

Torch Lake Township Planning Commission (PC)

Regular Meeting Agenda

Monday, October 19, 2026

7:00 PM

Community Services Building, Torch Lake Township, Michigan

Please turn off cell phones.

Public Hearing/Public Comment Rules:

Fill out comment card at the back of the room if you wish to speak. Turn into the secretary.

Each member of the public will be given 3 minutes to address the Planning Commission.

Comments should be directed at the Chair.

Please no clapping or cheering.

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consideration of Agenda
4. Conflict of Interest
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 17, 2026
6. Public Comment on Agenda Items
7. Correspondence
8. Unfinished Business
9. New Business
 - a. Master Plan Review- Open House Results

10. On-Going Reports

1. Zoning Administrator's Report
2. PC Representative to ZBA Report
3. TLT Board Representative on PC Report

11. Public Comment

12. Concerns of Commission

- A. Chair
- B. Members
- C. Consultant

13. Adjournment

Torch Lake Township Planning Commission (PC)

Regular Meeting Agenda

Monday, August 17, 2026

7:00 PM

Community Services Building, Torch Lake Township, Michigan

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Clarke, Walker, Carleton, Petersen,

Absent: Graves

Others: S. Schroeder

Audience: 4

Recording Secretary: M. Merchant

1. Call to Order-7:00 PM
2. Pledge of Allegiance-recited
3. Consideration of Agenda-approved by consent
4. Conflict of Interest-none
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 18, 2026-with no changes. Carleton/Walker 5-0
6. Public Comment-none
7. Correspondence-One email related to a prior action of the commission.
8. Unfinished Business-none
9. New Business-
 - a. Master Plan Review: Open House Prep-Getting ready to send out postcards and start advertng for the public hearing on September 21 from 4:30 to 6 PM at the Torch Lake Township Community Service Building. Focus is on future land use map feedback and working on questions specific to the airport and the villages. Also looking for feedback on the recreation plan.

Commission goes over the draft questions for the Open House with regards to recreation, Torchport, and the villages of Eastport and Torch Lake Village.
 - b. Signs in the Planned Residential Development (PRD)-A-Ga-Ming Golf Course replaced their sign on 31 with a new LED sign prior to obtaining a permit. Upon review, it was discovered that they are the only property in the township that is zoned PRD. The current ordinance does not have any sign

regulations for the PRD zoning District and therefore, the new sign is non-conforming. Furthermore, the current ordinance doesn't address LED signs at all. The current ordinance will need an amendment and A-Ga-Ming will likely need to come before the PC for sign review. More to follow.

10. On-Going Reports

1. Zoning Administrator's Report-ZBA hearing on Wednesday 8/19/26 with regards to the Loughrey property. 36 Land Use permits for the year so far. Dealing with a few violations with regards to the shoreline protection strip. Also working with the board on a plan related to the Short-Term Rental ordinance.
2. PC Representative to ZBA Report-none
3. TLT Board Representative on PC Report-none

11. Public Comment-Bob Cook comments on the Rec Plan funding, "usable" road ends, and vacant parcels. Mentions the perpetual cost of the Bike Trail and how that fits into the Rec Plan.

12. Concerns of Commission

- A. Chair-none
- B. Members-none
- C. Consultant-none

13. Adjournment-Petersen/Carleton to adjourn at 8:00 PM. Passes5-0

Torch Lake Township Open House Responses

Monday, September 21, 2026; Torch Lake Township Hall

Master Plan

Future Land Use

Reviewing the future land use map, what is missing or unclear? Please use a sticky note to record your answers.

- “What’s missing? How would this map be used? For what would we reference this to help decide/guide?”
- “Environmentally Sensitive areas are subject to poor water drainage creating road damage and significant beachfront drainage along the bay.”

Action Plan

Which draft action items should be the highest priority for the first 1 to 3 years? Please use sticky dots to select your TOP TWO choices.

Priority Item	Votes
Hold a design workshop for Eastport and Torch Lake villages to determine the communities’ desire for development in areas.	19
Following workshop, review zoning language for villages of Eastport and Torch Lake and update as necessary.	1
Review zoning ordinance to encourage cluster development and/or open space preservation projects.	0
Review the zoning ordinance to further support agriculture uses where appropriate in the Township; designate limited commercial uses as uses in the agricultural district.	3
Consider adding additional housing types (duplex, triplex, quadplex) to zoning	5

ordinance in appropriate locations of the Township, such as the Eastport and Torch Lake Villages.	
Identify areas of high-nonmotorized activity in the Township and prioritize investment in nonmotorized infrastructure in those locations.	11
Identify road-ends in the Township. Develop a plan to ensure that they remain publicly accessible, while also properly regulated according to the restrictions set by Public Act 56 of 2012.	2
Review the Torchport Airport Approach Plan. Establish an Airport Zoning Ordinance to comply with land use restrictions designated by the Approach Plan.	3
Conduct an annual joint meeting between the Township Board and Planning Commission to review the Action Plan and discuss other planning-related issues.	8 + comment: "That should be an annual procedure that does not need to be voted on"

Are any action items missing, unnecessary, unclear, or lower priority than others? Please use a sticky note to record your answers.

