

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Scheduled Meeting held on Monday, April 13th, 2026 of the Benton Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chairperson Matt Davis, Marletta Seats, Gregory Whitehead, Joseph Taylor and Wesley Koza
Members Absent:
Staff Present: Loyall Bennett and Deeann Scalf
Also present: Cocoa Corp Atty, Stephen Smith, Merritt Midwest, Rob Andrew, Point Blue, LLC, Alec Kraushaar, AnAneco Solutions, Tom Purkiss

SILENT INVOCATION:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Taylor motioned and support of approval by Mr. Whitehead. Motion passed.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Applicant Adam Brent is requesting a Special Land Use Permit and Site Plan approval for a state-licensed soil conditioner compost facility located at 1725 Dewey Avenue, Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022 (**public hearing**).

Ms. Seats made a motion to recess the Meeting and open the Public Hearing, supported by Mr. Taylor. Public Hearing started at 6:02 p.m.

Applicant, Adam Brent, Founder & CEO of Cocoa Trucking Corporation, he has been in the Composting Business for (15) fifteen years now. Composting is going to become an absolutely necessary form of organic waste management because of the resistance to Landfills, problems associated with Landfills, that are generating Greenhouse gas submissions, and it is a very efficient way to turn valuable nutrients back into the soils. They primarily sell their products back to Farmers who then reduce their chemicals fertilizer needs, reducing fertilizer runoff from their fields and helps to increase their crop fields. This Facility will be indoors, and not have the Michigan Winters, and will make a much better product, as well as controlling the odors associated with it. The Stormwater would not come into contact with the organic or food waste materials. The Solid Waste Plan for the State of Michigan is looking to reduce organic materials going into the Landfill by 50% in the next (5) five years. Two ways to do that is by composting it, or putting it into an incinerator. There is nothing within (200) two hundred miles of Benton Charter Township. Mr. Brent advised it will be a (1) one Phase Construction, (12) twelve weeks for Tents, and (8) eight to (10) ten weeks for Construction, with start date of Summer. It will be open to the Public for yard waste drop off, and the cost to the Public is to be determined, as there will be a scale at the Building, weighing the Public in. They will also have a yard waste pick up service available as well for Fall and leaf clean up. Signage and Lighting Plans to be submitted to Building Department at a later date. Mr. Bennett advised this Project is here for a Special Use and Site Plan Approval in the E-Restricted Zoning District (the least restricted District of all). Fertilized Manufacturer is unallowed in this District, yet this is similar, but not exactly the same. This is Licensed with the State of Michigan as a Soils Conditioner, not a Fertilizer. Conditions Mr. Bennett would like to see is:

- Any Sale of the Property, new Owners would have to come in and Renew SPU License
- Maintain Odor Control System
- Maintain Dust Control
- Berming already been done on the property
- Fire Truck turnaround already taken care of
- Egle approvals already done

Benton Charter Township
Special Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, April 13th, 2026 at 6:00 pm

Becca Shrug, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission and they are the designated Planning Agency to write the New Materials Management Plan for Berrien County, Cass County and Van Buren Counties. One of the State requirements is a 50% reduction in organics to the Landfill and a large push for recycling over the next (5) five to (10) ten years. In the (3) three County Region, none of them handle food waste.

Motion to open our Planning Commission Meeting and leave the Public Hearing portion by Mr. Taylor, and supported by Mr. Whitehead. Motion passed, Planning Commission Meeting resumes at 6:15 p.m..

Mr. Whitehead moved to recommend a Site Plan Approval and Special Land Use Approval for the State-Licensed Soil Conditioner Compost Facility located at 1725 Dewey Avenue in Benton Harbor with Conditions for site lighting to be approved by the Zoning Administrator. Supported by Ms. Seats. Motion Amended by Mr. Whitehead to add the following Conditions: Special Land Use will expire upon Sale of Property/Business (New Owner - must reapply for Special Land Use License, Maintain Odor Control and Maintain Dust Control. Supported by Mr. Taylor. Amendment supported by Ms. Seats. Motion passed.

Master Plan Update

Rebecca Harvey brought to the Planning Commission a Master Plan Update Outline for tonight's Meeting. Some Categories discussed were the Lake Michigan Industrial Park, Housing Strategies, Non-Motorized Routes, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's), Short Term Rentals (STR's), Existing Conditions Updates (Census or Existing Land Use Patterns) and Green Energy (Batteries, Wind, Solar) to name just a few. The Planning Commission will review, discuss, and identify recommended revisions during the next Planning Commission Meeting. A joint Meeting with the Township Board is planned for a Workshop with the Planning Commission Board sometime in May to review and discuss the proposed updates done by Ms. Harvey.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT REPORT: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: None.

TOWNSHIP BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORT: None.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS REPRESENTATIVE REPORT: Mr. Davis advised there was still no Application submitted yet to have the ZBA Meeting for the 1819 Sweet Street for the Cell Tower on Monday, April 20, 2026.

OTHER COMMENTS/CONCERNS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Taylor motioned to adjourn Mr. Koza supported. Motion carries and Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business before the PC, the Meeting was adjourned:
Minutes: Deeann Scalf the Secretary of the Planning Commission.

Loyall Bennett, Building Inspector