



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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MARCH 2026

Board of Trustees Come Together to Support Master Plan, Data Center Moratorium

Full agenda makes for a long, productive evening

The Board met on Monday, February 9, with a full agenda awaiting them. After regular business issues were handled, the board members jumped right into their new business.

After an incredible amount of hard work on behalf of the Planning Commission, the final draft of the Master Plan was unanimously approved and adopted. Data Centers, the hot topic of the evening, were discussed at length. The board heard a lot of comments and concerns not only from local residents, but from other Michigan residents dealing with the potential of Data Centers in their communities. The board had asked their attorney to draft a moratorium (a document that puts a pause on any data center plans) so the township can take the time to assemble a focus group to

further research data centers to assist in putting an appropriate ordinance in place later this year. Moratoriums from other townships were shared, which made board members question the simplicity of the draft they were working from. After some robust discussion, the board ultimately voted to edit and approve the moratorium draft and to work with the township attorney to strengthen the language in a new draft to be discussed at the March board meeting.

Roy Griffiths, LCEMSA President, gave

an annual report to the BOT. He shared that the calls had increased, they were continuing to recoup less than half of

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the cost of each call, and that they are working hard to keep excellent staff in

place to serve the community.

The townships audit report was also presented at the meeting. Hayes was given a clean audit report. Clerk Kristin Baranski, along with Treasurer Julie Collard, credit the B, S, & A accounting software that the township acquired in December of 2024. The software is made specifically for townships and municipalities, integrating with the tax and assessing software, making everything streamlined.

Other business addressed: A ZBA hearing was scheduled for Wednesday, March 18th, at 6pm. Sean Davis was appointed to the ZBA alternate position opening. The board tabled discussion on 2026 road projects and adopting a simplified version of Robert's Rules of Order to their March 9th meeting.

Planning Commission February Recap:

Advisory Groups to Study Data Centers, Short Term Rentals

The Planning Commission met for its regularly scheduled meeting at 7 pm on Tuesday, February 17. There were nine members of the community in attendance.

The review of the minutes was comprehensive and after amendments the minutes were approved. Routine reports were received without comment.

New business consisted of the creation of two work groups to study the topics of short-term rentals and data

centers. The work groups consist of one PC member, one Board member and three members from the community. The Short-Term Rental group appointees were CT Martin and Bill Conklin, and the data center group appointees were Alexander Curley and Julie Collard.

Notice was posted seeking interested volunteers from the community and the selection of the remaining group members will be done by the ap-

pointed members. Both groups were tasked with developing information and suggestions for the Planning Commission and the Board to consider in their work on these topics. Comments or suggestions for either group should be submitted in writing to allow the members as much time to consider remarks as possible. All submissions should be sent to clerk@hayestownshipmi.gov.



2025/2026 MASTER PLAN

Hayes Township, Charlevoix County,
Michigan Planning Commission

Kindness as a Quiet Force

How Small Acts Transform an Entire Community

Communities aren't held together only by shared geography or common interests. What truly binds people is something quieter, softer, and far more powerful: kindness. Not the grand, headline-making gestures, but the unexpected moments when someone chooses compassion over convenience. These small acts ripple outward, shaping the culture of a neighborhood and reminding people that they're not alone.

Kindness Creates Safety and Trust

When people witness kindness, they feel safer — not just physically, but emotionally. A community becomes a place where people believe others will show up for them.

Take the story of a Detroit bus driver who noticed a barefoot man walking in the snow. Instead of simply driving on, she stopped the bus, took off her own boots, and gave them to him. She finished her shift in socks. No cameras, no applause — just instinctive humanity. Riders who saw it said the atmosphere on the bus changed

instantly. Strangers started talking, offering help, and checking on one another. One act reset the tone for everyone.

Kindness Breaks Down Barriers

Communities often contain invisible walls — generational, cultural,

group of teenagers noticed their elderly neighbor sitting alone on her porch, visibly overheated. They didn't know her well, but they brought over cold water, set up a shade umbrella, and stayed to talk with her. That afternoon turned into a weekly ritual. The teens later learned she had no family nearby and had been feeling isolated for years. What began as a simple check-in became a lifeline.

Kindness Inspires More Kindness

The most powerful thing about kindness is that it multiplies.

People who receive it often feel compelled to pass it on. We have heard about the 'pay it forward' trend for something as simple as a cup of coffee; how beautiful for kindness to become contagious.

Kindness Doesn't Require Wealth, Status, or Perfection

The beauty of kindness is that anyone can offer it. You don't need money, influence, or a title. You just

need awareness.

