

**NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING
February 3, 2026 6:30 PM
17425 RED ARROW HIGHWAY,
NEW BUFFALO, MI 49117
Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lauricella at 6:30

1. ROLL CALL & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Present: Anderson, Armstrong, Lauricella, Nesci

Absent: Arvanitis, Schmidt, Wagner

Pledge of Allegiance

2. PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL NON-HEARING RELATED - None

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

PUBLIC HEARING – #2026-02-01

Armstrong moved, Nesci supported, to open the public hearing on the proposed PUD at 19701 US 12 and 13912 Grand Avenue, New Buffalo, MI at 6:33p.m.

Verbal vote: CARRIED

The Planning Commission will hear comments on the request of RMM 13912 LLC & 19701 US 12 LLC for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) to consist of a proposed 153 home sites intended for year-round workforce residents located at 19701 US 12 parcel 11-13-0019-0009-06-0 and 13912 Grand Avenue parcel 11-13-3100-0043-01-5 New Buffalo, MI 49117.

COMMENTS BY APPLICANT – Jesse Rose, representing the developer, stated the proposal is largely the same as a previous version, with key changes made based on the commission's feedback. A restrictive covenant has been added to prohibit short-term rentals in approximately 100 of the home sites. The density of the development has not been changed, as it is considered necessary to maintain affordability by spreading infrastructure costs over more units. The developer's intention is to sell all the homes and lots outright to individual buyers, with no land lease or "lot rent". The lot sizes range from 4,400 to 13,600 square meters, so it will allow for smaller, true starter homes (1000 – 1200 sq. ft) to achieve the lower price point. The total site is 70 acres, with 58 acres reserved for open space, much of which is wetlands. The homes will be either modular or site-built, with the final decision depending on a balance of cost and quality at the time of construction. The homes will be built on either a slab-on-grade or crawl space foundation; basements are not planned due to the high water table in the area.

COMMENTS BY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR:

Conceptual drawing provided for a preliminary approval prior to preparing final engineered drawings.

COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSION: The Planning Commission agreed that the added traffic on US 12 needs to have an MDOT study or traffic relief study. They agreed that we need affordable housing in our area. The lot sizes are a little too small since our normal size is 8000 sq. ft. They agreed that more short-term housing is not needed. Traci Lauricella, let everyone know that this is not an approval or a disapproval of an application. This is to determine if there's enough interest or visibility to take it to the next level by hiring an engineer.

PUBLIC HEARING WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE:

Jack Grace – not in favor
Ross Kerr – not in favor
Sean Sullivan – not in favor
Mark Hoppe – not in favor
Grace Kolavo – not in favor
Kim Habel – not in favor
Anne Callahan - not in favor
Katie Faul - not in favor
Patty Collins – not in favor
Katie Thompson - not in favor
John Heiberger - not in favor
Joey Andrews, State Representative – in favor

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tricia Stewart, Grand Beach – not in favor
Meg Piper, Grand Beach - not in favor
Harry Walder, Grand Beach - not in favor
David Roberson, New Buffalo – not in favor
Lara Heiberger, Grand Beach – not in favor
Sharon Flint, New Buffalo – not in favor
Lance Rezny, Grand Beach – not in favor
Sue Kramer, Grand Beach – not in favor
Pamela Schutt, Michiana – not in favor
Bill Kenny, Grand Beach – not in favor
John Larkin, Grand Beach – not in favor
Blake O'Halloran, Grand Beach – not in favor
Jerry Looney, New Buffalo – not in favor
Dale Johnson, New Buffalo – not in favor
Jim Theiss, New Buffalo – not in favor
Mike O'Halloran, Grand Beach – not in favor
Jeff Sedaro, Grand Beach – not in favor
Jeff Roberts, Grand Beach – not in favor

Armstrong moved, Nesci supported to close the public hearing on the proposed PUD at 19701 US 12 and 13912 Grand Avenue, New Buffalo, MI 49117 at 7:35 p.m.

Verbal vote: CARRIED DEFEATED

PUBLIC HEARING – ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Section 1. Amendment of Section 455-3.2. Regulated uses table.

Section 455-3.2 of the Township Zoning Ordinance is proposed to be amended to read as follows, with new text indicated by boldfaced font and deleted text stricken:

Regulated Uses	Zoning Districts										
	AG-R	R-1	R-2	MR	C-1	C-2	UPV	UPC	I	F-1	M
Residential Uses											
Residential rentals and residential short-term rentals	P	P	P	P	P		P	P			P

Section 2. Amendment of Section 455. Residential Rentals and Residential Short-Term Rentals.

[NEW SECTION] Residential rentals and residential short-term rentals. Residential rentals and residential short-term rentals are allowed in the following zoning districts subject to the New Buffalo Township Residential Rental and Short-Term Rental Licensing Ordinance under §332 of the Code:

- (1) AG-R – Agricultural Residential District;**
- (2) R-1 – Low-Density Residential District;**
- (3) R-2 – Medium-Density Residential District;**
- (4) MR – Manufactured Residential District;**
- (5) C-1 – General Commercial District;**
- (6) UPV – Union Pier Village;**
- (7) UPC – Union Pier Corridor; and**
- (8) M – Marihuana Overlay Business District.**

PUBLIC HEARING WRITTEN CORRESPONSE:

Joyce Mims, letter submitted

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Joyce Mims, New Buffalo – continue to look and go over the short-term rentals in R1 areas.

Bob Acker, Grand Beach – a special SLU case by case look at short-term rentals in R1 areas.

Alisa Johnson, Grand Beach – talked about MDOT study on US 12

COMMENTS BY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR: Zoning Administrator, Estelle Brinkman, this will be aligning the Police Power with the Zoning Ordinance.

4. BUSINESS SECTION

Planned Unit Development (PUD) Case Number #2026-02-01; RMM 13912 LLC & 19701 US 12 LLC

Nesci moved, Armstrong supported, to recommend the denial of the application in its present state for the land unit development submitted by RMM 13912 LLC & 19701 US 12 LLC. The Planning Commission will reconsider said application with the additional information provided by EGLE, MDOT, Galien River Sanitation District and the Drain Commission.

Roll Call Vote:

Anderson	<u>Yes</u>
Armstrong	<u>Yes</u>
Arvanitis	<u>Absent</u>
Lauricella	<u>Yes</u>
Nesci	<u>Yes</u>
Schmidt	<u>Absent</u>
Wagner	<u>Absent</u>
	<u> </u>

Motion: Carried

Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Motion:

Nesci moved, Armstrong supported, to recommend approval of the proposed amendment to the Regulated Uses Chart and NEW section regulating Short Term Rentals as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Anderson	<u>Yes</u>
Armstrong	<u>Yes</u>
Arvanitis	<u>Absent</u>
Lauricella	<u>Yes</u>
Nesci	<u>Yes</u>
Schmidt	<u>Absent</u>
Wagner	<u>Absent</u>

Motion: Carried

a. Excused Absences

Armstrong moved, Anderson supported, approving the absence for Arvanitis, Schmidt and Wagner at the present meeting.

Motion: Carried

b. Approve Minutes

Nesci moved, Anderson supported, to approve the minutes from the January 6, 2026 meeting.

Motion: Carried

5. NEW BUSINESS:

Anderson moved, Nesci supported, to approve the 2025 Annual Planning Commission Report.

Motion: Carried

6. CORRESPONDENCE

7. ADJOURNMENT

Armstrong moved, Nesci supported, to adjourn at 8:31 p.m.

Motion: Carried

Submitted by:



Barbara Anderson, Secretary