Caledonia Township Planning Commission
Draft Special Meeting Minutes
August 31, 2026
Caledonia Township Hall, 6461 Gillard Rd., Spruce, MI 48762

Call to Order:
The Meeting was called to order by Dan LeClair

Pledge of Allegiance:
Completed

Roll Call:
Sobeck - present, Halazon - present, LeClair - present, LaLonde - present, MacKinnon - present

Approval of the Agenda:
Sobeck made a motion to approve the agenda.. Seconded by LaLonde. All in favor, motion passed.

Approval of Minutes August 10, 2026:
Sobeck made a motion to approve minutes with public comments added as an appendix and correction to next meetings. LaLonde seconded. Motion passed.

Written Correspondence:
A written correspondence was received by Mike McGuire. Mr. McGuire expressed concern over the negative impact of solar panel electricity. He voiced concern that the government was not to be trusted and that Solar would raise costs to the general public.

Public Comment:
Brad Chase – Gustin township –
- Item 15 – Written description for maintenance plan. No stockpiling hazardous materials.
- Sound of 45 decibels needs to be maintained for the life of the project.

Amanda Kensa – Caribou Road
- Against Solar
- Why does it have to take up farm land
- Where is the money going and why is all this power needed.

Paul Smith – 1829 E Spruce Road
- Too close to lake
- Toxic Runoff
- Property Values
- Is this all going down without even a vote
- No map
- How many on the board are benefiting from this

Nadine Valentine
- Not everyone has agreed with these changes
- Are grants/bribes leaning township to make decisions

Lori Summers – Sanborn Twp
- Are we a sunshine state.
- Why is consumers willing to pay 5 times the property value for the land
- Will effect our lives for future generations

Linda Hatfield – Hubbard Lake
- May contribute to tributaries to Hubbard Lake.
- Toxic waste?
- Property values

Jamie Smith
- We can set ordinances to retain solar
- Only place on industrial property
- Moratorium for 12 months
- Put a cap on how many acres we allow for solar farm area.

Alana Dunmills – Haynes Twp
- Was approached by Ranger solar
- This is a huge industrial project and shouldn't be putting a burden on volunteers at the local level.
- Referenced photos of Rogers City project.

Pamela Kilbe – 1646 Swede Road
- Effect on wildlife. Temperature. Feeding of deer.
- Glad everybody thinks it's a horrible idea. Will ruin tourism

Zoning Ordinance Update Comments

Nadine Valentine
- Section 6.1 Special Land Use reference to the township board.

Paul Spegelmeier – Spruce Road
- Under assumption that the property was not Amanda from Carriveau Road
- Is the property rezoned?

Natalie Goldstrom – Hawes Twp
- Would like to see the land kept for agricultural reasons

Linda Hatfield
- Will these questions be answered?

Board of Trustees Report:
There will be a meeting next Tuesday.

ZBA Report:
None

Zoning Administrator Report:
None

Tri-Township Report:
Meeting the 3rd Thursday in October.

Public Hearing:
Zoning Ordinance Update:
LeClaire addressed the process for Zoning Ordinance Update. Public concerns were addressed as possible. LeClaire explained that the Ordinance was updated in 2025. Since that time, NEMCOG and MI State recommended further updates in Solar and Battery storage and Data centers. He pointed out that these agencies are working with much more expertise than commission members possess. He also discussed obligations imposed on any development of Solar, and related activity. These include restrictions already in place, and additional concerns such as noise level, roadways to give access to Fire and Emergency Response personnel, and oversight in place such as advance signing of agreement to requirements and legal involvement of Township Attorney both pre and post development.

It was explained that if Solar applications are received the process would be to review by the Planning Commission and make a recommendation to the Township Board. From there the Township attorney would also be involved.

Roadside Stands and Short Term Rentals were also part of the Ordinance updates that have been discussed.

Public Hearing closed at 7:30.

Planning Commission Discussion and Action:
The Planning Commission discussed possible actions regarding the updated Ordinance. One action could be to turn down the changes. A second choice could be to approve the changes and refer them on to the Alcona County Board of Commissioners. From there, the Township Board would consider it at their meeting. The Board would have 30 days to vote on it. It is estimated the process will take 35 to 50 days to complete.

There was discussion about Gustin and Harrisville and the process of determining the best course of action. LeClaire explained that this PC Board is working to get things into place, to be prepared for any application for Solar that may come through. He did reiterate that nothing has been submitted in Caledonia Township at this time.

Sobeck added that re-zoning was not being discussed tonight, and no map was available because nothing has been committed yet. He briefly addressed concerns that individual board members stand to benefit from Solar development in the Township. He reassured the public that anybody directly benefitting would bow out of any discussion. It was pointed out that the Township does not determine nor have a say in where this goes. The PC job in conjunction with the Township Board is putting the ordinance together and following through to ensure the Ordinance guidelines are followed.

Sobeck made a motion to approve the changes to the Township Zoning Ordinance and move to send it to Alcona County Commissioners. MacKinnon seconded the motion. All approved, motion was passed.

It is estimated that the process will return to the Township Board approximately October or November, 2026.

New Business:
None

Old Business:
None

Commissioner's Comments:
The Commissioner voiced appreciation to the community both in Caledonia Township and neighboring areas for their attendance and opinions tonight. He addressed concerns that were voiced tonight:

As individuals bow out due to personal involvement, what if there are not enough individuals to form a quorum? The public asked if members voluntarily recuse? Is the Township Attorney involved? What is the conflict if they participate in written Ordinance and then later benefit? The Commissioner responded that these concerns cannot specifically be dealt with at this time until there is a proposal in front of the Board. He explained that we need three eligible voters to form a Quorum.

The role of NEMCOG in various issues was discussed. LeClaire pointed out that they have specialized knowledge in areas (battery storage for example) requiring technical information.

Adjourn:
LaLonde made a motion to adjourn, MacKinnon seconded. All in favor motion passed
The meeting adjourned at: 8 pm.

Next Meetings:
There will be a PC Regular Meeting October 5, 2026, 7:00 pm at the Caledonia Township Hall, Spruce,MI.

Respectfully submitted by Barb Halazon

Date: 9-21-26