



Andy Schor
Mayor

LANSING PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
January 6, 2026 - 6:30 p.m.
Neighborhood Empowerment Center
600 W Maple Street, Lansing, MI

MINUTES – *Approved 2/3/2026*

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 (arrived at 6:35), Ted O’Dell (arrived at 6:35), John Ruge
- b. Absent: Tony Cox
- c. Staff: Sue Stachowiak, Zoning Administrator; Andy Fedewa, Planner; Dan DuChene, Deputy City Attorney

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

3. COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS & ITEMS FOR ACTION

- A. Introduce amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Section 1240.02 to provide a definition for “Liquor Store” Table 1243.03 to include Liquor Store in the Allowable Use Table, and Subsection 1250.02.13 to provide for a limitation within the Zoning Code of proximity of liquor stores to each other – Version 2**

Mr. Fedewa stated that Planning Commission previously reviewed draft amendments to the zoning ordinance to provide a new definition for ‘Liquor Store’ and a regulation prohibiting liquor stores from being within 2,500 feet of an existing liquor store to limit over-concentration. While Planning Commission members considered other recommendations the body ultimately decided to recommend approval of the draft amendment as written. Upon discussion with the Council Committee on Public Safety, committee members agreed with Planning and Zoning Office staff to amend the Allowable Use Table and make land use category for ‘Liquor Store’ thereby determining the appropriate zoning districts for them, rather than continuing to classify them as general ‘Retail Sales and Personal Services’.

Mr. Ruge asked why liquor stores are not recommended to be allowed in DT-1 Downtown Edge. Mr. Fedewa stated that DT-1 is a residential district bordering the downtown core. The only other use of note in DT-1 besides residential is professional offices. There are few if any commercial retail businesses.

Mr. Klont opened the public hearing.

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

Ms. Alexander made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to recommend approval of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Section 1240.02 to provide a definition for “Liquor Store” Table 1243.03 to include Liquor Store in the Allowable Use Table, and

Subsection 1250.02.13 to provide for a limitation within the Zoning Code of proximity of liquor stores to each other

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

B. Z-1-2026, 500 S Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Rezoning from “DT-1” Downtown Edge to “DT-2” Urban Flex.

Ms. Stachowiak presented the request from the Union Missionary Baptist Church to rezone 500 S MLK Jr. Blvd. from “DT-1” to “DT-2” Urban Flex and for a Special Land Use permit for a ‘Sheltered Care Facility’ in the DT-2 district. The property is buffered by the split of S MLK Jr. Blvd., a three-lane state trunkline, and I-496. This location makes it somewhat separated from the adjacent neighborhoods to the east and west. To meet the immediate need for shelter service, the building has been inspected by the Building Safety Office and the Lansing Fire Department, and has received temporary, 30 day to 30 day approval. The church is currently providing shelter for up to 50 users, specifically children and their families. Cots and privacy screens are set up on the gymnasium. Ms. Stachowiak spoke on the city-wide need for shelter facilities and that the need is greater than current capacity of other shelters. The Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance maintain that the downtown core should be conducive to high density commercial and residential uses, but that downtown edge areas are appropriate for a shelter so that users can still access the services and resources they need in the downtown area. This site has a large parking lot, is serviced by CATA bus routes, and is within walking distance of the downtown core, making this an appropriate site. Staff recommends approval of both applications.

Mr. Ruge asked how close the nearest grocery store is. Ms. Stachowiak stated that there are two corner stores a few blocks north on MLK Jr. Blvd.

Mr. O’Dell asked if the Letts Community Center allows overnight sheltering. Joe McDonald, City of Lansing Housing Ombudsman, answered that Letts is only a warming center during Code Blue events.

Mr. O’Dell asked the City and the applicant for a statement about the overall need within the City and for more information about the current operations.

Mr. Jackson asked if the City has an estimate of the current unhoused population. Kim Coleman, Director of Human Relations & Community Services, stated that the City is gearing up for the annual point in time count, but last year’s count was 2,300 persons over the course of the year. The City estimates that there are 400-600 unhoused persons at any given time since the number fluctuates based on changing circumstances.

Mr. Muchmore asked how far the church site is to the City Rescue Mission. They are one half mile from each other.

Pastor Kenny Craig spoke on a meeting Mayor Schor held with leaders of area places of worship about what assistance could be offered to Lansing families in need. Advent House highlighted a priority need for 50 children and their families that were resorting to stay in motor vehicles without shelter. UMBC met the necessary criteria for fire and life safety to

accommodate the 50 children and their families. These are the only persons staying inside the church. The Fire Marshal determines the occupancy limit. The church is not offering its space to the general unhoused population. Pastor Craig stated the church's is open to these families from 9:00 PM to 7:00 AM while the outside temperature is below 35 degrees. They expect to be open until late February/March. Pastor Craig stated they partner with Advent House to screen those staying at the church and the proper code of conduct in case there are any issues. The church maintains a staff of at least two to three people each night. Advent House is assisting people out of homelessness. The Lansing Police Department monitors and patrols the area, assisting the church if a need arises. Other places of worship have been donating supplies and volunteers to assist in this effort this season. Pastor Craig stated there is no intention to becoming a full-fledged shelter, but they are seeking the proper zoning approval as they were directed to provide temporary space for children and their families.

Mr. Klont opened the public hearing.

