



Hayes Township SENTINEL

Keeping Watch and Shining Light on the Politicians and Political News of Hayes Township

Published Monthly and Mailed Free to all Residences of Hayes Township, Charlevoix County

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Conklin vs Hayes Township Lawsuit: \$33,779.44 (and still going!)

PROMISES OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY GONE - "NOT MY CONCERN."

On November 19, 2024, Bill Conklin filed a lawsuit against the residents of Hayes Township. Conklin took office as Supervisor on November 20, 2024. His litigation **before becoming Supervisor** centered around unfounded accusations against the board members as well as a resolution approved at the November 11, 2024 Board of Trustee meeting. The resolution (with full township attorney support) was to organize the expiration terms of the planning commission members to comply with Michigan Law.

Conklin had another choice to make regarding his opinion on this resolution: he could have brought this to his new board members to discuss. He could have brought his concerns

to the Planning Commission or make ANY attempt to work through his concerns before turning to litigation. When asked about the cost of his litigation against the township at a board meeting, he responded, "It's not my concern."

Instead, he simply ran to the courts, a costly choice for everyone involved. His case was granted summary disposition by the Honorable Roy Hayes on May 28, 2025 and denied a motion for reconsideration on July 2, 2025. But yet, at the continued cost of Hayes Taxpayers, the case is now with the Michigan Court of Appeals. The question that has to be asked is: **Why is he keeping this money draining lawsuit going?**

Here is the truth of where we are now: Conklin has been Supervisor for a year. He has had ample time to listen, learn, discuss, observe, and engage. Mark Snyder and Carey Cuddeback are the first two re-organized Planning Commission members that terms expired in November 2025. Conklin, as is his right as Supervisor, proposed two new Planning Commission members at the most recent Board of Trustee meeting: Laura Ford and Kevin Willis. The Board members discussed both nominations publicly, made their opinions known, and did not support these individuals. That is the legal process.

If the individuals are not supported by the board members, the current Planning Commission members re-

main on the Planning Commission until the Board of Trustees votes to replace them with a new individual. Conklin's lawsuit, **that is still costing our taxpayers money**, is a moot point. No matter what happens in the court of appeals, the proper process still continues, which begs the question of Conklin: **Why? Why keep going? Why continue to cost taxpayers money?** Conklin had his day in court, and he lost. Twice. He needs to set his pride aside and do what's best for the taxpayers and community of Hayes Township. The residents are encouraged to ask him these questions themselves. They deserve to know the answer.

The Bill Conklin Supervisor Experiment HIS CAMPAIGN PROMISES SINK THIS TENURE

You have already seen the staggering running total (not including staff time and court prep) Conklin's lawsuit against Hayes Township taxpayers has cost \$33,779.44. But what about the other costs he has incurred on the township?

Conklin has remarked several times publicly that he campaigned on fiscal responsibility. However, his actions while in office prove otherwise.

2025-2026 Fiscal Year

Budget FAILURE

- Hired top tier Principal Accountants to put budget together, cost over \$6,000.00

- Refused to work with experienced Township Board members
- No workshop held, wrong format used, false information spread during hearing
- Township in a healthy and strong financial position; tried to frame it as otherwise
- Used budget discussion to publicly target and criticize Township employees/staff

Excessive use of Township Attorney

- Has had Attorney unnecessarily on Zoom during meetings for advisory

- questions
- Requests attorney to put together township applications, secretarial forms, when work can be done by township staff

Supports Litigation Against Hayes Township

- Openly supports litigation against the Township instead of trying to stop it
- Has excessive communication with counsel and group suing township
- Speaks out publicly against other Boards and encourages activity against Township efforts,

both at meetings and in written statements

Other Unfortunate Events

- Public allowed to go rogue during board meetings, fails to control meetings
- Involved himself in neighbor dispute, resident cites him for trespassing
- Fights for shoreline protection, yet has blatant disregard for Ordinance
- Came into office with campaign promises; outside influences clearly direct supervisor communication, both written and verbal

Planning Commission:

ZONING MAP AND SHORELINE REVIEW

The Planning Commission met on November 18, 2025 with two items on the agenda other than the regular reports. The first item was to hold a public meeting on the updated corrections to the zoning map at the request of the County planning and Equalization departments. The corrections to the map were the result of township approved rezonings dating back to 2019 which

had not been incorporated onto the official zoning map.

Planning Commissioners agreed to print larger versions of the Zoning Map to post in the hall to make it easier for residents to view the different areas. These will be available at the December meeting where the commission will continue deliberations on the public hearing.

The PC reviewed a proposed shoreline landscaping plan for a possible renovation project on 9 Mile Pointe Drive. The plan reviewed by the Shoreland Protection Subcommittee included a site visit and recommendations from the Tip of The Mitt. The applicant submitted an updated plan which included the recommendations of the subcommittee and the Planning

Commission voted to approve the plan if the decision to go forward with the project is finalized.

The December Planning commission regular meeting will be held on December 16th at 7pm. The PC will complete the public hearing deliberations and will attend to the routine business matters required. All are welcome to attend.

