Question and Answer Summary

COMINS TOWNSHIP

Zoning Ordinance Public Hearing Held on October 22, 2026

The Comins Township Planning Commission appreciates everyone who attended the public hearing and shared their questions and concerns about the proposed zoning ordinance. This Public Hearing Question and Answer Summary (Q&A) addresses the topics raised, explains how the proposed ordinance compares to the current rules, and highlights discussed changes based on public feedback. Please keep in mind that the proposed ordinance is still a draft, and no final decisions have been made.

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Campers, Lakefront Properties, And Everyday Property Use

1. Am I only allowed to use my camper for 90 days?

The existing ordinance allows campers or travel trailers to be occupied for up to 30 days when people are visiting friends or relatives at a residence. They also allow temporary trailer occupancy while building a permanent home, generally for up to six months, with possible extensions. [Article III, §Y(2), (4)]

The public raised concerns about the time limit for RV use. The draft ordinance introduced a 90-day limit for the RV. *Based on public input and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to remove the time limit. [§3.14, p. 3-10]*

2. Can I still park my camper, boat, or trailer on my property?

The existing ordinance generally limits outdoor storage to three unoccupied trailers or boats on a property. It also requires certain stored equipment to be in the rear yard and at least five feet from other structures or side property lines. [Article III, §Y(3)–(5)]

The draft ordinance revises these storage requirements, including a six-foot separation discussed at the hearing. The draft ordinance also states that RVs can be stored in any yard. *Based on public input and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to remove the licensing requirement and limitations on storing a camper, boat, or trailer owned by someone other than the property owner. RV was also added as an allowable short-term rental use. [§3.14, p. 3-10]*

3. Does the Township override Smith Lake, which is private, regarding the length of time an RV can be kept on a property?

Generally, private association rules may be more restrictive than Township zoning regulations, but they cannot authorize something that Township zoning prohibits. In other words, they can be more restrictive, but not less restrictive.

4. Will I have to let trees and brush grow back along my lakefront?

The existing ordinance includes a Green Belt Zone along all lakes and rivers in the Township with restrictions intended to protect certain shoreline areas, requiring a 25-foot native protection strip bordering each bank of the stream, river, creek, or tributary. [Article V, §F]

The draft ordinance narrows the applicable waterfront greenbelt for properties that abut a lake that is 5 acres or more. It was explained that existing lawns and cleared areas would not have to be allowed to grow back. However, residents raised concerns about the proposed restrictions. *Based on public input and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to remove Section 3.16 Lakefront Property in its entirety.*

5. Is the Township going to limit how long my dock can be?

What the current ordinance says: The current ordinance limits dock length to 25 feet into lakes and prohibits restricted movement of any vessels. [Article V, §D.2]

The draft ordinance maintained the 25-foot dock limit. Residents explained that some lakes are shallow and longer docks may be needed to reach usable water. *Based on those concerns, the Commission decided to remove the dock-length restriction, recognizing that state requirements may still apply. [§3.16, p. 3-11]*

6. Am I still allowed to have chickens and roosters?

The existing ordinance recognizes poultry farming and other agricultural activities. It also includes restrictions on certain animals within the Fairview limits and general noise requirements. [Article II, §R; Article III, §W, GG]

The draft ordinance specifically allows chickens on Category 4 sites and added specific requirements for keeping chickens on those lots. Michigan's Right to Farm Act designates areas as Category 4 where there are more than 13 non-farm residences within 1/8 mile of a livestock facility. The state doesn't consider Category 4 sites as suitable for farming, but they give the power to local units of government to allow farming on those sites anyway, so Comins Township chose to allow chickens on those sites. This does not affect any lot other than the very small residential lots in dense areas. Residents raised concerns that the language could restrict their ability to keep chickens. *Based on those concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to remove Section 3.17 in its entirety and, instead, clarify that chickens are allowed on all sites including Category 4, with no restrictions on Category 4.*

7. Will garage sales be limited?

The existing ordinance already limits garage sales to three times per year, with each sale lasting no more than three consecutive days. Sales are limited to 8 a.m. through 6 p.m., and residents are required to notify the Township Supervisor. The ordinance also includes rules about garage sale signs. [Article II, §FFF]

