

**Ganges Township Planning Commission**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes for May 26, 2026**  
**Glenn Community Center (Glenn Hall)**  
**6953 114th Ave. Glenn, MI 49416**

**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** - Present

Recording Secretary: Katie **Wolfe** - Present

McKenna Planner: Kevin **Garcia** - Present

**II. Additions to the Agenda and Adoption**

The public hearing was cancelled because the venue-change notice was not published in time. **DeZwaan** made a motion to amend the agenda to cancel the public hearing and continue as a regular planning commission meeting. **Gregory** seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**III. General Public Comments**

Brian **Bosgraaf** - 6810 124th Ave. from Cottage Home noted that none of the 12 houses his company has built along the lakeshore would meet the Overlay District requirements; citing irrigated lawns, swimming pools, walkout basements and drainage control. He added that multiple Cottage Home owners sent in letters opposing the Overlay District. Lizabeth **O'Shaughnessy** - Morning Glory, stated that she opposes the Overlay District for the same reasons previously raised, expressing concern that the changes are difficult to interpret and may restrict long-planned cottage remodeling projects. She emphasized

the significant property taxes paid by homeowners and asked the PC to consider the rights of homeowners.

Eric **Murch** - 2382 Lakeshore Dr. stated that reasonable regulation is important to protect properties, however, he noted that the current Overlay District is overreaching. He suggested that the proposal requires additional community input and should focus on protecting the beach without extending restrictions back toward the roadway.

Mike **Sands** - 1234 Shore Crest Dr. attending on behalf of Sylvan Shores, stated that members of the community are strongly opposed to the Overlay District. His concerns focused on impacts to property owners' rights to maintain, improve, and build on their properties. He continued that recent common-area projects in Sylvan Shores were designed by experienced marine engineers and had received approval from the US Army Corps and EGLE, yet the projects would not comply with the Overlay District. **Sands** asked the PC to pause, gather community input and then reassess the proposal.

Dave **Morlock** - 2226 Lakeshore Dr. stated that his house is five years old and, under the proposed Overlay District, if his house were to burn down, he would not be permitted to rebuild it. He acknowledged and appreciated the township's efforts to address issues that fall between jurisdictional gaps; however, he believes the proposal overreaches. He recommended that the PC step back, narrow the scope, and reconsider the Overlay District.

Chuck **Mannion** - 6611 Deer Trl. encouraged residents to attend meetings regularly or review meeting minutes posted on the township website in order to stay informed on township discussions. He added that the proposed Overlay District should not have come as a surprise, as the PC has been working on the matter for an extended period of time.

Andy **Murch** - 2384 Lakeshore Dr. stated that he appreciates the efforts that have been made to protect the bluff, but believes the regulations have gone too far. He suggested that if a property owner wishes to undertake any work along the bluff area, not inland, the proposal should require plans and drawings prepared by an engineer licensed in the State of Michigan.

Randy **Schipper** from Cunningham Dalman, noted that the proposed Overlay District addresses a topic that state regulations already address. He added that state regulations contain more extensive provisions, including approximately two pages of rules related to

special exceptions. For example, state law allows rebuilding even if the structure is entirely damaged, as long as it wasn't due to erosion. The state has extensive provisions to avoid potential takings, and there are a lot of things in the Overlay District that would result in takings of property. Lastly, he said there is a legitimate concern for shoreline erosion, however EGLE has a lot more resources and expertise than the township does. Peter **Rosenfeld** - 1472 71st St. stated that he has put in a revetment in the past with the encouragement of the township, county and the state. Science defined the process and then the township, county and state inspected and permitted the revetment. He asked the PC to follow science and not do the overlay district.

Ben **Budde** - 62nd St noted that it is the PC's responsibility to set policy.

Joel **Warmolts** - 6957 Lakeshore Ct. stated that one challenge with some of the ordinances is understanding the specific problems they are intended to address. He noted that the volume and complexity of the proposed changes make it difficult to provide effective feedback.

Natasha **Reitveld** - 2380 Lakeshore Dr. asked that the PC listen to all the feedback and work together with the community to create the Overlay District.