Supervisor Slams Board of Appeals

At the November Hayes Township Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, both LuAnn Kozma and Supervisor Bill Conklin criticized the decision to grant a variance to an applicant on Nine Mile Point Drive, despite the agreement of the homeowner to restore their shoreline that has had a decade of neglect. A Shoreline Landscaping Plan has already been approved by the Planning Commission. Ironically, restoring and protecting the shorelines of Lake Michigan and Lake Charlevoix has long been a declared objective of both Kozma & Conklin.

The applicant needed to seek a variance in order to replace the room structure and enclose an open area on their nonconforming structure. The house was built prior to the adoption of zoning in Hayes Township and one

corner of the house, just 125 square feet (about 8%), encroached into the setback area from Lake Michigan, making it non-conforming. Kozma was opposed to granting the variance, indicating the zoning ordinance allowed roof repair without having to get a variance. While a roof repair does not require a variance, that was not what was being proposed. The complete roof was to be torn off and a steeper roof was being constructed, both of which are not allowed on a nonconforming structure. Conklin objected to the process and told the ZBA they need to be more technical in their decision.

In response, ZBA member Rex Greenslade pointed out that the granting of this unobtrusive variance, which did not increase any non-con-

formance, accomplished a significant improvement to the shore land strip.

The Sentinel View: Callout

All zoning has to balance personal property rights with what is right for the community at large. The ZBA is called to rule on issue which cannot be resolved by the Zoning Ordinance alone or cause unreasonable restrictions on the property owners. In this case, the ZBA balanced the owners' rights (to improve their property) with community rights (improving the shoreline).

In short: a win/win situation for all and a classic example of what the ZBA does do (well). Yet Kozma still found reason to criticize. Can't she ever come up with a constructive suggestion?

Fix the Da*n Roads!

Each year, we feel the buckle and heave of our local roads, reminding us (and our suspension) of how many are in dire need of repair. The township and County Road Commission identify areas of concern and work through funding plans. Proposals are sent to bidders, and bids are reviewed. Once a bidder is chosen, the final budget for the project comes together, and the Road Commission oversees the project.

Prices have skyrocketed. The cost for the most recent completed Burnett Road project is \$401,857.05. The Township Board has committed an additional \$50,000 toward road projects in addition to their road millage for the past 6 years. This has allowed us to complete one large project in the township a year.

- THANK YOU VETERANS -



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TRUSTEE

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TRUSTEE

Matt Cunningham
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Conklin’s Proposal: Violation of ZO & State Laws

Maple Grove Road End Lake Charlevoix Access

According to Supervisor Bill Conklin, several residents have expressed concern over the road end at Maple Grove Road. The small, rocky access to Lake Charlevoix has a 66-foot easement for visitors to walk from the road end to the water ONLY. There are rules posted by the previous Board of Trustees that clearly state there is no stopping, sunbathing, or beach activity allowed at all. This is a state ordinance. Protecting the shoreline was the most important aspect the other four board members commented on with this lake access area. The township requires a 50’ deep strip of vegetation along the waterfront and limits path size to 6 feet across.

It was unanimously agreed that this area does need to have deadfall cleaned up and needs grooming, however this should be done collaboratively with Park and Rec, the Shoreline Protection Committee, as well as the

input of local garden club members. Conklin, has now waded into the waters, so to speak, and has gone from wanting to clean up a path and deadfall, to wanting a 15+ foot path for snowmobiles and four wheelers. He has reached out to the adjacent owners on either side of the road end access and let them know that the township does NOT have to follow the shoreline ordinance.

Sentinel View: Callout

Is it right that the Township makes residents spend their money and give up control of their property use in the name of protecting the lake and NOT do the same itself?

Come to the Board of Trustee meetings and let your opinion on this be known. This situation has all the makings of an epic saga. You may want to pop some popcorn...



Come to the Hayes Township Meetings!

9195 MAJOR DOUGLAS SLOAN ROAD, CHARLEVOIX, MI 49720

Board of Trustee Meeting:

Monday, December 8, 2025 @ 7pm

POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS:

Nominations of Planning

Commission members,

Maple Grove Road-End,

Eastern Avenue Beach Survey

Planning Commission Meeting:

Tuesday, December 16, 2025 @ 7pm

POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS:

Review Zoning Map Update

2024 HAYES TOWNSHIP ELECTION RESULTS

Name	Votes received
Julie Collard	760
Matt Cunningham	689
Doug Kuebler	686
Kristin Baranski	656
William Conklin	612

