



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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MAY 2026

BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETING:

Planning Commissioner Cuddeback Reappointed, BOT Members Review Policies

The April Board meeting included discussions on road work, safety and maintenance at our parks, Principals of Governance, and a unanimous PC re-appointment.

The BOT voted in support of a play area for Hayes Township Park Camp Sea Gull. The Park and Recreation Committee is working on putting that information together. They also supported buoys for swim areas and purchase of seasonal safety equipment as well as agreed to have Ray Cunninham install the buoys. Lyons Marine has volunteered to pay for the swim buoys at Camp Sea Gull to be installed and taken out at the end of the season. The board members signed an MTA Principals of Governance document, and divided Hayes Policies among the 5 members for review and edits. They will be reviewed at the BOT meeting in May.

Supervisor Bill Conklin brought the reappointment of Planning Commission member Carey Cuddeback to the

BOT, and she was unanimously voted to remain on the PC. Board members expressed their support and complimented Conklin on his reconsideration and nomination.

Conklin shared that he had been observing Cuddeback over many months and hearing her sensible and intelligent feedback had convinced him that she is a true asset to the PC.

Conklin also nominated Jon Purdy to the Planning Commission. The Board members commented that they did not know Purdy or have any history to support Conklin's current nomination, prompting Conklin to withdraw his nomination. They also commented that Mark Snyder, the Planning Commission member

Purdy would replace, is an incredibly strong member that brings a wealth of knowledge on real estate and related issues to the commission. Conklin said

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he believes Snyder is on the PC to influence decisions that would benefit him professionally. Clerk Kristin Baranski adamantly disagreed with his accusa-

tion. Treasurer Julie Collard asked Conklin if he had ever head Snyder vote on a PC matter that would be a professional advantage, and Conklin answered "No."

The trustees discussed road work in the township and how the chip and seal process saves money but might not be what people want. Treasurer Julie Collard volunteered to do an informal consensus in her neighborhood on Shrigley Road, and report back to the board how residents feel about the potential road work.

Spring Clean Up will be held in Hayes Township on June 27, 2026. Items need to be at the curb by 6am. The board will post information on the township website and residents are welcome to contact the office with other questions. Lake Charlevoix access via Maple Grove Road end fence will be widened to 6 feet and the path maintained through the summer season for easier resident access.

PLANNING COMMISSION APRIL MEETING RECAP: Advisory Groups Gather Information

The PC met for the regularly scheduled April meeting. It was a short agenda with the new business items of providing updates on the activities of the Short-Term Rental and Data Center advisory work groups as well as a report on progress on the Zoning Ordinance rewrite.

Both workgroups have met and will continue to meet in order to develop

a thorough report for the PC and their respective issues. The STR group is ahead organizationally as they are working with samples of existing STR ordinances from other townships and discussing what and how might things might work in Hayes Township. The DC group does not have these types of examples and thus are starting at the very basic level of working to ap-

propriately define what a data center is and from that work to develop a way to protect the township. The Zoning Ordinance rewrite has hit a significant snag in that the consultants BRI lost months of work from the group and it has forced them to redo their previous efforts. This has led to discussion regarding the value of the consultants being utilized.

The meeting wound down with an impromptu poll of the PC members regarding their current thinking about whether hyperscale data centers should be allowed in the township. Each member of the PC expressed their belief that it was not an appropriate activity in Hayes.

Mental Health and Community Harmony in Hayes Township

Hayes Township is known for its quiet beauty, strong neighborly ties, and the shared pride residents take in living along the shores of Lake Charlevoix. In a place where people see each other at the Township Hall, local parks, and community events, the emotional health of residents plays a powerful role in shaping the overall atmosphere. When most people feel supported and connected, the township thrives. But it only takes a few consistently angry, disruptive, or emotionally unhealthy individuals to create tension that affects everyone else.

This article isn't about blaming people who struggle. It's about understanding how persistent harmful behavior—when left unaddressed—can undermine the wellbeing of the entire township, and how residents can respond constructively while preserving the respectful, welcoming character Hayes Township is known for.

Why Mental Health Matters in Hayes Township

1. Our Community Depends on Connection

Hayes Township is built on relationships—neighbors helping neighbors, volunteers supporting local projects, and residents working together to protect our natural spaces. When people feel mentally healthy, they contribute positively to these connections. When they struggle, the effects ripple outward.

2. Rural Life Brings Unique Challenges

Northern Michigan's long winters, limited local mental health services, and the rural nature of the township can contribute to stress, isolation, or frustration. These pressures can make emotional struggles more visible and more impactful.

