

COMINS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Comins Twp. Hall @ 6:03pm August 13th, 2025

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE 6:03 Pm

ROLL CALL: (TAKEN)

Jerome R Kunnath	Present
John McConnell	Present
John kuziel	Present
Kyle Yoder	Present
Michelle Knepp	Present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made and seconded to approve the previous meeting minutes as presented.
First: [Jerome R Kunnath] Second: [Michelle Knepp] All in favor. Motion carried.

GUEST:

Linda NEMCOG

PUBLIC COMMENT

None. No public comments were received.

Regular Meeting:

Master Plan Draft Review, Schedule, and Adoption Process:

The Commission discussed the timeline and process for finalizing the Master Plan draft to meet grant funding deadlines (November 27th). Key points included:

- Township Board meeting schedule reviewed: August 25th, September 22nd, October 27th, November 24th, and December 22nd (noted possible discrepancy on website for December 1st or combined meetings; confirmed regular monthly meetings).
- Final draft with changes must be provided to the Township Clerk by Monday, August 17th for inclusion in the August 25th Board packet.
- On August 25th, the Board will consider a motion to approve the draft for public review.
- 63-day public review period: August 26th through October 28th.
- Planning Commission public hearing scheduled for the regular meeting on November 12th, 2025.
- Public notice language will be prepared by NEMCOG and provided by the 17th for publication in the Oscoda County Herald and posting at the Township Hall and on the website. The notice will cover the public review and hearing.
- Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the Planning Commission has authority to adopt the Master Plan unless the Township Board has previously reserved that right via resolution or minutes. The Board retains the option to adopt after the public hearing. It was recommended to communicate the schedule and process to the Board at the August 25th meeting and confirm their intentions. The Commission will handle the Master Plan; the Board will handle final zoning ordinance adoption.
- Zoning Ordinance adoption is targeted for the October 27th Board meeting.
- Contingency discussed if timelines slip: complete work and pursue funding later if needed.

Page-by-Page Review of Master Plan Draft (with Linda):

The Commission reviewed the draft Master Plan document page by page and discussed proposed edits. All changes were reviewed for accuracy, tone, and community fit. Key edits and decisions included:

- Introduction (early pages): Revised vision statement language from "welcoming community that honors its past while embracing growth and change" to "welcoming community that honors its past while planning for the future." Changed "sustainability" to "commitment to Excellence" in the community commitment paragraph.
- Existing Conditions: Corrected number formatting (e.g., 1.53). Changed "Moby homes" to "Mobile homes" on relevant chart. Corrected "Montmorency County" references to "Oscoda County" (multiple instances from boilerplate language).
- Transportation Network (around page 29-30): Corrected road reference from "Fairview Road" to "Abby Road." Confirmed accuracy of references to Kittle Lake and Thunder Bay River.
- Natural Resources / Forestry (page ~29-30): Revised statement on "51.5 percent of forest areas classified locally important" - removed or generalized the percentage as it may invite questions; emphasized all forests are important. Added language regarding planning for future changes due to invasive species and diseases (specifically oak wilt and beech bark disease). Noted best forestry practices, including seasonal restrictions on cutting oak (e.g., avoid May 15 to July 15) and proactive measures like those used by local hunting clubs (e.g., thinning, replanting, deer exclosures). Suggested this supports potential future forestry grants.
- Future Land Use / Goals, Objectives, and Actions (around pages 50-58):
 - Clarified "gateways" as entrance points/signage into the community (e.g., Fairview or Motor Point Park areas).
 - Updated "create a walkable downtown community" to "create a walkable community" or "walkable business district" (retained "walkable" language as preferred).
 - Retained/enhanced streetscape language (street trees, lighting, sidewalks, pedestrian elements) for Fairview as it can support future grants and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) efforts.
 - Updated action item: "Identify and prioritize services in need of improvement through annual goal setting sessions supporting the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)."
 - Clarified terminology around business district, commercial district, and downtown/village overlay.
 - Other minor wording and highlighted new language reviewed for the village overlay/maintenance standards.

The Commission agreed on the edits. Linda will incorporate the changes into a clean draft.

Motion:

Planning Commission recommend the Board of Trustees approve the draft Master-plan for 63-day public review

First: [Jerome R Kunnath] Second: [Michelle Knepp] All in favor. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING: September 11th, 2025 (regular meeting); Public Hearing on Master Plan: November 12th, 2025

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at approximately.