A. Manufactured Housing, add the last sentence to read: ‘Lot size must be a minimum of 10 acres located in the Commercial District.’

Page 11-2, Contractor’s Office should be P not SLU.

Page 11-2, Remove ‘RV park’ from the table of uses because ‘Campground’ is listed in the definitions and includes RV Parks.

Page 11-3, Add Woodworking Shop/Retail Gallery as permitted.

Page 11-3, Move Accessory to Page 11-4.

Remove the blank page after Page 11-5.

Page 12-4, Move B. Parking Requirements to Page 12-3.

Page 18-29, BB. Winery, Meadery or Cider Mill. Under number 5, add ‘two food trucks are allowed as an accessory use.’

Badra noted that Agricultural products retail is a SLU in the Ag and Res/Ag District, however there is no SLU for Ag products retail in Article 18’s list of SLUs. **DeZwaan** suggested that the McKenna Planner draft some regulations for a SLU for agricultural products retail.

There was some confusion about public versus private parks. **Hutchins** wondered if the two could be combined to say ‘parks, outdoors’ and both require a SLU. **Badra** will ask the McKenna Planner for clarification and to draft some regulations for a SLU for parks. The PC would like ‘trade, industrial and commercial schools’ to be separate from ‘elementary, middle and high schools’. **DeZwaan** noted that the Planner could help draft up separate lists of conditions for each school classification.

The PC read through **Smalley’s** draft of Article 20 ZBA, Section 20.5. Applications and Hearings. **Pierson** noted the following edits:

- B.3.c. edit to say ‘Site plan, drawn to scale, showing the variance request, including all setbacks measured from the overhang or farthest protruding part of the structure. Show all other structures including the use (house, garage, shed, etc.)’
- Add: ‘A statement with regard to compliance with the standards of Section 20.4A, as applicable.’ (the section number may be different after edits are completed)

- Add to the end of B.3.b: ‘must accompany the variance application along with appropriate property markings on site to indicate the location of the variance request.’

Pierson will review **Smalley’s** draft of Section 20.5 with the ZBA Chair, Carol **Josefowicz**. They will reword the draft and report back to the PC.

DeZwaan suggested that the Planner attend the PC meeting on November 18. They can review the Overlay District and help with the ordinance questions.

Add the following to the campground SPECIAL LAND USE REQUIREMENTS ordinance: ‘No camping cabins, resort cabins, or park models are allowed in the campground special land use.’ **Pierson** wondered if the township can prohibit camping cabins. **DeZwaan** suggested that **Badra** consult with EGLE, MTA, and the township attorney.

Gregory noted that he would like to see more green/open space at any future campgrounds. **DeZwaan** replied that the PC cannot demand that but it is something the applicant can offer.

IX. Administrative Updates

a. Township Board

Hutchins reported that the Township Board approved the PC’s request to utilize McKenna for assistance with updating ordinances.

Also, the Township Board is going to begin working on a Short-Term Rental Ordinance. They are looking for Ganges Township residents to help draft the new ordinance.

b. Zoning Board of Appeals

Pierson reported that the ZBA had a meeting on October 16th. The applicant at 2246 Lakeshore Drive petitioned for variances for a partially constructed fence. They wanted a variance for the fence height exceeding 4 ft in height within 50 ft

of the road right-of-way, they requested 8 ft in height. They requested the fence to be right up to the right-of-way, and they requested that the fence be 8 ft in height everywhere. The ZBA denied the variance.

c. Zoning Administrator

Smalley was absent.

X. Future Meeting Dates – November 18th

XI. General Public Comments

Marsha **Maslanka** thanked the PC for being proactive when working on the ordinances.

Chuck **Mannion** – 6611 Deer Trl. added that it's easier to over-regulate things and then pull back as needed, versus under-regulating.

Kevin **Perkins** – 1741 65th St. stated that he appreciates the hard work of the PC.

XII. Adjournment

Gregory made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Badra** seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katelynn Wolfe, Ganges Township Recording Secretary