- "Need to add on properties that are not maintained, in disrepair or dangerous, especially unoccupied, unused buildings and uncompleted construction"
- "Put a recycling center in TLT."
- "We need a recycling center in Torch Lake Twp. Why not in the village"

Agricultural Uses

What types of agricultural uses should the Township encourage? Where? Please use a sticky note to record your answers.

- "Ethnobotanical practices – work with the natural environment, not against (example: cattails are natural/native plants that soak up pollutants in wetlands)"
- "Organic only for water quality – plants only"
- "Water quality is clearly a priority or at least supported. Signage at parks to further encourage the public + land owners ways to help out"
- "Native pollinator habitats. Monarch Butterfly. US 31/M88"

- "Whatever agricultural uses the climate and soil will support. Limit the number of wind turbines"
- "Organic is GREAT, but all farms should have freedom they need to be creative so they can make ends meet."
- "Small scale farms, local owners"

Torchport

Airport planning and zoning has additional regulations limiting the Township's ability to allow certain uses and development around an Airport that are provided for by the FAA and MDOT. Any plans or ordinance adopted after an approved airport approach plan shall not allow for greater non-conformity in land use than what was in effect at the time of the airport approach plan was approved. Please use sticky notes to answer the following questions about the airport:

What types of land uses would you like to see near the airport?

- "None"
- "None"
- "Hiking Trails only"
- "NONE"
- "NONE Keep Natural"
- "Maintain rural – leave suburbia behind"
- "Can airport be used for winter sports? Do planes use in winter."
 - X Country ski
 - Snowmobile"
- "None"
- "NONE"
- "Hiking, no development"
- "Create natural buffer around airport, no development. No fuel for planes"

What types of land uses should be limited or reviewed carefully?

- "Any development of the area should be limited/stopped"
- "Restrict camping. Limit commercial entities –
 - Food trucks
 - Beer wagons"
- "Limit development of any kind"

- "No gas!! for planes Please!"
- "Green Space"
- "No gas. No expansion. Protect environment + water quality"

What concerns do you have about the increased use of the airport?

(Keep in mind that the Township cannot regulate the time of day the airport is used or the noise generated from the use of the airport)

- "Torch Park is an Airport. That is it. Keep it as it is."
- "The airport area should remain as is. Commercial development in the center of the Township would ruin the entire area. The airport is near the lake & should reflect the community"
- "Torchport should remain as is supporting small planes."
- "The airport has demonstrated a lack of caring w/ regard to para motors & community/natural areas. We have videos of para motors w/ feet on the ground. Directly overhead of family in the beach, etc."
- "Keep Private Not Commercial"
- "Fireworks"
- "Inconsiderate and dangerous, ultralights and not adhering to FAA rules"
- "Noise"
- "Concerned about the noise"
- "Keep private not commercial. No fuel. No hangar"
- "More frequent use of the airport by aircraft of the size we see today (small) isn't a big concern to me and I'm right there. The lights can be bright, but they're not on always."

Eastport and Torch Lake Village

What is a village that you have visited? What did you enjoy about it? What should we include in the Villages within the Township?

- "Landscaped gateway signage would initiate the concept that you are entering a "village". Not obvious in Eastport or TL"
- "Establish Artist Studios"
- "Quality and scope of projects should be limited in size"
- "Short Term Rentals"

- 1. Keep going notifying abusers w/ legal letters
 - 2. Look at alternative of licensing so can fine for overuse, noise, blight, etc.”
- “???... It is a group of buildings from the original village to that time period specification. High standards on building to the “original” design. Not just random buildings built to anyone’s standards. It help a “tourist town” remain a “hometown”.
- “Give property owners w/ historic properties tax incentive to restore their properties!”
- “A very nice signage or flower planting to enter the M88 – US 31 junction”
- “Stop using tax dollars for bringing strangers to our community.”

Do you support the draft Commercial/Residential policy direction for Eastport and Torch Lake villages, including neighborhood-scale business, mixed-use development, and additional housing types?

- “Limit types of businesses + housing – Keep more residential single family homes”
- “Avoid any and all high density housing projects”
- “Avoid the big city look and feel and the commercial look”
- “NO per the survey results no development keep us rural feel”
- “Zones should have a single not combined designation – either residential or commercial not residential slash commercial – no industrial zones”
- “Yes, additional housing types and mixed-use development!”

What types of businesses, services, civic spaces, or public improvements would help Eastport and Torch Lake villages become places people can stop, gather, and spend time?

- “Recycling & yard waste disposal”
- “Establish Artist Studios”
- “A bakery – a recycling center”
- “???... On NW Torch Lake Dr. local and construction traffic is running at 50-60 mph on a two lane road with curves. Please post it at 35 mph in Township. If people want to roll at 65 mph – they can go to US 31.”
- “Yard waste center clippings, brush, etc.”
- “Recycle + yard waste”
- “Recycle/yard waste please”

- "We need a recycling station for the Twp please!"