The draft ordinance continued to regulate garage sales. Residents questioned whether these restrictions were necessary. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to remove Section 3.30 from the draft ordinance in its entirety. [§3.30, p. 3-37]*

8. Will I be required to mow my lawn when the grass reaches eight inches?

The existing ordinance includes rules about trash, junk, and certain property conditions, but it does not contain the same eight-inch grass height requirement proposed in the draft for the Village Overlay. [Article III, §F]

The draft ordinance introduced an eight-inch grass-height requirement for the Village Overlay District in central Fairview. It was clarified that this rule would not apply throughout the Township. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to remove the eight-inch grass height requirement. [§4.10, p. 4-33]*

9. Can I repair or store vehicles outside?

The existing ordinance regulates junk, abandoned vehicles, and the outdoor accumulation of discarded materials. It does not include the same specific vehicle-repair time limit proposed for the Village Overlay District. [Article II, §Y; Article III, §F]

The draft ordinance included additional rules for outdoor vehicle storage and repairs in central Fairview, including a 30-day repair period. Residents raised concerns about the time limit. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to extend the repair period to 1 year. [§4.10, p.4-33]*

10. Are fences required to be six feet from a lot line?

The existing ordinance includes rules for fences, including a general maximum height of eight feet and additional height and design restrictions for fences located between the front of a house and the front property line. It does not establish a general six-foot setback for every fence. [Article II, §S]

Residents asked about a six-foot separation requirement in the draft. The six-foot distance discussed in connection with RV and trailer storage should not be confused with a general fence setback. The draft has a separate section governing fences. The proposed draft clearly states that fences may be located directly on the lot line [§3.21, p. 3-16].

11. Are the proposed sign limits new?

The existing ordinance generally requires Planning Commission approval for outdoor advertising signs larger than 80 square feet. It also restricts certain flashing or hazardous signs and limits portable signs to 4 feet by 8 feet and 90 days of use per year. [Article II, §§KK and NN; Article III, §EE]

The draft ordinance includes more detailed sign requirements due to the Supreme Court decision Reed v Town of Gilbert, 2015. Included in this is a proposed 32-square-foot limit for certain signs. Residents expressed concerns that the limit was too restrictive. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to increase the proposed limit to 64 square feet. [§3.26, pp. 3-25–3-35]*

Homes, Buildings, and Existing Property Rights

12. What will happen if my house is damaged, and I can't begin rebuilding within six months?

The existing ordinance already includes a six-month requirement for beginning reconstruction after certain types of damage to buildings. This requirement is separate from ordinary maintenance or routine repairs. [Article III, §K; Article IV, §C]

The public expressed concerns about the six-month requirement being too restrictive. Many unforeseen circumstances delay rebuilding. Residents pointed out that insurance delays, contractor availability, and major storm damage could make that deadline difficult to meet. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to change six months to two years. [§3.23, pp. 3-19–3-22]*

13. Will the Township be able to condemn or tear down a nonconforming building?

A nonconformity is a building, property use, or lot that was legally established but does not meet a later zoning requirement. The existing ordinance allows certain lawful nonconforming buildings and uses to continue, although it places restrictions on expansion, replacement, changes in use, and transfers of ownership. [Article IV, §A–C]

Residents expressed concern that the new ordinance could require them to remove buildings or stop using property they had legally used for years. Residents were also concerned that the Township would take over nonconformities in order to remove them. The Planning Commission discussed removing Section 3.23(C), Elimination of Nonconformities, because it is covered under state law. *Based on this discussion, the Planning Commission decided to remove Section 3.23(C). [§3.23, pp. 3-19–3-22]*

14. Will my cabin be considered abandoned if I don't use it for a year?

Residents were concerned that their seasonal cabins would be considered abandoned nonconforming uses. Seasonal cabins would only be considered nonconforming uses if they were located in an Industrial District or a Commercial District outside of the Commercial Overlay (meaning they are residences in a

district that does not allow residences), but there do not appear to be any seasonal cabins in the Industrial or Commercial District. Seasonal cabins in the Commercial Overlay would be permitted (therefore not a nonconforming use) because there is an underlying district underneath the Commercial Overlay (meaning those lots have both zoning districts apply and are allowed uses in both districts). Therefore, there are no seasonal cabins that are nonconforming uses, so this section does not apply to them. Also to clarify, nonconforming *buildings* are buildings that don't meet a dimensional requirement of the ordinance, so the Abandonment of Nonconforming Uses section does not apply to them either.

