

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

BRIMFIELD TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION

BEAR GRAPHICS 800-325-8094 FORM NO. 10148

Held _____ 20_____

BRIMFIELD TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING

MINUTES of February 12, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Brimfield Township Town Hall

Present: Chairman Tom Johnson, Debbie Darlas, Tom Sargent, Kolette Woloszynek, Bill Anderson

Alternates: Carl Riggenbach, Robert Radoslovich

Absent:

Staff: Mike Hlad, Economic Development Director and Zoning Inspector, Kayla Nealon, Zoning Secretary, and Todd Peetz with Portage County Regional Planning

The Zoning Commission meeting is called to order by Tom Johnson at 7:00 PM on February 12, 2026.

Roll call:

Anderson: Here Darlas: Here Johnson: Here Sargent: Here
Woloszynek: Here Riggenbach: Here Radoslovich: Here

MOTION #2026-22

Tom Sargent made a motion to accept the meeting agenda. His motion was seconded by Debbie Darlas and passed unanimously.

MOTION #2026-23

Debbie Darlas made a motion to approve the January 8, 2026 meeting minutes. Her motion was seconded by Bill Anderson and passed unanimously.

WORK SESSION:

Amendment to the definition of building height (Chapter 10, Definitions):

Tom Johnson read the proposed definition for building height which states, "The vertical distance measured from the average elevation of the proposed finished grade at the front of the building to the eave or where the parapet wall meets the roofline." Mike Hlad requested the Commission remove "at the front of the building" to avoid developers building on a slope and exceeding the height requirement at the rear or side(s) of a building. The Commission members agreed to change the definition to "The vertical distance measured from the average elevation of the proposed finished grade to the eave or where the parapet wall meets the roofline."

Tom Sargent asked if everyone was comfortable that the revised definition wouldn't be nitpicked by future architects or developers and Bill Anderson felt saying "average elevation" should block that from happening. Mike Hlad said if there is an issue down the road, it can always be amended, but he felt this revision was sufficient and reminded the Commission that the Fire Department still has final say over buildings over 40'.

MOTION #2026-24

Tom Sargent made a motion to send the revised definition of building height to the Trustees. His motion was seconded by Kolette Woloszynek and passed unanimously.

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Amendment to add a definition for eave (Chapter 10, Definitions):

Tom Johnson read the proposed definition of eave which states, "The horizontal edge of the roof where it overhangs, or, if it is a flat roof, the top of the roofline."

There was no further discussion from the Commission, and no comments from the public regarding the proposed definition for eave.

MOTION #2026-25

Bill Anderson made a motion to add a definition for eave to Chapter 10, and to send the definition to the Trustees. His motion was seconded by **Tom Sargent** and passed unanimously.

Amendment to add Appendix F, Lighting Requirements:

There was no further discussion from the Commission, and no comments from the public regarding adding Appendix F to the Zoning Resolution.

MOTION #2026-26

Robert Radoslovich made a motion to send Appendix F to the Trustees. His motion was seconded by **Bill Anderson** and passed unanimously.

Amendment to Section 304.02 B, #8 and Appendices C and E:

There was no further discussion from the Commission, and no comments from the public regarding the removal of #8, Planned Residential Developments from Section 304.02 B., or the updates to reflect the removal in Appendices C and E.

MOTION #2026-27

Tom Sargent made a motion to send the removal of Section 304.02 B, #8, Planned Residential Developments, and the corresponding updates to Appendices C and E to the Trustees. His motion was seconded by **Debbie Darlas** and passed unanimously.

Amendment to Section 400.10 B, #51:

There was no further discussion from the Commission, and no comments from the public regarding the removal of #51, Institutions for Human Medical Care, such as but not limited to Hospitals, Clinics, Mental Health Care Facilities and Nursing Homes from Section 400.10 B.

MOTION #2026-28

Bill Anderson made a motion to send the removal of Section 400.10 B, #51, Institutions for Human Medical Care, such as but not limited to Hospitals, Clinics, Mental Health Care Facilities, and Nursing Homes to the Trustees. His motion was seconded by **Kolette Woloszynek** and passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION:Data Centers:

Todd Peetz provided the Commission with an email with links and videos of data center information, as well as draft legislation from Shalersville. He reworked the language to fit what was discussed at the previous meeting regarding water and electricity usage, cooling facilities, and overall size. Mike Hlad suggested limiting the size to 500,000 square feet. Todd Peetz noted if the size is too small, the facility won't be viable, but if too large, who knows what the impact could be on the community.

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Tom Johnson inquired about the possibility of prohibiting data centers since the Township's infrastructure doesn't support them. Todd Peetz felt the Commission has a good case to prohibit them. Tom Johnson said the density of the Township is such that any development would be near farmland and would consume it. Tom Sargent added that if wells are drilled, data center developers typically drill multiple, large wells, and with the amount of water they need, they could eliminate a water source. Bill Anderson added that some data centers can self-clean their water and recycle it on site.