Greg **Cotton** - 1630 Blue Star Hwy. stated that he hopes to establish a farm-to-table brewpub on his property. He is requesting a variance that would allow the business to open earlier in the morning than currently permitted.

Mick **Story** - Morning Glory Lane, stated that he hopes the PC consults with adequate legal counsel before moving forward with the Overlay District.

Kevin **Perkins** - 1725 65th St. encouraged community members to continue to attend meetings.

Phil **Wilson** - 1838 Morning Glory, stated that shoreline erosion will continue to be an ongoing issue; however, he expressed concern that community members are placing too large a footprint on small lakeshore lots. He added that the PC is on the right track in addressing the issue, though some of the proposed regulations may be overly restrictive in certain situations.

William **Platz** - 1994 Lakeshore Dr. stated that his lakeshore residence is his sole residence. He expressed concern that, under the Overlay District regulations, if the home

were damaged by a fire, tornado, or other event, it would be required to be relocated 130 feet farther from the shoreline to comply with the setback requirements.

Jeff **Antaya** - 1472 71st. commented that Ganges Township should improve its communication methods and suggested providing residents with a weekly email containing township updates. He feels that increased communication could help build community engagement, encourage constructive discussions, and support informed decision-making that benefits the community as a whole.

Mark **Robbins** - 1232 Shore Crest Dr. stated that he does not support the Overlay District as currently written. He expressed concern about avoiding situations in which significant time and resources are spent on matters that could have been resolved through discussions.

Kimberly **Brisley** - 1210 Shore Crest Dr. stated that, in addition to other concerns regarding the Overlay District, her primary concern is how damage to a home and any resulting rebuilding requirements could affect homeowners' insurance coverage. She encouraged the PC to carefully consider all aspects of the Overlay District, including input from community members and environmental professionals.

Daphne **Fairbanks** - 2343 Lakeshore Dr. stated that the township is facing a number of important issues and suggested that increasing accessibility to public meetings could help improve community engagement. She recommended offering meetings on Zoom.

Clark **Carmichael** - 1510 71st St. wondered who residents should contact if they have specific questions and how they should contact them. **DeZwaan** replied that residents can speak during public comments, or email the Township Clerk or the Zoning Administrator.

Kevin **Daker** - 1514 71st St. questioned the origin of the proposed policy change. He stated that property owners are responsible for addressing issues that occur on their properties.

Paul **Miller** - asked where to find the draft ordinances.

Mike **Davey** - 7134 116th. stated that going in and changing the rules because it seems like the right thing to do is the wrong approach. He suggested taking another look at the issue and giving it another shot.

Patti **Landreth** - 1808 Morning Glory, wondered who to talk to about the high risk erosion areas. She continued that there are sections along the beach that have just as much erosion as the others yet they are not considered high risk erosion areas. She expressed concern about why EGLE has not addressed these areas.

#### **IV. Correspondence and Upcoming Seminars**

**Pierson to Garcia & PC** - Re: ZO corrections

**Badra to Garcia & PC** - Re: Event Center definition

**Phelps to PC** - Re: FOIA request. Reply from **Badra & Pierson**

**Badra to Bila**, Fwd. to PC - Re: ZO corrections completion. Reply from **Gregory** - Attorney client privilege

**Twp. attorney to Badra**, Fwd. to PC - Re: Central Florida Resort Appeal - Attorney client privilege

**Badra to Smalley to Hebert to PC** - Re: Conditional Rezoning for Fenn Valley Winery update

**Phelps to PC** - Re: Letter from Greg & Meagan **Cotton** regarding Brewpubs

**Phelps to Hebert to Twp. Attorney to PC** - Re: Open Meetings Act - Attorney client privilege

Letters from **Regnery, Carbery, Palley, Hammami, Bosgraaf, Nevins, Kailbourne, Spiotta, Speese, O'Shaughnessy** - Re: Proposed Overlay District

#### **V. Public Hearing – CANCELLED: Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

#### **VI. Approval of Prior Minutes**

Motion made by **Gregory**, seconded by **Badra** to approve the March 24, 2026, Regular Monthly Meeting minutes. Motion passed.