The existing ordinance includes a one-year vacancy provision for certain legally established nonconforming uses. This does not mean that every seasonal cabin must be occupied throughout the year. [Article II, §JJ; Article IV, §B]

The draft ordinance includes more detailed rules about when a nonconforming use is considered discontinued or abandoned. It was clarified that simply leaving a legally permitted seasonal cabin empty for an extended period does not automatically make it an abandoned nonconforming use. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to extend the period of abandonment to three years. [§3.23, pp. 3-19–3-22]*

15. If I sell my property, can the new owner continue an existing nonconforming use?

The existing ordinance states that a legal nonconforming use will not continue for a new owner. [Article IV, §B]

The draft ordinance changes this approach by allowing nonconforming uses and buildings to continue after a property changes ownership, subject to the ordinance's other requirements. [§3.23, pp. 3-19–3-22]

16. Can seasonal residents build an accessory dwelling unit?

The existing ordinance generally limits properties to one main building, along with customary accessory buildings. [Article III, §G(2)]

Questions were raised about whether seasonal residents would qualify to have an Accessory Dwelling Unit. It was explained that the intent was not to exclude seasonal residents simply because they don't live in the Township year-round. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to remove the full-time resident requirement for Accessory Dwelling Units. [§7.3, p. 7-4]. Also, the zoning ordinance draft increases the number of dwelling units on a parcel from one to up to six – by acreage.*

17. Will I need a special use permit to rent my house to vacationers?

The existing ordinance includes general rules for residential uses, tourist accommodations, and special use permits, but it does not specifically classify short-term rentals in the same way as the draft. [Article III, §FF]

The draft ordinance lists short-term rentals as permitted uses in the Farm & Forest district but requires special use approval in certain residential and resort-recreational districts. Residents raised concerns about the additional approval process. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to allow short-term rentals as a permitted use in those districts. [§4.11, p. 4-36]*

18. Can I still operate a business from my home?

The existing ordinance allows certain home businesses but includes restrictions. For example, a typical home occupation cannot occupy more than 20% of the dwelling's qualifying floor area, cannot use

nonresident employees, and cannot operate from an accessory building. Separate rules apply to home professional offices. [Article II, §W–X]

The draft ordinance introduces Level 1 and Level 2 home occupations, with different requirements depending on the type of business. During the hearing, an inconsistency was identified between the permitted-use tables and the home occupation section. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to update Section 7.2 to allow Level 2 Home Occupations as a permitted use in the FF and C Districts. [§4.11 and 7.2]*

19. What is a special use permit, and is that process new?

Special use permits already exist. They allow the Planning Commission to review certain activities that may be appropriate in a zoning district but need additional consideration because of their potential effects on surrounding properties. [Article III, §B and FF]

The draft ordinance spells out more detailed procedures for special use permits, including applications, public hearings, review standards, and approval conditions. The process was discussed in connection with short-term rentals and other uses. Special use permits are not new, but the draft explains the process in greater detail. [Article 6, §6.1–6.6]

Zoning Districts and Large-Scale Development

20. Why is my property's zoning classification changing?

The existing ordinance divides the Township into several zoning districts, including Agricultural, Forest-Recreational, Resort-Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Single-Family Residential. [Articles V–XI and XIV]

The draft ordinance reorganizes the zoning districts, including combining the Agricultural and Forest-Recreational districts into a new Farm & Forest district. It was explained that the goal is to simplify the zoning map. Residents raised concerns about the accuracy of individual property classifications. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to continue its review of the zoning map.* Property owners who believe their proposed zoning classification is incorrect should contact the Township and identify the property.

21. Can the Township change my zoning without telling me?

No. The Township is required to provide public notice and an opportunity for residents and property owners to comment on proposed zoning changes before decisions are made. The Planning Commission must hold a public hearing, with notice published in a newspaper at least 15 days in advance. There are also individual notice requirements for rezonings involving 10 or fewer adjacent properties. Additionally, a property owner may request a hearing before the Board by submitting a request by certified mail to the Township Clerk. These requirements help ensure property owners are informed and have opportunities to express concerns about changes affecting their property.