It was noted that in the example legislation provided by Todd Peetz, Section E stated "Must show that the applicant's use of water will not result in a material rise in the ambient temperature of the water of the surrounding township areas of township as a whole. For the purposes of this section, a "material rise in the ambient temperature of the water" shall be an increase of more than fifteen percent (15%) over the ambient temperature of the water that existed immediately prior to the installation of the data center." It was discussed that if said project were to be completed in December and the water temperature is 40 degrees, the temperature cannot elevate more than 15%, so with this language, they would not be able to discharge in the summer months. They discussed this possibly being an error in the example. Todd Peetz suggested it could mean 15% of the surrounding water.

Tom Johnson said the materials provided are interesting to read, but he feared a good firm would shoot holes in the legislation. Todd Peetz said it was created by an attorney from Shalersville. Tom Johnson said he preferred to prohibit data centers entirely. He was concerned that if a developer could not find a large enough piece of real estate, they would just tailor their project to these regulations and added that even a large facility could be paired down to fit the requirements and towns will still receive all the negative impacts. Tom Sargent noted there is no financial benefit to the Township since there are skeleton crews operating these massive facilities.

Bill Anderson asked if something could be added to the Zoning Resolution saying these projects would be subject to TIFs. Mike Hlad said he could always TIF a project based on the property value compared to its improved value. Bill Anderson asked if a TIF could be done on a yearly basis, and Mike Hlad explained that they take the property value at purchase verses the improved value, and that difference is the amount that can be subject to tax increment financing over thirty years. They can opt for fewer, but they typically set them up for thirty years. Bill Anderson asked if a 500,000 square foot building was constructed, could the Township TIF the property for 40 million dollars over thirty years. He felt that would be a win for the Township if the project is something that cannot be stopped but where the location is limited based on water supply. He also felt language should be added that requires water usage to be in a closed system.

Mike Hlad said he could see something like this happening near the Mogadore/261 area because of the amount of land there. Tom Johnson said if the use is prohibited, the Commission doesn't need to create any language that may or may not be effective, as well as the community uproar asking why we would allow this to happen, and he used the data center in Lorain County as an example.

Mike Hlad was concerned that being only ten minutes from Akron, Brimfield may be viewed as a good site for a data center. He told the Commission if they chose to send this to Regional Planning to prohibit data centers, they would also need approval from the Prosecutor's Office to make sure we aren't setting ourselves up for future litigation. Tom Johnson said data centers are not community friendly; they do not generate jobs or income taxes and are of no benefit to Brimfield. He added they consume mass quantities of real estate, power, and water, and have deep pockets, so if they need a wind or solar farm to operate, they will buy land at any cost.

Tom Sargent said there isn't enough history to see if any have shut down yet but questioned what the Township could utilize a vacant 500,000+ square foot building for other than a massive warehouse that was not actually constructed to be a warehouse. He added that it would be impractical to retrofit such a building.

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Resident Phil Ridenour mentioned batteries and servers would need to be removed from a failed data center. Tom Sargent said the removal would be a project, plus the added difficulty in getting a new tenant for such a large building. Bill Anderson suggested requiring data centers to have funds placed in an escrow account up front designated to clean up the building if they were to fail.

Tom Sargent agreed with prohibiting the use entirely. He felt the more the issue is discussed, the more there is no incentive to allow them in Brimfield. Kolette Woloszynek agreed and suggested asking the attorney if this route was acceptable. The Commission agreed to obtain a ruling from the attorney on prohibiting data centers before moving any further.

Todd Peetz said they are not the only Township to discuss prohibiting data centers and agreed to speak with the Prosecutor's Office to see if they have language to support the decision. He said there is plenty of land to build a data center elsewhere; it does not need to be in Brimfield.

Tom Johnson felt it would be difficult to make sure all parcels in the Township do not fit what would be required to construct a data center and he was concerned a developer would find a way to move forward regardless. He said prohibiting them could provide community input and give the Commission and Township a strong backing from the residents. Mike Hlad noted many areas in town won't have the resources to provide water to such a facility, even if water is being recycled.

MOTION #2026-29

Tom Sargent made a motion to send the issue to Regional Planning to review options regarding prohibiting data centers in the Zoning Resolution and to provide any feedback on how the Zoning Commission can proceed further. His motion was seconded by **Bill Anderson** and passed unanimously.

Kolette Woloszynek requested a tight definition be created for data centers and Todd Peetz agreed.

Town Center Architectural Standards:

Mike Hlad said there are no updates on the matter at this time. Two separate standards are currently in the works: residential and commercial. He said he is considering requiring brick to grade on new residential homes and that he would provide the Commission with something to review soon.

