

Houghton County Planning Commission

Houghton County Courthouse
401 East Houghton Avenue
Houghton, MI 49931
(906) 482-8307



Benjamin Larson
County Administrator

Joel Keranen <i>County BOC District 2</i>	John Larson <i>Hancock Twp.</i>
Allan Aho <i>Chassell Twp.</i>	Dr. Timothy Sears <i>Franklin Twp.</i>
Erik Killunen <i>Osceola Twp.</i>	Steve Aho <i>Hancock Twp.</i>
Mark Larson <i>Portage Twp.</i>	Michael Erickson <i>Osceola Twp.</i>

Meeting of the Houghton County Planning Commission

Commissioners Hall, August 20, 2024 4:00 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to order at 4:00 pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance led by Chairman Steve Aho
3. Roll Call Present: Steve Aho, Chairman, Mike Erickson Vice Chairman, Timothy Sears Secretary, Ben Larson County Administrator, Joel Keranen District 2 Commissioner, John Larson, Mark Larson, Erik Killunen, Allan Aho
4. Agenda Adopted: Motion by Joel Keranen, Second by Erik Killunen
5. Public Comments: No public comments
6. Approval of Minutes from July Meeting: Adopted Motion by Ben Larson, Second by John Larson
7. Old Business: None
8. New Business
 - a. County and Municipalities discussion regarding PA 233/SB 5120 with State Representative Greg Markkanen and State Senator Ed McBroom. Greg led the discussion and Ed joined in via Teams and fielded many questions and gave us the realities of what is happening around the state with this effort. Ed told us that the vote was right down the party lines, with many "no" votes including his opposing this move. Information on CREOs was shared, and about some large scale renewable energy sites that are currently being explored. Nothing has come to Houghton County yet, but this is likely going to be on our radar soon. The Constitutionality of the move was questioned, and several municipal leaders gave their views on the Act and the new proposed Law. Kevin Maki who is the municipal lawyer who took Adams Twp through the last effort by Circle Power was in attendance, and he gave us a lot of information on what happened for Adams and Stanton. Farmlands and Forestlands will be the likely targets for large scale siting, and each of our municipal partners in Houghton County were encouraged to learn more about and get ready for the new Law which takes effect on November 29, 2024. The Arvon Twp Supervisor Jay Fish was in attendance, and he told us that in his Baraga County Township that a large area has been clear cut and now is getting sprayed with chemicals to kill all of the underbrush. He encouraged the Planning Commission to come to visit and see for themselves, and a proposed trip will be scheduled. Supervisor Fish wondered about the chemicals going into the groundwater and streams, and he wanted to be sure that the public knows about this.
9. Public Comments: Horst Schmidt gave his opinion on the matter. Calumet Twp Supervisor Tim Gasperich thanked us for holding this informational session. Franklin Twp Supervisor Mary Sears shared her disappointment, and questioned the constitutionality of the Law. She encouraged our area to band together and see if we can defend our rights and on behalf of our people.
10. Meeting Adjourned at 5:30pm

Respectfully Submitted: Ben Larson, Administrator