22. Why are the five parcels being rezoned, and what are they being rezoned to?

A resident asked about five parcels included in the public notice that were identified for rezoning. Michigan law requires that only parcels that are proposed for rezoning that are in groups of less than 11 are required to be included in the public notice and need letters sent. These were the only parcels in the township proposed for rezoning that were in groups of less than 11. In fact, most of the parcels in the Township are proposed for rezoning because the previous zoning map did not accurately reflect the actual uses on the property. Therefore, the Township Planning Commission redrew the map to more

accurately reflect the way each parcel was already being used. In addition, they added a Commercial Overlay to expand commercial development. The parcels in the Commercial Overlay have the option of using the property for commercial purposes and for whatever uses are allowed in the underlying district.

23. We are opposed to data centers. Why are data centers allowed in the new ordinance?

By including data center standards, the Planning Commission sought to reduce uncertainty about how a proposed facility would be classified and reviewed while providing the Township with clearer authority and enforceable tools to address concerns such as environmental impacts, infrastructure, noise, setbacks and screening, fire and emergency response, lighting and visual impacts, and decommissioning.

During the hearing, the Planning Commission discussed Michigan's exclusionary zoning law, which limits a municipality's ability to completely prohibit a land use when certain legal conditions are met. The data center language is intended to protect the Township in the event that such a proposal is submitted. A member of the public suggested establishing a maximum building size for new development. In response to this suggestion, the Planning Commission remained open to considering building size restrictions as an additional standard recognizing the importance of evaluating whether such restrictions could unintentionally limit the expansion of existing Township businesses. [§7.22]

24. Why does the draft include large solar and wind projects?

The existing ordinance does not include the same detailed regulations for large solar facilities, wind energy projects, and battery energy storage systems. [Articles II–III and district regulations]

The draft ordinance adds separate sections regulating these types of development because the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act does not allow a municipality to completely prohibit a land use. It was explained that Michigan law provides a state approval process for certain large energy projects, which can affect local authority. However, developers have the option of seeking local approval. The proposed rules are intended to establish local standards where the Township has the authority to do so in order to allow the Township to shape the type of development that happens rather than the State (i.e., require larger setbacks, more restrictive noise standards, and better emergency procedures, etc.). [§7.19–7.21, pp. 7-38–7-67]

Enforcement, Regulations, and Financial Impact

25. Are fines for zoning violations new?

The existing ordinance already establishes civil fines for zoning violations: $50 for a first offense, at least $250 for a first repeat offense within 90 days, and at least $500 for subsequent repeat offenses, plus costs and applicable sanctions. [Article III, §F; Article XII]

The draft ordinance includes a separate section addressing violations and penalties. Residents expressed concerns about the proposed fines and how they might be enforced. The Planning Commission explained that they do not have the authority to issue civil infraction citations or impose fines. *Based on these concerns and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission decided to remove the language, and place the fine structure in a Municipal Civil Infraction Ordinance. [§9.9, pp. 9-12–9-13]*

26. Who is going to enforce all these rules, and how much authority will that person or persons have?

Residents asked who will enforce the proposed regulations and whether someone will be inspecting private property. Presently, the Township does not have a dedicated zoning enforcement officer. Ultimately, the Township Board has the authority to determine the enforcement process. Enforcement is an issue with the current and draft ordinance.

27. Is a blight ordinance being added?

The draft ordinance includes some property-related requirements, but it does not include a separate blight ordinance. It was explained that the Township had previously considered blight regulations, but that was a separate discussion from the zoning ordinance update. [Articles 3 and 9]

28. Will the updated ordinance raise my taxes?

Residents asked whether the proposed zoning changes would increase property taxes. It was explained that adopting a zoning ordinance does not automatically raise property taxes. Property assessments and taxes are handled through a separate process. Property is taxed based on the actual use of the property, not the zoning district the property is in.

