

VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of meeting held on December 11, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Al Drenth, Larry Essenberg, Jerry Klooster, Mary Neer, Lynn Aldrich Spearing

Absent –

Guest – Ruben Shell (Beckett & Raeder)

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm by Larry Essenberg.

Larry E. opened Public Hearing.

Purpose – To receive public comment on the proposed Village of Ellsworth Master Plan.

Public Comment – There was none. Larry E asked if there was any public comment either from phone or mail and there was none.

Larry E. closed the Public Hearing.

Planning Commission Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm.

Reviewed Minutes of August 14, 2025, meeting, MMS to approve the minutes, approved 5-0.

Old Business –

MMS to approve the Village of Ellsworth Master Plan as noted with edits, approved 5-0.

Ruben gave us an update of the remaining steps for the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Essentials certification.

- Update 2017 Master Plan and post it to the Village website once adopted.
 - Final compiled draft currently under 63-day review. Adoption anticipated January 2026.
- Update CIP (2024-2030) and post it to the Village website.
 - MEDC staff specified that for RRC Essentials alignment, the CIP project schedule needs to be extended a full six years forward from the current fiscal year. Though the title of the CIP adopted March 2024 identifies 2024-2030 as the plan's timeframe, MEDC staff pointed out that the schedule of improvements currently lists projects only through FY27 (see pg. 13 of the CIP). To bring this into alignment, it would be beneficial for the Village Council to review and extend the project schedule this fall or early in 2026 to cover FY25-FY31.
- Fee Schedule: The community maintains a fee schedule.
 - As discussed at the August Planning Commission meeting, Council should also review and make any adjustments to the Village's current fee schedule in the Fall of 2025, adjust as needed, and re-adopt it before posting online. This will help meet another RRC requirement.

Conclusion – With the Master Plan adoption, CIP update, and fee schedule review still to come, the Village of Ellsworth is on track to complete all remaining requirements in early 2026.

MMS to forward the CIP (2024-2030) to Village Council, approved 5-0.

New Business –

Discussed meeting schedule for next year 2026.

MMS to meet on even months on the 2nd Thursday at 6:30 pm for 2026 at Banks Township Hall. approved 5-0.

Discussion on possible Zoning updates to add side setbacks for the downtown commercial buildings for new construction only, also discussed if front and back setbacks would be needed? Currently doesn't seem to be an issue. Concerns were raised by Gary Strange on side building setbacks to the Planning Commission. Will look at what options might be available to the Planning Commission for discussion at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry Klooster". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "K".

Jerry Klooster

Next Meeting will be February 12, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.