Source: Clerk, County of Charlevoix

REACTIVE LEADER

✗ Waits for issues to arise

✗ Focuses on immediate, short-term solutions

✗ Responds to problems as they occur

✗ Operates in a state of urgency

✗ Handles issues independently

✗ Relies on past practices

✗ Communicates only when necessary

✗ Fixes problems after they arise

✗ Reacts to team feedback as it comes

✗ Handles change reactively

PROACTIVE LEADER

✓ Anticipates and plans for potential challenges

✓ Develops long-term strategies and goals

✓ Identifies and addresses potential risks in advance

✓ Prioritizes time for strategic planning and reflection

✓ Delegates responsibilities and empowers team members

✓ Stays updated with industry trends and innovative practices

✓ Maintains open and frequent communication with the team

✓ Implements tools and systems to predict and prevent issues

✓ Actively seeks and incorporates regular feedback

✓ Builds a culture of adaptability and resilience





OPINIONS

Shining Light on Political News

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THE SENTINEL VIEW: CALLOUT

Conklin & Kozma: Singing the BOO Bird's Song

At the November Planning commission meeting we found the Conklin/Kozma Cabal were back in action, singing their song of disruption through the normal course of business. They focused on the long overdue updating of the zoning map. As usual with this crowd, some who came were confused about why they were there and what they were to speak on. They had their scripts from central command and acted out their parts to the best of their ability. Their goal is simply to delay or prevent the township from accomplishing even the most mundane

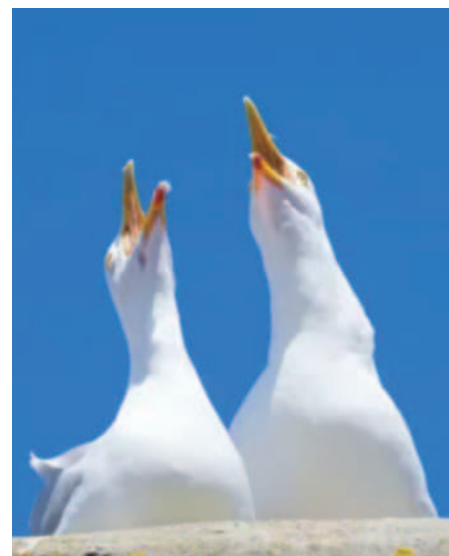
of tasks while using every opportunity to criticize staff and various boards and commission members.

As the Township Supervisor, Conklin tries to walk the thin line of proclaimed innocence while at the same actively promoting the points that the cabal bring forth, making it painfully obvious to everyone that he was included in their planned actions from the start. One can only think that Conklin believes the citizens of the township are either unaware or too stupid to recognize his silly claims for what they are: regurgitated opinions he's been

brainwashed to repeat.

It is time for the silent majority to wake up and say ENOUGH to this foolishness. Your tax dollars are being wasted in pointless delays and rebuttals of this small but obnoxious group who use volume and repetition to try to justify their false ideas.

When nature cycles to winter in Hayes Township the real song birds go south. Too bad the BOO birds don't take a page from nature's guide and head to warmer climates. Maybe the vitamin D would do them some good.



Peace on Earth, Goodwill Toward...Hayes Township?

TIME TO HEAL OUR COMMUNITY

Heart full of gratitude, spirit full of peace...what a beautiful sentiment of the season. I'm always a bit melancholy around the holidays, thinking of days and loved ones that have gone. We embrace the traditions and hopefully, find it in our hearts to reach out to help those in need, no matter how small the task. I witness miracles all the time and am so very thankful for each day.

These warm thoughts point me directly to my home: Hayes Township. A lifelong resident, I know good people live here. Camp Sea Gull pitted our community against one another; friendships were ended, grudges were created, and people ended up picking sides, possibly not even knowing the details of the side they chose. And then, for a while, we had some peace, and a healing began. Our meetings were balanced and efficient, we regained financial strength, the community was com-

ing back from the sting of division, and there was a peace that had been missing for a while.

And then, the bulldozers, steamrollers, and jackhammers came out, in full force, and all bets were off. The

**"It's ok to disagree,
but can we put aside
the raised voices,
accusations, and
attacks?"**

endless litigation and meeting disruptions and accusations found the cracks in our community and began chipping away.

In the spirit of the season, is it pos-

sible to find peace? Can we put aside our differences and talk about the things we may not agree on? It's okay to disagree, but can we put aside the raised voices, accusations, and attacks? Nothing gets done and quite honestly, it's embarrassing. Grown adults unable to use common sense, decorum, and be neighborly to everyone—can we please find the calm and peace in ourselves to have the important discussions and move forward?

Putting aside the animosity and actually being a productive part of the community would be a far cry from the constant efforts to aggravate and agitate. Making demands is NOT part of the solution. Wouldn't we much rather be known for how well our residents are

at communicating and solving problems together, rationally, and with a positive spirit to benefit all members of our community? We can set a good example, but that means the litigation, misinformation, accusations, and attacks have to STOP.

Is this a fever dream? Have I not properly vented the wood stove? Or is this a real tiny shining possibility of peace in Hayes Township? I have witnessed many miracles in my time, and if the stars were to align and this became a reality, every single person would benefit from the weight of the nastiness being lifted and the endless barrage of accusations coming to an end—A true holiday miracle in Hayes Township. I'm a realist, so I will quote a famous Dicken's character, Tiny Tim. "God bless us, every one!"

Sending my Christmas wish far and wide, with hope for true peace in our home.

— Long time local resident