

Elk Rapids Township Special Planning Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2025 – APPROVED

The meeting of the Elk Rapids Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Zach Amos at 11:32 AM at the Government Center, 315 Bridge Street, Elk Rapids, MI 49629.

Roll Call/Present: Zach Amos, James Lundy, Emile Sabty, and Shen Smith,
(Quorum Established)

Absent: Tom Crandall, Gary Pepler, and Matt Soper.

Also Present: Creston Scheel, Assistant Zoning Administrator/Planner.

Audience: Mark Poniatoski, Bill Derman, George Brown, and Scott Nelles

Approval of Agenda: **Motion to Approve Agenda.**
Motion: Smith/Lundy **Motion Carried**

Approval of Minutes: **Motion to approve the February 10, 2025 meeting minutes.**
Motion: Lundy/Sabty **Motion Carried.**

Public Comments: **Summary of Public Comments:**

George Brown, General Manager, Nowak Cabinets noted the following concerns regarding the proposed development. A summary of his comments are listed below:

- 1) Because the properties are on angle, the proposed landscaping with high fencing puts the berm and landscaping right to the front door of Nowak. Coming south on US-31, the landscaping and berm would cut off all visibility to the building and sign.
- 2) Concerned there is no screening along the side of the buildings. Nowak does not want to look at metal buildings.
- 3) Does not seem to be any allocation of dumpsters on the site – concerned where trash from these units will be placed.
- 4) Not in favor of mini storage units. Not best use of property. Would prefer to see this property used for housing instead of more storage places.

Applicant Marak Poniatoski commented on Mr. Brown’s concerns. A summary of his comments are listed below:

- 1) The words “mini storage” are not stated in his proposal. These units are not metal sided buildings with flat metal roofs. States his buildings are high-end storage units.
- 2) Understands the property lines are on an angle which had nothing to do with him.
- 3) He has no plans to move the 3 existing giant pine trees.
- 4) Berm is not going in Nowak’s front yard – it is on his property.
- 5) Mr. Poniatoski commented the Nowak property has boats, trailers and scrap stored in the back of his property that he has to view. He suggested Nowak put up screening if he doesn’t want to look at the side of his buildings.

**Motion to Open Public Hearing:
Motion: Smith/Sabty**

Public Hearing – Property rezoning from R-2 Residential to PD Planned Development requested by Mark Poniatoski owner of said property at 11882 S. US-31 Tax ID #05-06-032-014-00.

A summary of the comments and discussion regarding the Rezoning/Site Plan Review Public Hearing follows:

- 1) Member Shen Smith noted that she has been in opposition to Mr. Poniatoski's berm, landscaping and fencing from the beginning and has voiced her opinion at the previous planning commission meeting.
- 2) Applicant Poniatoski replied that the planning commission required the berm, landscaping and screening for this project. He stated if it is not needed, he would be willing to remove it.
- 3) Member Emile Sabty asked the planning commission to consider Administrator Nix's memorandum dated March 5, 2025 which lists 9 remaining issues that need to be addressed before this project can move forward for approval.

**Motion to Table Mr. Poniatoski's rezoning request:
Motion: Sabty/Smith**

Move to table the Townline Storage Application request to rezone said property from R-2 Residential to PD Planned Development to allow the applicant time to properly address the various concerns brought up at the public hearing and the nine (9) items listed in the Zoning Administrator/Planner memo of March 5, 2025. The next meeting will be scheduled after responses are satisfactorily received and reviewed by the zoning Administrator/Planner.

**Roll Call Vote: M. Smith – YES
 E. Sabty – YES
 Z. Amos – YES
 J. Lundy -- YES**

4 Voting YES – (Tom Crandall, Matt Soper and Gary Pepler are absent)

Motion Carried – Unanimously.

Summary of additional comments by members and applicant regarding the Townline Storage Application:

- 1) Member Shen Smith stated she would like the applicant to provide the planning commission with a complete and total landscaping plan; not just a list and pictures of what Mr. Poniatoski plans to plant on the property.
- 2) Chairman Zach Amos encouraged Mr. Poniatoski to meet with Zoning Administrator Larry Nix to address the remaining nine points that need to be addressed and resolved before the proposed project can move forward.
- 3) Mr. Poniatoski stated that he believed he had met the requirements that Mr. Nix had requested.

Conclusion:

The Planning Commission unanimously voted to table this rezoning request until all the nine issues outlined in the Zoning Administrators memorandum dated March 5, 2025 are addressed and resolved. The Planning Commission will wait for Larry Nix to provide an update on the status of these outstanding requirements.

Motion to Close the Public Hearing:

Motion: Lundy/Sabty

Zoning Administrators Report:

Assistant Zoning Administrator Creston Scheel reported there were no significant changes in the last month to report.

Township Attorney Report: None.

New Business None.

Unfinished Business: None.

Members Comments:

Member Shen Smith wanted to address the lack of housing in the Township. She stated the need for smaller housing is needed and should be addressed by the commission at some time in the future.

Adjourn: **Motion to Adjourn:**
Motion: Lundy/Sabty **11:59 AM**

(An audio tape of this Planning Commission Meeting is available at the Township Office)

(Minutes as of 7/14/25 – 11:35 AM)