#### **VII. New Business – None**

## VIII. Old Business – Zoning Ordinance Amendments Decision

**DeZwaan** addressed the public comments:

The discussion regarding the Overlay District started because of concerns related to enforcement by EGLE. As EGLE ~~became less cooperative in~~ WAS NOT addressing issues, the PC wanted the township and community to have greater local control.

The draft ordinances are located on the Ganges Township website.

The township does not currently use Zoom for meetings. Concerns regarding this policy can be directed to the Township Board.

The township attorney has been involved in creating/reviewing the ordinances.

The Overlay District was not an arbitrary decision made by the PC; the first draft was presented in July 2025, and the proposal has been discussed publicly throughout the process. The PC communicates with the community through public meetings and detailed meeting minutes, which are available on the township website.

**Gregory** thanked the community members for attending and sending in letters, he said it helps him to understand property owners concerns. Looking back at the last erosion event in Ganges Township, EGLE was inundated because it happened throughout the whole lakeshore. As a result, universities and planning consultants recommended that townships take a more active role in addressing these concerns. While zoning ordinances and building codes provide protections for homes and structures, there are no regulations specifically addressing bluffs and beaches. As a result, townships have become more involved in managing shoreline-related issues. **Gregory** expressed a willingness to meet with a committee from the Lake Michigan Shore Association to help refine the proposed ordinance. He stated that without community input, the PC is doing its best to develop regulations and would welcome constructive feedback.

**Badra** suggested a couple changes to the current Overlay District ordinance: use the current non-conforming ZONING Ordinance, ARTICLE 19, and change the district to a shorter distance. After **Badra** talked to EGLE it was determined that since 2012, their jurisdiction is from the ordinary high watermark into the bottom lands of the lake. When

there was an issue with a destructive sort of construction on Lakeshore Drive, EGLE, the Army Corps of Engineers and Allegan County Environmental Health did nothing.

**Badra** continued by referencing Article 19 of the zoning ordinance, which addresses nonconforming uses and structures. He stated that he believes the Overlay District Ordinance should be consistent with the provisions of Article 19, if a single-family dwelling or duplex is destroyed, property owners should have the ability to rebuild it to the same footprint.

**Badra** explained that EGLE uses the Projected Recession Distance to determine building setbacks from the lakeshore. In Ganges Township, EGLE projects approximately 70 feet of shoreline recession over 30 years and 130 feet over 60 years. **Badra** suggested that the township align with EGLE by establishing the Overlay District at 150 ft landward from the Ordinary High Water Mark to protect the bluff. **Badra** continued that within the 70 ft setback area only ~~temporary~~ READILY MOVEABLE structures are generally permitted, while permanent structures may be allowed beyond the 130 ft.

**DeZwaan** agreed that the proposed district should be pulled back significantly and expressed support for establishing the district at 150 ft.

**Hutchins** agreed that the PC needs to make some adjustments to the Overlay District throughout the next month.

**Badra** noted that under Section 14.7 B.1 shoreline protection measures are not permitted on lots that do not contain a structure. He expressed disagreement with this stating that property owners should be allowed to take steps to protect their property, even if there is no structure on the lot.

**Pierson** stated that he would support holding a public meeting dedicated to reviewing the Overlay District ordinance section by section.

**Badra** stated that he would consult with the township attorney to determine if an open discussion session could be held. His impression is that such a format may not be allowed under applicable legal requirements, but he will confirm with the attorney.

If that is not the correct approach, **Gregory** questioned what format the attorney would recommend for communication between the PC and residents to allow for productive discussions.

In response to the comment regarding the proposed brewpub opening earlier in the day, **DeZwaan** noted that when the ordinance was originally discussed, it was determined that patrons do not typically visit a brewpub for breakfast. That was the reasoning for the 11:00 a.m. opening time.

**Badra** noted that the biggest concern is that the property was a conditional rezoning. The previous owners were allowed to have a brewery and it was rezoned commercial for that one purpose. When the purpose goes away, then it reverts back to its previous zoning.

**Badra** stated that this matter will be discussed at a future PC meeting.

The PC expressed support for revising the nonconforming structures provisions within the Overlay District ordinance to be consistent with those applied throughout the rest of the township. Homeowners should have the ability to rebuild in the same footprint if a building is destroyed as long as it is a single-family dwelling or duplex.