A teenager holding an umbrella over a stranger in the rain

A mechanic fixing a single mom's tire for free

A neighbor mowing an elderly couple's lawn without being asked

A child leaving encouraging notes on a community bulletin board

These moments don't solve every problem, but they shift the emotional climate of a place. They remind people that goodness exists — not in theory, but in practice.

Kindness Is the Foundation of a Resilient Community

When crises hit — storms, power outages, personal tragedies — communities with a culture of kindness respond faster and recover stronger. People already know how to look out for one another. They already trust that help will come.

Kindness doesn't overpower everything because it's loud or forceful. It overpowers because it's persistent. It shows up in the cracks of everyday life, quietly reinforcing the idea that we belong to one another.

And when enough people believe that, a community becomes more than a place to live. It becomes a place to thrive.



economic. Kindness is one of the few forces that can dissolve them instantly.

During a heatwave in Phoenix, a

Planning Commission History:

Decisions have an impact - poor memories don't erase past behavior

Last month, we reviewed meeting minutes and decisions from 1985. Among those decisions were land use plans for industrial areas from Bay Shore to Murray, an illegal re-zone of all properties from Bay Shore from agricultural and residential to commercial and industrial.

As promised, The Sentinel has continued to review Planning Commission minutes during the Henne, Simpson and then Rudolph era. The reason is very clear; these people have been constant critics of what our current Planning Commission and then subsequently our Board of Trustees have been working on.

We've moved into 1986 through 1989 only to find on going changes to the zoning ordinance mostly reactionary to changes in the township and

requests for permission to allow certain activities. Nothing new about that as demands change with times.

What is different is the way it was done. A good ole boy gravel pit is okay, an expansion of another is not. Rezoning property without owners being informed as a way to prevent them from what they are asking for while ignoring input from the County. The problem of course is it opens the township up to a lawsuit, in this case H & D in Bayshore. Having a judge make decisions for township instead of the township working with applicants equals more wasted taxpayer money.

Flatly turning down a proposed development in northwest corner of township forcing another lawsuit. Judge rules again, township loses.

The township received reports from

the Health Department that all wells in Bayshore are good, but a member of the PC told residents to get a doctor to tell what will happen to their health from gravel pit activity.

A variance was granted with a condition to put most of property into a specific conservancy-not legal to force that on a property owner. Owner can voluntarily ask for this but it cannot be suggested or required by ZBA. (This was overturned later so township lost, with these individuals at the helm, yet once again).

The Zoning Administrator was allowed to vote with Planning Commission. Could you imagine if this happened with our current commission? Long range plans were updated to catch up with changes made to the Zoning Ordinance—yet another back-

ward flow of decisions.

All Boards and Commissions struggle with issues that come before them. New technology, uses and demands that need to be addressed, researched, and discussed. Currently, the township is addressing Data Centers. In the next year or two, it will be something else. The zoning ordinance is a moving document. There is no such thing as a 'perfect' Zoning Ordinance. Constant criticism from those who obviously struggled and sometimes failed should not even be recognized. These individuals should be helping not hindering. It's not too late to make that adjustment in the sails. These decisions are for everyone, not just a few people, and the more we work together, the stronger our community will be.

LETTER TO THE SUPERVISOR:

Let It Go - It's Time to Bring our Community Together

An Open Letter to Bill Conklin:

Mr. Conklin, on behalf of the residents of Hayes Township, I would like to ask you to please, for the betterment of our community, drop your lawsuit against the township. You filed this before taking office, I truly believe, in the middle of high emotion and false narrative being thrown at you. At the time, I will give you the benefit of the doubt that you truly believed there was some kind of personal attack against you. There wasn't. But since then, I truly hope you have gotten the opportunity to get to know the other people working for the betterment of our community, and that maybe, you all have more in common than first believed.

And, in the spirit of competition, it is understandable that the people who opposed the standing board members and supported your candidacy did not share the nicest comments about your new 'co-workers'. You have now had the time to get to know them independently, and what I hope is that all of the lies have been dispelled. Your support of the Planning Commissioners in their incredible work on the Master Plan revision was a fantastic decision that brought your board together. You commented that the cost of this is "not your concern" during a board meeting, but at \$34,000 and growing, it should be. In the spirit of bringing our community together, I again request that you drop your lawsuit.

This will not make you weak. This will not make you a quitter. To the contrary: it will be the biggest gesture you could extend to the entire community to show you are willing to move forward, together, and forge a fresh start. Your example would help break down the walls of animosity that remain and bring our community together.

Mr. Conklin, let's take the new year as a sign to let go of that which now serves only as a burden and divider. Let the lawsuit go, and spend your time and resources doing something that serves you and our community in a more positive way.

