



Andy Schor
Mayor

LANSING PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
December 2, 2025 - 6:30 p.m.
Neighborhood Empowerment Center
600 W Maple Street, Lansing, MI

MINUTES – *Approved 1/6/2026*

1. OPENING SESSION

Mr. Klont called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

- a. Present: Katie Alexander, Monte Jackson, Tim Klont, Spencer Lippert, Shane Muchmore, Ted O'Dell, John Ruge
- b. Absent: Tony Cox
- c. Staff: Rawley Van Fossen, Director of Economic Development & Planning Department; Sue Stachowiak, Zoning Administrator; Erin Buitendorp, Development Office Manager; Doris Witherspoon Senior Planner; Andy Fedewa, Planner.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

3. COMMUNICATIONS –

Stephanie Swart submitted an email in opposition of Z-2-2025, 200 blocks of S Cedar St. and S Larch St. Conditional rezoning from DT-3 to IND-1

Chris Sovey submitted an email in opposition of Z-2-2025, 200 blocks of S Cedar St. and S Larch St. Conditional rezoning from DT-3 to IND-1

Marcie Alling submitted an email in support of Z-2-2025, 200 blocks of S Cedar St. and S Larch St. Conditional rezoning from DT-3 to IND-1

Maggie McConnaha submitted an email in opposition of Z-2-2025, 200 blocks of S Cedar St. and S Larch St. Conditional rezoning from DT-3 to IND-1

Four anonymous postcards were submitted in opposition of Z-2-2025, 200 blocks of S Cedar St. and S Larch St. Conditional rezoning from DT-3 to IND-1

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS & ITEMS FOR ACTION

A. City of Lansing Annual Action Plan, Citywide Needs Hearing and Proposed Funding Allocations FY 2026-2027.

Ms. Witherspoon stated that the purpose of the public hearing is to receive input on the proposed funding allocations for the Community Annual Action Plan for the fiscal year of 2026 - 2027. She said that the amount of the appropriations that the City last year was 2-3% less than previous years. Since exact funding numbers are not available at this time, the City of Lansing will proceed with the Action Plan process/schedule and plan based on the previous year's allocations and adjust accordingly once the actual allocations are received. She said that the budget projections are subject to pro-rata adjustments based on the actual amounts awarded to the City of Lansing by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Ms. Witherspoon stated that CDBG funds can be used to fund housing rehabilitation, public service programs, and economic development that benefits persons of low to moderate income. She said that the HOME program provides down payment assistance for home buyers

as well as funding for new housing and housing rehabilitation. ESG eligible activities include rapid re-housing, homelessness prevention, street outreach and emergency shelter operations.

Mr. Klont opened the public hearing.

Raphael Kasen, Lansing Women's Center, spoke on his organization's programs and that although they have not been awarded funds previously they hope they will be considered next fiscal year.

Yolanda Pope, DAP Services & Resources, spoke on the funding need for housing for adults that do not need continuous nursing care.

Shelia Contreas spoke on the conflict between the Planning Commission meeting and the Nova Pod meeting at the Foster Community Center being held on the same night.

Ariana Brown spoke on the conflict between the Planning Commission meeting and the Nova Pod meeting at the Foster Community Center being held on the same night, and the need for a livable wage during the increase in housing costs.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak Mr. Klont closed the public hearing.

B. SLU-2-2025, 4220 S Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Special Land Use Permit – Place of Worship

Ms. Stachowiak presented the request from Abel Izaguiurre for a special land use permit to use 4220 S MLK Jr. Blvd. as a place of worship. The subject building was last used as an auto parts store but has been vacant. This section of S MLK Jr. Blvd. is strip commercial with a variety of land uses, including one church across the street and another three at the more active MLK – W Holmes Rd. intersection. Since the existing building will not be modified and the applicant has not submitted plans to expand the parking, occupancy will be limited to the existing parking of 35 spaces, and building space as determined by the Fire Marshal during the change of use permit review. Ms. Stachowiak stated that city staff does not expect the place of worship to impact the area due to low intensity nature of the church and the amount of commercial space available along the corridor available for businesses.