3. Stigma Can Prevent People From Seeking Help

In a small community, people may hesitate to talk about their mental health. This can lead to untreated stress or anger that eventually spills into public meetings, online discussions, or interactions with neighbors.

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4. A Healthy Community Is a Resilient Community

When residents feel supported and emotionally stable, they are more engaged, more cooperative, and more resilient during challenges—whether it's a township project, a local disagreement, or a broader economic shift.

How a Few Disruptive Individuals Can Affect the Township

Even a small number of chronically angry or disruptive people can have an outsized impact:

- They dominate meetings, making others afraid to speak.
- They derail township business, preventing progress on real issues.
- They create tension, discouraging participation and volunteerism.
- They spread negativity, dividing neighbors and weakening trust.

Over time, this can make the township feel less welcoming, less productive, and less united—despite the fact that the vast majority of residents want cooperation and civility.

How Hayes Township Residents Can Respond Constructively

The good news is that a community doesn't have to be defined by its most disruptive voices. Residents have more influence than they realize.

1. Stay Calm and Don't Mirror Their Behavior

Disruptive individuals often escalate when others react emotionally. Remaining calm protects the conversation and prevents conflict from spiraling.

- Keep your tone steady
- Avoid personal attacks
- Don't take the bait when someone tries to provoke

Calmness is a form of leadership—and it sets the tone for the room.

2. Support Clear, Consistent Boundaries

Township meetings and community spaces work best when expectations

are known and enforced.

Residents can help by:

- Redirecting conversations that become hostile
- Supporting meeting rules and codes of conduct
- Backing township officials who enforce guidelines fairly

Boundaries protect everyone—not just the loudest voices.

3. Ensure One Voice Doesn't Dominate

A disruptive person often becomes the center of attention simply because they are the loudest.

Residents can:

- Speak up calmly and confidently
- Encourage quieter neighbors to share
- Bring discussions back to the agenda

Hayes Township decisions should reflect the community—not a single individual's anger.

4. Focus on Facts, Not Emotion

Disruptive individuals may rely on exaggeration or blame. Facts help keep discussions grounded.

- Bring documentation
- Ask for clarification
- Keep conversations solution-focused

Facts create stability where emotion creates chaos.

5. Avoid Gossip and Drama

Rumors spread quickly in small communities. Talking about disruptive individuals behind the scenes only fuels tension.

- Stick to verified information
- Decline to participate in rumor spreading
- Encourage constructive conversations

A community that refuses to feed drama weakens its influence.

6. Support Township Leaders

Local leaders—board members, committee chairs, volunteers—often absorb the most hostility. They need community backing.

Residents can:

- Attend meetings
- Speak up when leaders are unfairly targeted
- Reinforce expectations for respectful communication

When leaders feel supported, they can enforce boundaries more effectively.

7. Encourage Healthy Outlets and Resources

Some individuals act out because they are struggling. While residents aren't responsible for fixing personal issues, they can encourage healthier pathways.

- Suggest local or regional mental health resources
- Promote community activities that reduce isolation
- Offer empathy without enabling harmful behavior

Compassion and boundaries can coexist.

8. Protect Your Own WellBeing

Dealing with negativity is draining.

Residents should:

- Take breaks from heated discussions
- Limit interactions with consistently hostile individuals
- Lean on supportive neighbors

A healthy township starts with healthy individuals.

9. Stay United as a Community

Disruptive individuals gain power when the rest of the community becomes divided or disengaged.

Residents can:

- Communicate openly
- Show up for important decisions
- Reinforce shared values like respect, cooperation, and fairness

Unity is Hayes Township's strongest defense against negativity.

Hayes Township Thrives When Its People Do

Mental health is not just an individual issue—it's a community issue. A few disruptive individuals can create real challenges, but they don't define Hayes Township unless the community allows it. By staying calm, setting boundaries, supporting one another, and refusing to be pulled into conflict, residents can maintain the respectful, welcoming environment that makes Hayes Township such a special place to live.

MAY 2026

Carey Cuddeback Unanimously Re-Appointed to Planning Commission

BOT MEMBERS RECOGNIZE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

During the April 2026 Board of Trust-
ee meeting, Supervisor Bill Conklin
nominated Carey Cuddeback be
re-appointed to the Hayes Township
Planning Commission. His nomina-
tion was not only supported, but the
BOT unanimously voted yes. Board
members mentioned Cuddeback's

contribution and hard work through
the Master Plan Revision, specifically
her organization and presentation of
the community survey. BOT members
praised her continued involvement on
the PC and sharp skills in the huge task
of reviewing and editing the Zoning
Ordinance.



