

SAUBLE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

~~DRAFT MINUTES~~ *approved minutes*

JULY 3, 2025

July 1, 2025 *A.B.*

CALL TO ORDER by Chairperson A. Baker at 6:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Members present: A. Baker, M. Miller and T. Baker

HOUSEKEEPING: A. Baker noted there will be a change of date for November 2025 Planning Commission meeting. Specifics at August meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made and supported to approve the June 3, 2025 minutes as presented (T. Baker/M. Miller 3-0).

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: R. Hall noted that seven permits have been issued in the township for the year to date. In addition he noted the Blight Ordinance will remain in effect regardless of decisions regarding zoning.

NEW BUSINESS: Chairperson A. Baker welcomed over 80 members of the community for attending the Public Hearing regarding the proposed repeal of the Sauble Township Zoning ordinance. She encouraged the community to ask questions and state their feelings within a three minute time limit.

A. Baker directed the initial query, "why repeal zoning?" to Sauble Township board member T. Baker. Baker responded that he did not feel that the Planning & Zoning Commission was dealing with issues in a timely manner. In addition he did not believe that Sauble Township had the resources to effectively handle zoning enforcement.

Community contributions fell into questions, comments/concerns and opinions.

Questions:

- 1.) What happens to the planning commission?
- 2.) What will be done with zoning?
- 3.) Could a schedule of fees address the township money issues?
- 4.) Can we return to previous zoning (pre-2022).
- 5.) How many townships in Lake county have zoning ordinances?
- 6.) Where can a petition be found?

Comments/concerns:

- 1.) Lakefront property - need for some form of protection.
- 2.) Non-Sauble Township residents will come in to develop property.
- 3.) Zoning is slow process. Resident spent two years for property variance.
- 4.) Build a fence if issue with neighbor.
- 5.) A Home owners association (HOA) can address control in an area.
- 6.) Take a pause on enforcement of zoning ordinance.

Opinions:

- 1.) Zoning ordinance is ineffective, too big for our township, a money grab, and broken.
- 2.) Historically zoning served a purpose to avoid "mole people" and tax evaders.
- 3.) Zoning offers lots of protection.
- 4.) This level of zoning is very restrictive.
- 5.) Zoning does not match what a rural community has.
- 6.) Communities have problems but where did common sense go?

Several community members identified as former planning and zoning members from Sauble township as well as other townships. One pointed out that the Michigan Township Association acknowledges that townships under 1000 residents frequently do not have zoning in place. Another community member mentioned utilization of stand alone ordinances when no zoning present.

Before responding to questions A. Baker shared that the commission had received 6 written responses regarding zoning ordinance repeal. Four responses were in favor of maintaining the zoning ordinance and two were in favor of the zoning repeal.

Baker then responded to questions reiterating that the process the P/Z Commission will make includes a recommendation to the Sauble Township board regarding the repeal of zoning ordinance. Township board will take P/Z commission recommendation under advisement and agree to adopt the repeal or not. A. Baker addressed questions regarding a citizen petition. The Township clerk must be notified within 7 days of township board action that a community petition is being initiated. The community has 30 days to obtain a formula driven number of valid signatures. If enough valid signatures are obtained, then township will follow through with additional action.

M.A. Nugent, Sauble Township Supervisor addressed insufficient zoning funds noting that the P/Z commission has a budget. In addition Nugent stated there are 9 townships in Lake county without a zoning ordinance.

Baker also noted that agencies provide zoning guidance, e.g., set back rules are enforced with the county road commission, utility companies and other agencies. EGLE (Environment, Great Lakes, Energy) permits are utilized around lakes and waterways.

Finally, A. Baker noted that planning will continue per the

Sable Township Master Plan. The P/Z commission is in need of two additional members. Members in general must be from Sauble township. However one member on the commission can be from outside Sauble township.

BOARD MEMBER TIME: T. Baker stated that township trustees are elected positions. He as a trustee did not feel that the P/Z board was effective. A. Baker thanked all those who came out to participate in the public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion made/seconded (M.Miller/T. Baker 3-0). Meeting adjourned at 7:29 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: August 5, 2025 6. P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Miller
Secretary, Planning and Zoning Commission