Mr. Ruge asked how many parishioners they expect to have. Ms. Stachowiak answered that although that is not part of the review, she stated the letter from the applicant in the packet says they have under 100 members. Since this location is along the main street, and there is no on-street parking along Mary Ave., worshipers will not be driving through or parking on residential streets. Mr. Ruge asked how the city enforces over-occupancy. Ms. Stachowiak stated the Fire Marshal would have to enforce occupancy limits if there was a life safety danger.

Mr. Ruge asked if the applicant will be required to screen the property from the adjoining residential properties. Ms. Stachowiak stated staff did not see a need to require that at this time due to the existing tree canopy and landscaping buffer.

Mr. Muchmore asked what the wattage level will be for the community radio station stated in the application. Ms. Stachowiak stated that staff does not know at this time, but the application

stated it is a low-power FM radio station, and that it is an allowable accessory use. There are other zoning requirements for communication towers and antennas that are being met with this request.

Mr. Klont opened the public hearing.

Stephen Monte (sp) stated that allowing a church will result in property tax revenue for the City and encouraged the City to enforce parking requirements.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Mr. Klont closed the public hearing.

Ms. Alexander made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to recommend approval of SLU-2-2025, 4220 S Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Special Land Use Permit – Place of Worship.

On a voice vote the motion carried unanimously (7-0).

5. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Brad Clark spoke in support of Z-2-2025 and stated that the anticipated utility and energy use has been said to be within the capabilities of the Lansing Board of Water and Light (BWL).

Nichole Biber spoke in opposition of Z-2-2025 and stated that the proposed use is not appropriate for the downtown area. Ms. Biber stated that only 15 full time jobs would be created and the operations would necessitate the continued use of fossil fuels.

Lisa Lee spoke on the negative public health effects of BWL and Consumers Energy operations.

Kendall Uckele spoke in support of Z-2-2025 and the sale of property Act-7-2025. Ms. Uckele stated that the water usage is said to be comparable to a fast food restaurant and that any public health effects will be minor compared to a major manufacturing or industrial user moving in. Ms. Uckele supported the proposed savings for the downtown hot water system.

Jack Pressman, representative for the applicant, spoke on the low-scale operations of the proposed data center compared to mega-sites being proposed on greenspace and farmland, the expected energy use, the expected number of jobs and yearly tax income, and the purchase price for the City.

Sam Nelson spoke in opposition of Z-2-2025 and his opinion that data centers are a speculative business.

Marshall Clabeaux spoke in opposition of Z-2-2025 and claimed that large energy users and natural gas plant development will cause BWL to miss its clean energy targets.

Tim Daman, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, spoke in support of Z-2-2025 and about the need for new tech jobs for the Lansing area.

Elizabeth Chiaravalli spoke on need for other land uses for the Downtown and riverfront area, her opposition to living next to nuisance side effects, and in opposition of Z-2-2025.

Ariana Brown spoke on the possible fire hazard of the data center with battery storage. Ms. Brown spoke on the lack of public outreach by the applicant and in opposition of Z-2-2025.

Stephen Monte (sp) spoke in opposition of Z-2-2025.

Sarah Evans spoke in opposition of Z-2-2025.

Yolanda Pope stated her wish for the Planning Commission to review rules on transitional housing and the definition of 'functional family' and to recommend changes that would allow more adults to occupy a single-family residence.

Emma Bostwick, Lansing Economic Area Partnership, spoke in support of Z-2-2025 and Act-7-2025.

Rawley Van Fossen, Director of the Economic Development and Planning Department (EDP), spoke on the ongoing Deep Green engagement with City staff, and that both applications have the Mayor's support. Mr. Van Fossen stated that the Parking Services Office is a division within EDP that has supported the sale of the parking lots. Mr. Van Fossen stated that the lots have received no other real offers.