Carey Cuddeback

TOP OF MICHIGAN TRAILS: Determined to Complete Bike Trail

Finishing the bike trail is at the 'top' of
Top of Michigan Trails wish list. They
have been working hard to educate
county elected officials about the
economic, safety, and health benefits
the trail provides. They are also shar-
ing important information with both
residents and businesses on the need
for their continued support.

They are in full fundraising mode,
working to raise matching funds for
grants. To find out how you can help,
go to trails council.org. Sign up for the
newsletter to get the most up to date
information.



Happy Mother's Day

All the good things in us came from our mothers.
We can never thank her enough for everything she did for us.
Wishing all the happiness to our mothers on this day.

Here We Go Again

ZBA Case Appealed to Judge Hayes

Ellis Boal, with a considerably
smaller group of Appellants, has
filed with the Charlevoix County
Clerk, against Hayes Township. This
document has just been acquired
from the County Clerk's office and
The Sentinel will be following the
case as it moves forward. We will
add this to the running total it has
cost our taxpayers of Boal's frivolous
lawsuits through the years.

Supervisor Bill Conklin contends
that the cost of his on-going litigation
against Hayes township was
'Not his concern'. The township
will soon be drafting a budget for
the next fiscal year-how much will
Conklin budget for his and others
wasteful lawsuits?



Hayes Township Bi-Annual SPRING CLEAN UP Saturday June 27th

According to the township website,
each home is limited to two yards
(approximately a pick-up truck
length) of trash. No tires, electron-
ics, hazardous fluids, concrete,
or bricks. Mattresses (DRY), used
carpet (bound in 3-foot rolls), appli-
ances, and grills are allowed. Items
need to be curbside by 6am on
pickup day.



OPINIONS

Shining Light on Political News

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View from the Cheap Seats:

Stress and Bad Energy Keep Residents Away From Meetings

A FEW ROTTEN APPLES TRULY CAN RUIN THE BUNCH

Out in the wild, I talk to a lot of Hayes residents. We are finally coming out of our winter caves and feeling some sun on our faces. People who have lived all or most of their life here, new residents, and everyone in between-I talk to everyone. It is so important to talk to your neighbors-not to get on a particular soap box, but just to connect and, this is a big one: LISTEN.

As I listen to my friends and neighbors, a common sentiment keeps coming around: attending township meetings. At the Sentinel, we strongly encourage everyone to come to township meetings and hear what is going on in person. And if you are unable to attend, listen on our website. Don't take my or anyone else's word for it: hear what is happening yourself.

But I digress. What I'm hearing from people is they don't want to be around the negative energy from other attendees at our meetings. They don't want to be accosted or yelled at or confronted by people who pride themselves on

being loud. They don't want to be attacked or questioned by the constant provocateurs. They want to be able to attend at will, speak their honest voice if they please at public comment, and go about their night when the meeting adjourns. People have shared that the mention of attending a meeting spikes their anxiety, and that as much as they might want to attend, they have to care for their mental health first, and I fully support that.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not encourage our residents to come to our meetings in person. If you tried before, give it another try. You are under absolutely NO obligation to talk to anyone who is rude enough to ques-

tion who you are or why you are there. You can simply ignore any noise that comes your way. If you have something to say, please don't be afraid

well as your fellow residents who are in attendance for the very same reason.

Come on and hear what your officials are discussing and deciding. I promise

not to show up at your front door and demand you listen to my viewpoint. I promise not to harass you or question why you are there. I will just smile your way and listen to the meeting. You have the right to ignore, in fact I highly encourage you to do so, any confrontational rhetoric or nonsense that may arise. Your silence is the BEST response to any rubbish that comes your way.

Do you want these people to speak for you? You deserve to have your voice heard, and our officials are listening to you,

no matter how softly you choose to speak. This is not a contest of the loudest voice being heard and the quiet being dismissed. We hear you in the shadows, it's okay to step into the light.

They want to be able to attend at will, speak their honest voice if they please at public comment, and go about their night when the meeting adjourns.

to speak up-you have just as much right as anyone to talk. Your Board of Trustee members will whole-heartedly support you, Supervisor Conklin will defend your freedom of speech, as

Come to the Hayes Township Meetings!

9195 MAJOR DOUGLAS SLOAN RD. • CHARLEVOIX

Board of Trustee..... Monday, May 11 @ 7:00 pm

Planning Commission Tuesday, May 19 @ 7:00 pm

CONTACT YOUR OFFICIALS:

SUPERVISOR Bill Conklin.....231-373-0059

CLERK Kristin Baranski 231-547-6961

TREASURER Julie Collard.....231-547-6961

TRUSTEE Doug Kuebler906-298-1416

TRUSTEE Matt Cunningham.....231-881-1533