Why the Township Has Zoning and Why It Is Being Updated

29. Why update the ordinance?

The existing ordinance has been amended over the years, but some of its provisions are outdated, difficult to interpret, or do not specifically address newer types of development. Residents questioned whether some proposed regulations were necessary or appropriate for a rural community. Many of the concerns brought forth through public comment regarded existing zoning ordinance language. Updating the ordinance provides the Planning Commission with an opportunity to address resident concerns through modified or eliminated provisions based on that feedback. The goal is to have an ordinance that is well defined, legally enforceable, and clear in terms of what is allowed and what standards exist. In addition, the Township Planning Commission wanted to relax some of the current standards and allow more uses, which they did. They also decreased the minimum dwelling unit size allowed and relaxed setbacks, making development easier.

30. I don’t support zoning regulations. Why doesn’t the Township eliminate the zoning ordinance instead of updating it?

Both approaches have benefits and drawbacks. Zoning provides reasonable standards to guide development, protect neighboring properties and natural resources, preserve the Township's rural character, and support the Master Plan. However, it also places restrictions on how property owners may use their land.

The zoning ordinance is intended to establish reasonable and enforceable standards to reduce conflicts between land uses, protect the Township's rural character and natural resources, and provide clear expectations for property owners and businesses. It also helps guide future development in a manner consistent with the Township's Master Plan while avoiding unnecessary restrictions on property owners.

The Planning Commission's responsibility is to consider public input, evaluate the benefits and impacts of proposed regulations, and make recommendations to the Township Board. *Based on the concerns brought forth by the public and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission amended numerous sections of the draft ordinance by incorporating less restrictive language or eliminating specific requirements.* The Planning Commission will continue to consider public input throughout the remainder of this project and consider both property owners’ rights and the potential impacts of development on neighboring properties and the community.

31. How do the Master Plan and zoning ordinance differ?

The Township's Master Plan and zoning ordinance serve different purposes. The Master Plan is the policy document that provides guidance for future land use and community development. Whereas the

zoning ordinance contains enforceable rules that apply to individual properties, land use, and development.

The relationship between the Master Plan and the proposed ordinance was discussed as part of the zoning update. The Master Plan helps guide zoning decisions, but it does not automatically change a property's zoning or create new restrictions. Those changes must be made through the zoning ordinance and its required adoption process.

32. Why don't you just remove all references to MCL?

The MCL references are included as a way to promote public awareness and understanding of the laws that govern Township zoning decisions. Rather than expecting residents to accept a regulation without explanation, these references are intended to allow property owners a way to look up the applicable state law, understand where certain requirements come from, and learn about the protections and procedures available to them. By providing references to applicable state laws, residents have a tool to better understand the proposed regulations and their rights, enabling them to ask informed questions, express concerns, and provide meaningful input throughout the public review process. The draft ordinance does not regulate issues that the State also regulates, with the exception of renewable energy (the Township has adopted stricter standards than the state). Other MCL references are there to refer people to where they can find the regulations (i.e., the ordinance refers to state regulations on manufactured housing communities because the Township does not have specific standards for that).

33. Why are we moving forward with an ordinance that contains regulations residents do not support?

The purpose of public review is to identify concerns and determine what should be changed before a final recommendation is made. Residents raised concerns about several proposed regulations, and the Planning Commission considered the concerns and, in many but not all cases, made changes to the draft ordinance. *Acknowledging the public's request for additional time, the Commission did not make a motion to move the draft forward to the Township Board. The Planning Commission will continue to consider provisions that fall within the Township's discretion to develop a recommendation that meets the needs of the Township and its residents.*

34. What happens if the zoning ordinance is rejected?

If the proposed ordinance is rejected, the current zoning ordinance will remain in effect, and existing contractual and grant obligations will still apply.

Planning Process, Consultants, and Project Costs

35. Why is Comins Township using Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) to write our zoning ordinance?

Preparing a zoning ordinance involves reviewing state laws, updating zoning maps, and developing clear, legally compliant regulations requiring significant time and planning expertise beyond the Township's available resources. NEMCOG is a regional planning agency that serves as a cooperative resource for local governments throughout counties in Northeast Michigan. The agency is governed by a board that includes elected officials, business leaders, and citizen representatives from municipalities within the region. NEMCOG provides technical assistance, shares information, and asks questions designed to encourage discussion and consideration of potential scenarios. NEMCOG's role is to prepare and revise the draft ordinance based on the direction from the Planning Commission, and although NEMCOG may suggest language or recommend provisions for consideration, the agency does not have the authority to

make decisions on behalf of the Planning Commission or to adopt the zoning ordinance. In this case, Comins Township decided to rewrite the Zoning Ordinance and contacted NEMCOG for a proposal. NEMCOG then let the Township know about the MSHDA grant opportunity so that it would not cost the Township anything. The MSHDA grant did not dictate any of the provisions of the new ordinance.