Josh Hovey, Bellwether Public Relations, public relations for Deep Green, spoke on the appropriateness of the rezoning request in relation to the light industrial uses of BWL next door and adjacent to the east, as well as marijuana operations another block over. Mr. Hovey stated that the operations of Deep Green would result in less ambient noise than BWL's REO Town operations and that they will utilize mitigation techniques.

Sheila Contreras, spoke on her lack of trust in BWL, her public health concerns with a data center, and in opposition of Z-2-2025.

Michael Robertson spoke in support of previous comments regarding changes to zoning rules on transitional housing and the definition of 'functional family'. Mr. Robertson spoke the lack of federal and state regulation of data centers and stated that data centers should utilize brownfields.

Shantel Rodriguez spoke in opposition of Z-2-2025 and Act-7-2025.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Mr. Klont closed the public hearing.

6. RECESS

Mr. Jackson made a motion, seconded by Mr. O'Dell to take a five-minute recess. On a voice vote the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klont called the meeting back to order at 7:48.

7. BUSINESS

A. Consent Items

- (1) Minutes for approval: November 5, 2025
The minutes from the November 5, 2025, Planning Commission meeting were approved without objection.

B. Old Business –

- (1) **Z-2-2025, 200 blocks of S Cedar Street and S Larch Street, Conditional rezoning from DT-3 Downtown Core to IND-1 Industrial.**

Mr. O’Dell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muchmore to approve Z-2-2025, 200 blocks of S Cedar Street and S Larch Street, Conditional rezoning from DT-3 Downtown Core to IND-1 Industrial.

Mr. O’Dell stated his appreciation for those who made public comments and attended both meetings. Mr. O’Dell reiterated comments made by former Councilmember James Blair about the original purpose of the City holding these properties for parking, but having a long-term vision for redevelopment. Mr. O’Dell stated the fact that no development has taken place in those 35 years so he supports this redevelopment proposal.

Mr. Ruge spoke on his concerns for the proposed land use conflicting with the vision of the Stadium District. He spoke on the long history of redeveloping the 500 block of E Michigan into the baseball stadium and the mixed-use building on land which included a city-owned maintenance garage. Mr. Ruge stated his belief that redevelopment may spread north and south now that the main corridor has been redeveloped.

Mr. Muchmore reiterated Mr. O’Dell’s comments and stated his support due to the long-term vacancy of the parcels.

Ms. Alexander agreed with Mr. Ruge’s comments and stated her desire that any building be oriented toward the streetscape and not have any blank facades.

Mr. Klont told the audience that Planning Commission’s schedules are established at the end of previous years and have been held the first Tuesday at 6:30 PM of each month for years. There was no intention to conflict with any other public meeting.

On a roll call vote the motion failed 3-4. Mr. Jackson, Ms. Alexander, Mr. Ruge, and Mr. Lippert cast the dissenting votes.

Mr. Ruge asked a question about voting procedure and if a motion to table the request could have been taken.

C. New Business

- (1) **Act-7-2025, Lot 49, 200 block S Cedar St., Sale of Real Property**

Mr. Fedewa presented the request from Deep Green Industries USA LLC to purchase three parcels of real property from the City. As stated by Ms. Stachowiak and the Z-2-2025 case, these properties are commonly referred to as Lot 49, along E Kalamazoo St. and Lot 49a, along S Cedar St. Mr. Fedewa

stated Lot 49 was acquired in 1990 for \$600,000 and Lot 49a was purchased in 2010 for \$350,000.

Mr. Fedewa reviewed the known history of the sites stating that the old motel buildings were razed in the 1990s to make way for Lot 49. In 2007 the City attempted to swap the E Kalamazoo property for the one along S Cedar St. to help facilitate the development of a mixed-use building that ultimately did not happen due to the Great Recession. The City eventually followed through its own purchase of what would become Lot 49a, with a long-term vision for dense, multi-use development. These properties were also part of a 2007 rezoning attempt, from "H" Light Industrial to "G-1" Business, that was recommended for approval by that Planning Board, but was withdrawn before the City Council vote.