Agricultural Properties Survey Update:

Todd Peetz said he is working on drafting a letter and QR code to send to properties in R-3 and R-4 Districts on properties over 20 acres. He said he will also provide a link on the website, and hard copies in the Zoning Department for anyone who is not comfortable with an electronic survey. He plans to get them sent out early next week.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan – Chapter 5, Community Services:

Mike Hlad said following the loss of the Township's Parks and Recreation Department, this section may need to be analyzed further. He added that since we are unsure of the future of the community center and the parks, we may want to hold off on sending this chapter to Regional Planning. He said the Township still owns an abundance of land that is buildable and worth money. He added he was unsure of what would happen to the library but felt the Trustees would be revisiting these issues soon. The decisions are entirely up to the Trustees, so Mike Hlad felt once those decisions are made, the Commission should revisit this chapter. Kolette Woloszynek asked if the state could order the Trustees to sell property. Mike Hlad said if the state were to take over, he is not certain what they would do with the land.

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Bill Anderson said he has heard the Township will be consumed by Kent and/or Tallmadge. Mike Hlad felt those communities would jump at the opportunity because of all the businesses in Brimfield.

Mike Hlad said that Chapter 5 needs to highlight our parks and recreation, especially the new park off Howe Road. He added that McGuire Park is perpetually a park no matter what happens with the Township's finances since that has already been determined through the court system, however, it can still be sold off to Portage Parks.

Tom Johnson suggested addressing issues as we know them today and making amendments later in the process if needed.

Mike Hlad said there is a lot he would like to highlight in the section dedicated to the schools. He would like to show the number of students in the last eight to ten years since there is always so much chatter about the capacity. He said the current enrollment numbers don't reflect such an increase. Todd Peetz said several schools in the county are experiencing large enrollment drops.

The Commission discussed the impact of reduced taxes being brought in if residential building continues and commercial and/or industrial building decreases. Mike Hlad warned the Commission that if the developers are stifled by the removal of PRD's, they will find another way. He felt this could increase the number of condominiums, apartments, and mixed-use properties. Tom Johnson felt this issue is a frustrating aspect of being on the board. He questioned how the Commission could communicate both sides of this issue clearly to the residents, and felt some only see a small snippet on Facebook and get upset. Bill Anderson said some residents won't be concerned because it will be past their time and their kids will move elsewhere. Todd Peetz said other communities are also discussing how to be able to thrive in the future. He explained that residential properties are losing money – parks, services, snow plowing, et cetera – are all financial losses on the Township. Commercial properties bring a small amount back to the Township, but industrial properties bring roughly \$1.75 for every dollar spent because they take care of themselves and don't rely on amenities that residents expect. Todd Peetz added that many communities in Portage County are currently trying to gear their land use plans toward industrial properties since they make money, and said townships without it will be hurting in the future. He felt Brimfield has a great advantage in the amount of industrial and commercial here and once tax abatements are paid off, Brimfield will thrive and is in a much better position in the future than the other townships in the county.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Mike Hlad updated the Commission on several matters and projects including:

- The department's year-end report was emailed to the Commission. Mike Hlad asked the Commission to notify Kayla Nealon if they prefer to have a paper copy.
- Four awards were given to Township businesses from Portage Development Board last year. The businesses are Wohlwend Engineering, Unified Construction Systems, Brimfield Town Square, and Graphic Detail. This year, the Village of Saint Edwards project will receive an award for being the biggest project in the County, bringing in 83 new jobs.
- 7 Brew, to be located near Aldi, is in the works.
- Human Bean is still working on a plan for the former Van's Tire property.

NEW BUSINESS:

Tom Johnson saw an article in the Record Courier where eight townships are discussing wind and solar farms and asked how that relates to Brimfield. Todd Peetz said they are discussing the state's control over farms over 50 gigawatts, but for anything less, the townships can go to the county level to prohibit smaller wind or solar farms. He elaborated that townships allow them for personal use, but not for off-site sales. They are trying to prohibit off-site sales due to

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aesthetics and rumors of panels breaking and polluting land, which Todd Peetz said is untrue. He explained that farmland can still be utilized with solar panels simply by elevating the panels. The discussion amongst those eight communities is regarding large solar farms, but it will not stop state-controlled farms. Mike Hlad added there is a solar farm in the Township located on the Kent State property on Edson Road.

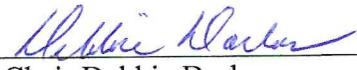
SET NEXT MEETING:

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on **Thursday, March 12th, 2026.**

MOTION #2026-30

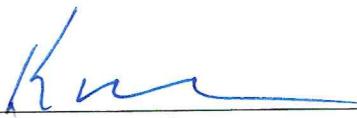
A motion was made by **Kolette Woloszynek** to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m., seconded by **Bill Anderson**. The motion passed unanimously.


Chairman Tom Johnson


Vice Chair Debbie Darlas


Bill Anderson


Tom Sargent


Kolette Woloszynek


Alternate Carl Rigenbach


Alternate Robert Radoslovich