Thank you for your consideration.

- David Zipp

Hayes Township Sentinel Publisher

CONTACT YOUR OFFICIALS:

SUPERVISOR Bill Conklin - 231-373-0059

CLERK Kristin Baranski - 231-547-6961

TREASURER Julie Collard - 231-547-6961

TRUSTEE Doug Kuebler - 906-298-1416

TRUSTEE Matt Cunningham - 231-881-1533

Come to the Hayes Township Meetings!

9195 MAJOR DOUGLAS SLOAN ROAD, CHARLEVOIX, MI 49720

Board of Trustee Meeting: Monday, March 9 @ 7pm

Possible agenda items: road projects, rules of order, advisory committees.

Planning Commission Meeting: Tuesday, March 17 @ 7pm

If you can't come in person, go to hayestownshipmi.gov and join with the ZOOM links. Send comments to the board members in writing before the meetings.

Winter Weather Safety PSA - It's not over yet!

Severe winter weather can disrupt daily life quickly, so preparation is essential. Before storms arrive, create a simple plan and gather supplies that help you stay warm, fed, and connected. Snow, ice, and high winds can lead to dangerous roads and power outages, so staying alert and ready makes a real difference.

If you must travel, drive slowly and

watch for black ice, which can be nearly invisible. Keep your gas tank at least half full and store emergency items in your vehicle. At home, dress in warm layers, cover exposed skin, and use heaters safely. Keep anything flammable far from heat sources, and never use ovens or grills for warmth. Charge devices ahead of time and know where your flashlights are in case the power

goes out.

Staying informed is just as important as staying warm. Sign up for local emergency alerts at <https://www.smart911.com/smart911/ref/reg.action?pa=CCEOEM> so you receive critical updates during severe weather.

Community matters, too. Check on neighbors, especially older adults or anyone who may need extra support.

Recommended Winter Safety Supplies

- Blankets and warm clothing
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Nonperishable food / bottled water
- Essential medications
- Firstaid kit
- Portable phone charger
- Shovel, ice scraper, sand or cat litter
- Waterproof boots and gloves



OPINIONS

Shining Light on Political News

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An Early Spring or Just a Temporary Thaw?

The time has come to freeze out fear mongering in our neighborhood

Those in attendance at the February Board meeting were treated to the experience of all five board members talking to each other and working together to get through a lengthy agenda. Supervisor Conklin deftly led discussion on a variety of topics that have been the subject of much wailing and gnashing of teeth. Three items brought to the board by the planning commission; the zoning map amendment, adoption of the master plan and the creation of moratorium on data

entire board. Credit must be given when credit is due.

While other topics on the agenda engendered comment, the three above mentioned topics brought the usual commentors back out to repeat their worn and tired complaints. One new wrinkle in the fabric of our township came from the elaborate activity to provide a "gotcha" moment regarding the issuance of the data center moratorium. Our infamous know it all reactionary, she who must not be

named, decided that the topic needed to be broadcast far and wide lest anyone in the state, and perhaps beyond, so that all and sundry would know that the township had concerns about data centers. Rather than initiating a discussion with either the Planning Commission or the board members, SWMNB took it upon herself to post incendiary and imaginary comments on social media, contact local and state-wide news agencies and also data center protest groups who are involved in downstate protests inviting them to bring their concerns

to Hayes Township. Indeed, the reporting from Channel 4 was fair and balanced and even the Mlive report was reasonable.

Fortunately for all involved these claims were not accepted and careful work by the township leadership in verifying the processes involved in the moratorium resolution led to the enactment.

centers were debated and ultimately unanimously approved in a rare show of focus and determination by the board. Kudos to Mr. Conklin and the



The unfortunate plot to try to discredit the moratorium resolution based on her stated beliefs that the township attorney could not have drafted the moratorium and that an ordinance was going to be better was repeated by the group on Zoom that she rounded up to back her claims. Fortunately for all involved these claims were not accepted and careful work by the township leadership in verifying the processes involved in the moratorium resolution led to the enactment. When later challenged on her actions, SWMNB tried to blame the township for forcing her to do the things she did. That is behavior one expects from children or perhaps in

the words of Flip Wilson, "The devil made her do it!".

Once again all of us are subject to the drama and hysteria that one person and a small cabal of sycophants manage to create. The part that amazes this writer is that it is clear that these "concerns" are manufactured using gross assumptions as to the cause, benefit and motivation of the township leadership. It is clear in the postings and the comments that things are based on assumptions without ever seeking information or discounting the answers that she doesn't want to hear. It is time for all to ignore this behavior.