



# Minutes

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING  
Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting held in person at Lawrence Township Hall

## **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Doroh, Kurt, Chair, Van Buren County Commissioner  
Curran, Jim, Vice Chair, Berrien County Commissioner  
Preston, Linda, Secretary, Cass County Representative  
Sinclair, Kim, Treasurer, Van Buren County Representative  
Catherman, Rick, Van Buren County Representative  
DeLong, Don, Cass County Representative  
Dodd, James, Cass County Representative  
Durm-Hiatt, Marge, Berrien County Representative  
Fette, Dan, Berrien County Representative  
Freehling, Teri Sue, Berrien County Commissioner  
Gundersen, Kristen, Alternate Secretary, Berrien County Representative  
Hanson, Sandra, Alternate Treasurer, Van Buren County Representative  
Leary, Tina, Van Buren County Representative  
Marchetti, Roseann, Cass County Commissioner  
Multhauf, Katie, Van Buren County Economic Development Ex-Officio  
Pantaleo, Paul, Berrien County Representative  
Patterson-Gladney, Gail, Van Buren County Commissioner  
Stauffer, Dick, Berrien County Representative  
Torzynski, Robert, Pokagon Band Representative  
Tyler, Doug, Cass County Representative  
Wood, Gary, Berrien County Representative  
Wuerfel, Julie, Berrien County Commissioner

## **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Engle, Roger, Van Buren County Representative

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kurt Doroh called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Office Manager, Maria Vettraino took roll call, and a quorum was present.

### **2. ACCEPTANCE AND/OR REVISION OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Chair Doroh presented the Consent Agenda. Gail Patterson-Gladney moved to **“ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA.”** Paul Pantaleo seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

### **3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Deputy Director Marcy Hamilton presented the Executive Director’s Report and opened the floor for questions and comments.

Linda Preston inquired about the Broadband grant. Hamilton explained that it covers equity and affordability.

Doug Tyler asked for an update on the EV Readiness plan. Hamilton shared that we received funding from MDOT to hire a consultant, who will assess and make recommendations on where EV chargers will be best suited. Roseann Marchetti inquired about the timeline. Hamilton shared that we have hired a consultant and will take a year to complete the plan. More discussion ensued regarding the cost, funding, and need of chargers.

Teri-Sue Freehling discussed the committee selection and process of member approvals for Materials Management. She thinks further discussion is needed regarding how committee members are approved and a possible update in bylaws. Deputy Director Hamilton suggested a meeting with the executive committee to discuss this further when Director Egelhaaf is also present. Julie Wuerfel and others shared their concern of proper representation from each county. Dan Fette then shared his knowledge on the application process. Members discussed their want of equal representation and the possibility of applications being brought to the Board for review.

Roseann Marchetti moved to **“ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT.”** James Dodd seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

### **4. AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION**

Chair Doroh stated Vice Chair Curran is the head of the ad hoc committee for the Executive Director evaluation. Along with the executive committee, a member from each county will assist Curran in this evaluation. The members chosen were Doug Tyler from Cass County, Gail Patterson-Gladney from Van Buren County, and Dick Stauffer from Berrien County.

### **5. GRAHAM WOODHOUSE INTERGOVERNMENTAL EFFORT AWARD**

Deputy Director/Senior Planner Hamilton went over the Graham Woodhouse Award including the internal process, past recipients, nomination form, and submission deadline of October 1<sup>st</sup>. Nomination forms should be sent to Maria Vettraino.

## **6. PLANNER PRESENTATION**

### *TRAILS & COASTAL RESILIENCY*

Marcy Hamilton presented updates on trails and coastal resiliency. She highlighted a plethora of trail work currently in progress throughout the three counties, including a trail to the SMART Park. She also shared happenings in coastal resiliency, some topics including the South Haven Master Plan, Bridgeman Shoreline Resiliency Committee, Ox Creek restoration, and funding for more rain gardens in the area.

Rick Catherman inquired on the purpose of the rain gardens. Hamilton stated that when a large water event occurs, the creek gets flooded and disturbs the habitats. She explained how rain gardens help with stormwater retention and slow down runoff into the creek.

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

Chair Doroh shared that Van Buren County will receive around a million dollars back from ARPA funds.

Gail Patterson-Gladney asked about the SMART Park. Deputy Director Hamilton shared information on what these parks are and how they are creating jobs for the community.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Linda Preston moved to adjourn the meeting. Gail Patterson-Gladney supported the motion. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 10:35 am.

Respectfully submitted by:



K. John Egelhaaf, AICP

Date: August 20, 2024