Debra Mulcahey, spoke in opposition of Z-1-2026 and SLU-1-2026.

Councilmember Peter Spadafore spoke on his time on the Lansing School Board and about the need of families for safe shelter and other support. Councilmember Spadafore spoke in support of Z-1-2026 and SLU-1-2026.

Ms. Coleman commended UMBC for their service, spoke on the general need for support from organizations within the City, and in support of Z-1-2026 and SLU-1-2026.

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

Mr. Jackson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ruge, to recommend approval of Z-1-2026, 500 S Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Rezoning from "DT-1" Downtown Edge to "DT-2" Urban Flex.

Mr. O'Dell asked if the former City-owned property on W Hillsdale St. was being developed as low-income housing and if the future residents were considered during staff's assessment. The on-going development did receive a Low Income Housing Tax Credit, but the development did not factor into staff's report.

Mr. Ruge stated that he is concerned about over-concentration of shelter facilities on the west side of the city and the Westside Neighborhood. Mr. Ruge spoke on his concern about these approvals running with the land, past the temporary nature of the service as detailed by the applicant. Mr. Ruge asked if there was an alternative process to allow the overnight shelter.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the City cannot legally grant temporary approvals indefinitely.

Mr. Jackson asked if the Planning Commission can recommend conditions for the applications. Ms. Stachowiak answered that conditions cannot be placed on a rezoning, but a special land use can have reasonable conditions connected to the specific land use and based on general safety and welfare. Staff does not see a reasonable need for conditions at this time. Ms. Stachowiak stated there are other methods such as violation notices and the police to address nuisances or problems if they arose.

Mr. Muchmore spoke on Mr. Ruge’s comments and asked how the City would address the situation if the pastor or church moved from this location and someone wanted to establish a large homeless shelter.

Mr. Jackson asked the staff and operations capacity of the church to operate a dedicated shelter.

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

C. SLU-1-2026, 500 S M L King Jr. Blvd., Special Land Use Permit for a “Sheltered Care Facility” in the “DT-2” district.

Ms. Stachowiak reiterated the request for a special land use permit for a sheltered care facility in the DT-2 district.

Mr. Klont opened the public hearing.

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

Mr. Ruge made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson recommend approval of SLU-1-2026, 500 S M L King Jr. Blvd., Special Land Use Permit for a “Sheltered Care Facility” in the “DT-2” district.

Mr. Ruge and Mr. Muchmore spoke on the need to consider appropriate conditions for the special land use. Mr. Ruge requested time to confer with the City Attorney’s Office about possible conditions for the Planning Commission to recommend.

Mr. Ruge made a motion, seconded by Mr. O’Dell to table SLU-1-2026. On a voice vote the motion failed 3-4. Mr. Jackson, Ms. Alexander, Mr. Lippert, and Mr. Klont cast the dissenting votes.

On a roll call vote the original motion carried 4-3. Mr. Ruge, Mr. Muchmore, and Mr. O’Dell cast the dissenting votes.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

6. RECESS – Not taken

7. BUSINESS

A. Consent Items

- (1) Minutes for approval: December 2, 2025**
The minutes from the December 2, 2025, Planning Commission meeting were approved without objection.

B. Old Business – None

C. New Business

(1) Act-1-2026, 3119 Stoneleigh Drive, Use of Right of Way

Mr. Fedewa presented the request from Spaulding DeDecker on behalf of the Lansing School District for use of the right of way for a bus drop off lane. The school district proposed to create a new 10-foot wide lane adjoining Stoneleigh Dr. for bus drop off, running approximately 286 feet. This bus lane would help internal circulation and assist school operations. Part of this request will require approximately three- and one-half feet of public sidewalk to be relocated onto the school property. The Public Service Department has agreed to both the license of the public right of way and the easement agreement for the public sidewalk on private land, subject to the school district maintaining the long-term winter and general maintenance of the bus lane. Staff recommends approval of the request.

Mr. Ruge asked for details about the internal circulation for the property. Tom Gerrish, Project Engineer for Spalding DeDecker, stated that the school district wishes to separate bus drop off traffic from parking needs.

Mr. Muchmore made a motion, seconded by Ms. Alexander to approve Act-1-2026, 3119 Stoneleigh Drive, Use of Right of Way. On a voice vote the motion carried unanimously (7-0).

(2) Act-2-2026, 2000 Lewton Place, Use of Right of Way

Mr. Fedewa presented the request from Spaulding DeDecker on behalf of the Lansing School District. Like Act-1, this request is for use of the right of way for a bus drop off lane, 11 feet wide by approximately 250 feet in length. The public sidewalk would be approximately four and one half feet on the school’s property. Lewton Elementary School will be redesigned and rebuilt on the property with a much bigger footprint requiring the bus lane relocation. Like Act-1, the Public Service Department approves of the license agreement of the public right of way and the easement agreement for the public sidewalk on private land, subject to the school district maintaining the long-term winter and general maintenance of the bus lane. Staff recommends approval of the request.

Mr. O’Dell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson to recommend approval of Act-2-2026, 2000 Lewton Place, Use of Right of Way. On a voice vote the motion carried unanimously (7-0).

8. REPORT FROM PLANNING & ZONING OFFICE – None

9. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None

10. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. O’Dell requested information about area developments.

11. PENDING ITEMS: FUTURE ACTION REQUIRED – None

12. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.