Regarding the provision allowing shoreline protection measures only on properties containing a structure, the PC was split in their decision, with one commissioner needing more time to study the information.

**Badra** and **DeZwaan** expressed support for establishing the district at 150 ft. **Pierson** suggested increasing the district to 250 ft. He argued that consideration should be given to the distance between the ordinary high watermark and the bluff, because it's variable and it's included in the overall measurement. **Badra** noted that EGLE calculates setback requirements from the Erosion Hazard line which is 583 ft above sea level for Lake Michigan.

**DeZwaan** stated that additional revisions to the overlay district are still needed, so holding a public hearing in June would be premature. She recommended postponing the public hearing until after the PC has received guidance from the township attorney and has additional time to review and study the proposed provisions and letters and comments submitted by community members.

In response to the comment about high-risk erosion areas, **Badra** noted that the designation of those areas is determined by EGLE.

## **IX. Administrative Updates**

### **a. Township Board**

**Hutchins** reported that the Township Board is continuing to work on the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. The draft is currently being reviewed by legal counsel for final revisions. Once that review is complete, the ordinance will be posted for public review and a public hearing will be scheduled.

**DeZwaan** asked **Hutchins** to follow up with the Township Board regarding the expiration date of the campground moratorium. She noted that the updated campground ordinance will not be completed by then.

**b. Zoning Board of Appeals**

**Pierson** had nothing to report.

**c. Zoning Administrator**

**Smalley** reported that the following will be discussed at the June meeting:

Public hearing for Fenn Valley to rescind their conditional rezone.

Rezone request for 1630 Blue Star Hwy to fully rezone to commercial.

**X. Future Meeting Dates – June 23rd & July 28th**

**XI. General Public Comments**

Curt **Bailey** - 2256 Lakeshore Dr. stated that he purchased his property six years ago and two weeks after the purchase, 15 ft of shoreline fell into the lake. He explained that he worked with neighboring property owners to connect with highly qualified erosion and shoreline management experts to help determine their next steps. Through that process, he believes he has gained significant knowledge regarding erosion issues and expressed a willingness to share that experience and provide input as the PC continues to develop and refine the Overlay District ordinance.

Andy **Murch** emphasized the importance of holding meetings online to encourage participation.

Charles **Landefeld**, President of the Lake Michigan Shore Association, stated that five of the board members were in attendance at the meeting. He added that he would love the opportunity for lakeshore residents to meet with the PC in a work session to discuss concerns, review proposed provisions, and provide input on the ordinance.

Dave **Morlock** asked that, as the PC continues its work on the Overlay District ordinance, members keep in mind the broader objective of protecting the bluff.

Dave **Koster** - 1540 71st St. noted a few years ago, he installed revetments on his property and cut the toe of the bluff to allow for environmentally sustainable plantings. He stated that natural materials were placed over the revetments and that he has experienced no erosion since. He emphasized that there are structured solutions, and that many professionals specialize in this work; sometimes you can reduce erosion by doing the right things.

Meagan **Cotton** - 1630 Blue Star Hwy. stated that, with regard to their rezoning request, their goal is to maintain the farm use and grow the farm.

Brian **Bosgraaf** asked that the PC table the overlay district for an extended time to go back to the drawing board.

Rebecca **R.** asked for clarification regarding the next steps in the Overlay District ordinance process and wondered if residents could submit letters and questions to the PC. She stated that there appears to be a significant amount of misunderstanding surrounding the proposed ordinance and suggested that allowing residents to put their thoughts and questions in writing could help improve communication and foster a better understanding between residents and the PC.

Mike **Saude** stated that lake levels are not currently at a high-water stage, so there is no immediate emergency. He expressed the opinion that there is time to review the Overlay District ordinance section by section and carefully consider input from the community before moving forward.

Brittany **L.** - 2380 Lakeshore Dr. stated that, while listening to the discussion, she noticed that homeowners are concerned about their homes, insurance, and property rights. She understands that the environment is a big factor but she asked that the PC keep empathy in mind while making this decision.

## **XII. Adjournment**

**Gregory** made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **DeZwaan** seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Katelynn Wolfe, Ganges Township Recording Secretary