36. Why is the zoning ordinance so long?

NEMCOG has written over 60 zoning ordinances for communities in and outside of Northeast Michigan, so they bring examples from many different communities, including very rural townships across the region. The length of the zoning ordinance does not necessarily mean it is more regulatory. It is extremely important for a zoning ordinance to be clear about the regulations and processes it contains. "Gray areas" in zoning can leave the Township legally vulnerable. NEMCOG has worked with multiple attorneys over the years to develop an ordinance structure and specific language that attorneys feel protects the Township. It was important to the Comins Township Planning Commission to use as much language as possible that has already been through attorney review. So, NEMCOG brought in examples of language written by NEMCOG staff for other communities that have already had attorney review. The Planning Commission used much of this boilerplate language for the non-regulatory sections of the ordinance and the Planning Commission provided a significant amount of revisions for the more regulatory sections of the ordinance. This resulted in an ordinance that was tailored to Comins Township. NEMCOG typically does use the same ordinance format and section order as they do in other communities, so, while it might appear to be the same ordinance, the differences are in the details in the regulatory sections.

The process of creating the ordinance was as follows: NEMCOG wrote each draft chapter prior to the Planning Commission meeting. The current Comins Township ordinance was woven through the new draft text that NEMCOG provided. NEMCOG used colors and highlights to show the Planning Commission what was current and what was new. NEMCOG went through each section with the Planning Commission at nine Planning Commission meetings – for sessions of two hours each. The Planning Commission discussed changes, and NEMCOG made the changes to include in the final draft. While the Commission sometimes accepted NEMCOG's suggested language, most provisions were discussed in detail and revised to reflect the Commission's decisions. In nearly all cases, those decisions reduced existing restrictions and expanded how property owners could use their land.

The proposed ordinance contains 10 articles. Some establish land-use regulations, while others explain definitions, review procedures, and administrative responsibilities. The following summary explains the purpose of each article.

Article 1 – Purpose: This chapter does not contain regulatory language and is fairly consistent for all communities.

Article 2 – Definitions: This is a very important chapter that is fairly non-regulatory. Definitions form the backbone of the ordinance. This is a lengthy chapter because the more the township specifically defines, the legally stronger the ordinance is. A question was asked at the hearing about the number of definitions related to sexually oriented businesses. NEMCOG has received legal guidance advising the specific definitions listed to reduce the risk of that type of business coming into the community, being classified as something other than a sexually oriented business, being considered a permitted use for the district, and not having to go through the Special Use process. Therefore, the attorneys request that we define them specifically like that.

Article 3 – General Provisions: This chapter is where many of the regulations are contained. As you can see from the questions in this document, many of the regulations being brought up in the meeting were

already in the current zoning ordinance. In many cases, the Planning Commission had already relaxed regulations in this new version.

Article 4 – District Regulations: This is the chapter that lists the uses allowed in each district and the lot and building standards. The Planning Commission actually greatly expanded the uses allowed in the district from what they were in the current ordinance. This chapter is long because of the easy-to-use format, with the uses being in a large table at the end and also in small tables in each district section.

Article 5 – Plan Review: This is a "process" chapter – it details the step-by-step process of site plan review.

Article 6 – Special Use Review: This is a "process" chapter – it details the step-by-step process of special use review.

Article 7 – Supplemental Regulations: This is a regulatory chapter that provides specific standards for specific types of uses. Much of this chapter is devoted to renewable energy projects and data centers – it is important to detail the many standards that you want to hold these uses to.

Article 8 – Zoning Board of Appeals: This is a "process" chapter – it details the step-by-step process of the appeals process.

Article 9 – Administration and Enforcement : This is a "process" chapter – it details how administration of the ordinance is done.

Article 10 – Amendments and Adoption: This is a "process" chapter – it details the step-by-step process of adopting the ordinance and how amendments work.