Should duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, or other small-scale housing types be considered in Eastport and Torch Lake villages?

- "YES!"
- "NO"
- "NO maintain rural character esp. w/ density"
- "No"
- "NO"
- "NO"
- "Duplexes but no tri or quad plexes"
- "NO"
- "No definately [sic] not in villages"
- "WHY not?!! Service industry staff need local housing. Planning & zoning compliances make a difference. Lower income does not mean TRASH"

What zoning or design standards would help new development fit the existing village character?

- "BIKE TRAIL"
- "Strengthen existing tree protection & water quality as priorities"
- "Design assistance is definitely needed. Both "village" areas are very fragmented and lack an identifying feature and layout"
- "Underground utilities – Commercial structures should be single stand alone on duplex structures – No strip shopping centers – covered containment – Are we sure we want the existing character – could be improved"

Parks & Recreation Plan

Action Plan

Are any action items missing, unnecessary, unclear, or lower priority than others? Please use a sticky note to record your answers.

- "Where are the road end maps provided?"
- "Get rid of toilets at Nature Preserve, Save our tax \$"
- "Keep port-a-johns @ Nature Preserve as people were defecating on beach by installation"
- "Do like the bears?"
- "Yes - create committee made up of residents for the purpose of recreation/park areas – not current group"
- "Yay! Well done!"
- "Educational signs"
- "I support EVERYONE enjoying the beauty here (responsibly). Residents and guests."
- "Too many nature preserve visitors since parking expanded"
- "I'm happy to report that since requested last year to have trash containers placed at TBNP, I have picked up very little trash. Visitors have been using the 2 containers to dispose of their trash and are taking large objects they find and placing them near the trash containers. This **has** made a significant difference in experiencing the preserve :)"
- "Yes there should be a recreational committee to ensure compliance to residents needs & desires"
- "I think TLT should support their own residents BEFORE trying to make TLT village and areas a tourist destination. Please think about all our township residents!!"
- "At 1.5 million dollars per mile the trail is a lower priority. There are too many other spending priorities now"
- "Road Ends – Maps area? I think it's important to identify property lines because historically it has caused problems"

Additional Funding

Would you be willing to pay additional property taxes, a millage, special assessment, user fees, donations, or another funding source for specific recreational improvements? Please use a sticky dot to select your answer.

YES	16 votes + comments: • "Yes, if bike trail included" • "I would prefer our taxes go toward parks and rec rather than expensive contracts like FLOCK that conduct mass surveillance" • "I believe Nakwema bike trail should be first priority" • "Yes if bike trail included in plan and is developed" • "The Nakwema Trail can only improve the area as the TART trail has improved the desirability of where it passes."
NO	16 votes + comment: • "Our concern is <u>no</u> additional costs that lead to expense. Most people unable to pay are not here to voice ... they are working or tending to family needs. Those present represent a smaller # w. probably more income"

If additional property tax funding were considered, what annual cost per household would feel reasonable? Please use a sticky dot to select your answer.

None	5 comments: • "User fees of whatever dollar amount is necessary – residents can elect to participate" • "Timing is terrible – too many other spending priorities right now – storm damage repairs & recovery" • "Nakwema Trail continues to fail to divulge how much to build, how much to maintain, how much is equipment to maintain trail, and what cost is 'west' side vs 'east'. 'More expensive' is not an answer." • "Nakwema Trailhead: how much to renovate, who is going to insure building,
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	who is going to pay to staff it, who is going to pay clean restrooms” • “None – too many other necessary, maintenance expensive”
\$25 per property Approx. \$52,500 collected annually	0 votes
\$50 per property Approx. \$105,000 collected annually	0 votes
\$100 per property Approx. \$210,000 collected annually	12 votes
\$200 per property Approx. \$420,000 collected annually	3 votes
More than \$200	1 vote

Miscellaneous Questions

How should the Township identify, protect, regulate, and maintain public road ends while preserving public access and minimizing conflicts?

- “How much are people willing to pay for these asks?”
- “Creswell Rd access if perfect for fire dept use – worth funds to bring it to a useful water access since we are so close to fire station.”
- “Call ‘em out so residents can walk to them and even just get a glimpse of the water. Identify the boundaries so neighboring properties aren’t trespassed and let us enjoy them.”
- “TLT has multiple waterfront access points for public use. This should not be a priority.”
- “I believe access to road ends (like Creswell) are important for easy access for fire trucks but not for private boats to use.”

What additional recreational needs do you see for the community?

- “Road end Boat launch on Lake Michigan”
- “\$5000 for pickle courts in township parking lot”
- “No pickleball at day park is too close to residential and very very noisy”
- “None... we live in a recreation paradise”
- “Pickleball court at Day Park”
- “Nakwema Trail a very valuable resource for the community. Would love to see that happen.”

- “Nakwema Trail:
 - If get \$0 from state, cost \$1-3 million/mile for 9 miles - \$18 million.
 - \$18 million (est’d cost)
 - \$0 from state grate
 - \$1 million donors
 - \$17 million balance – where is money coming from. Nakwema people won’t answer”