Mr. Fedewa stated that there are 145 total parking spaces used by a few permit holders as well as event parking for Lansing Lugnuts games, Lansing Center events, and Choose Lansing. In 2023, there were only eight permit holders. All users have been notified of the proposed sale and the City is conducting ongoing talks with each to identify alternative locations based on individual needs. No user has objected or expressed a concern for their respective needs next year.

Mr. Fedewa referenced a table and chart in the agenda packet showing parking revenue FY 2021-2025. Although numbers were not available at the time of printing, staff now knows in the five years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the lots were averaging \$80,000 to \$100,000 in annual revenue. In the last five years the lots made only \$43,000 total. The Parking Services Office does not expect pre-Covid numbers to recover. In the 2023 Parking Study, these lots were identified as assets for sale. A 2023 appraisal valued the two lot properties at \$1,450,000. Also in 2023 the Lansing Economic Development Corporation in partnership with the City released an request for proposals. Only one firm responded with an offer for a multi-family residential development, however that fell through. Deep Green has been the only other firm to submit a purchase offer in this time period.

Mr. Fedewa reviewed a section of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan that discusses this area. The Plan envisioned a transition from industrial and heavy commercial to a mix of office, retail, entertainment, arts/culture live-work, and residential uses and to build off the main E Michigan Avenue redevelopment. However, the Plan does concede that light industry can continue to be part of the mixed-use area if external impacts such as outdoor storage, noise, and truck traffic are minimized and buildings and parking are sited in-line with the urban, pedestrian-friendly vision of the area.

Mr. Fedewa stated that although the proposed data center does not meet the dynamic, mixed-use vision the Plan or prior City Councils had hoped for, he personally recognizes that redevelopment has so far failed to extend to the 500-600 block of E Kalamazoo St. even with major projects such as Block 600 on E Michigan Ave. This area is still dominated by infrastructure/utility, motor

vehicle, and light industrial uses, or worse vacancies. There are four other major vacant parcels just across the street that have been on the market for years, showing the difficulty in redeveloping this intersection.

Mr. Fedewa stated with the drop in parking lot usage, the major decline in revenue, the lack of alternative proposals, it is staff's opinion that sale of the properties is in the City's best interest. These properties are under-utilized and not needed for parking services or other city operations. Mr. Fedewa recommended approval of Act-7-2025.

Mr. Jackson asked staff why the area has lacked redevelopment even with the zoning change to allow it. Ms. Stachowiak stated that the major reason is the one-way State trunklines, as well as the BWL uses, and legacy industrial businesses. Because there are major vacant expanses there is noticeable vehicle speeding along these sections. Without street redesign to slow down traffic or a major catalyst to start bringing a critical mass of new buildings closer to the sidewalks as required in the zoning ordinance, the perception of the area will continue. Part of the sale agreement will require the proposed data center to adhere to the DT-3 site layout requirements and architectural standards instead of those for IND-1 or industrial buildings, meaning the building will be sited at the corner of E Kalamazoo St. and S Larch St., and will appear as a normal commercial building rather than a warehouse.

Mr. Jackson stated that he believes future development can extend further north and south from the main E Michigan Ave. core.

Mr. Ruge made a motion, seconded by Mr. O'Dell to recommend approval of Act-7-2025, 200 block S Cedar Street, Sale of Property.

On a roll call vote the motion carried 5-2. Ms. Alexander and Mr. Jackson cast the dissenting votes.

8. REPORT FROM PLANNING & ZONING OFFICE – None

9. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None

10. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ms. Alexander reminded everyone in attendance to review Consolidated Plan materials and to leave comments with the City to help allocate major federal funds.

Mr. Muchmore wished to thank members of the public for attending and staff for their time in preparing materials for the meeting.

11. PENDING ITEMS: FUTURE ACTION REQUIRED – None

12. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.