The ordinance's length is partly due to its formatting, which includes a larger footer reserved for interactive buttons in the final version, extra spacing around headings to improve readability, and numerous graphics.

37. How much Township money, taxpayer dollars, was spent to fund this project?

The Planning Commission explained that the zoning update was supported by grant funding through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), with planning assistance from the NEMCOG. It is quite common for grants to require the award recipient to fund a portion of the project in the form of a local match, a percentage of the total grant award. In this case, the MSHDA Housing Readiness Incentive Grant did not require a local match. No portion of the project was funded by Township funds; 100% was funded through the grant award.

38. Is the Township trying to finish the ordinance because of the grant deadline, even if residents believe more review is needed?

Residents expressed concern that the ordinance was being rushed to meet a grant deadline. The November 27, 2026, grant deadline was discussed, along with the possibility of requesting an extension. Residents also asked for more time to review the proposed regulations and additional opportunities for public comment. The Planning Commission did not vote to recommend Board adoption of the ordinance. Rather, they decided to apply for a grant extension and continue working through public input questions and comments.

39. You said a survey was published. Why didn't I receive one?

As part of the Master Plan process, a public input survey was launched in May of 2025, and the survey was closed in December of 2025. The survey contained five zoning-related questions, and 96 people participated in the survey. The survey was posted on the Comins Township Facebook page, distributed on Facebook by members of the Planning Commission, and posted on community bulletin boards in

Fairview stores. Cost was a factor in the decision not to mail the survey to each household in the Township. Paper copies were also available from the Township upon request.

Zoning-related questions asked in the Master Plan survey include:

- Do you feel that the Township needs to enforce the Zoning Ordinance better? Yes (47.8%); Unsure/No Opinion (34.04); No (18.09%)
- Is the Township responsive to questions on Zoning and Planning? Unsure/No Opinion (64.52%); Yes (26.88%); No (8.60%)
- Are Planning and Zoning applications processed in a timely manner? Unsure/No Opinion (77.66%); Yes (17.02%); No (5.32%)
- The zoning in Comins Township should be: It is good the way it is (51.95%); More restrictive (25.97%); Less restrictive (22.08%)







40. Who makes the final decision to approve or reject the zoning ordinance?

The Planning Commission's role is to review the proposed ordinance, consider public input, and make a recommendation. The Comins Township Board makes the final decision on whether to adopt the ordinance.

Public Input, Hearings, and Next Steps

41. What was the outcome of the Public Hearing, and what will happen next?

The Planning Commission did not make a motion to move the draft zoning ordinance forward for Township Board review and consideration of approval. A significant number of changes were agreed upon by the Planning Commission, and additional work is needed, including a review of the comments received about proposed changes to the zoning map. The Township is seeking a grant extension from MSHDA to allow sufficient time to develop a zoning ordinance that meets the needs of the Township and its residents.

42. Will residents get additional review time?

Residents expressed concern that they needed more time to read and understand the lengthy draft ordinance. The Planning Commission discussed additional revisions and did not vote to forward the ordinance to the Township Board that evening. A significant number of changes were made during the Planning Commission meeting that immediately followed the public hearing. Due to the number of

changes, as well as further review of the zoning map, the public will be provided with an updated draft, time to review, and an opportunity to comment.

43. Will there be more public hearings?

Residents requested more opportunities to review the ordinance and express their concerns. Additional meetings or hearings may be scheduled as the draft moves through the review process. The Township will notify the public when another hearing will be held, when it will take place, and how residents can participate. Public review and hearing notices will be published in the Oscoda County Herald, on the Township website, at the Township Office and Township Hall, and on the Comins Township Facebook page.

44. Can residents participate in future decisions?

Residents asked for continued opportunities to review and comment on the proposed ordinance. The Planning Commission heard concerns about several provisions and agreed on some changes during the meeting. Residents can attend Planning Commission and Township Board meetings and participate in public hearings when they are scheduled.

45. How can I become part of the Planning Commission?

Residents expressed interest in having a voice in future planning and zoning decisions. Serving on the Planning Commission is one way to participate directly. **Residents interested in serving should contact the Township Supervisor or Township Clerk to ask about vacancies, eligibility requirements, and the appointment process.** Residents can also attend public meetings and participate during Public Comments without being Commission members.