

October 15, 2025

Good evening, everyone,

I want to begin by clearly stating that the Board will not be voting on the proposed moratorium tonight. It is not on the agenda, and even if we were to agree on the language this evening, there are still procedural steps that must be completed before any vote could occur.

This issue has generated strong feelings throughout our community, and rightfully so. Every member of this Board understands the weight of this decision. We take it seriously. I have personally read through the hundreds of comments submitted and have had one-on-one conversations with residents from all sides of the issue. I want you to know that I hear you. I respect the diversity of viewpoints shared, and I remain committed to considering all perspectives with an open mind and a sense of responsibility.

And I know I speak for the entire Town Board when I say that we are all taking your comments into account as we move forward in this process. We have heard from the business community, from environmental advocates, and from residents who care deeply about preserving the character of our town. We have also heard from individuals with specific projects in motion who have shared how the proposed moratorium could impact them directly. These perspectives, while sometimes in tension with one another, are all important. Every voice matters and we are listening with the goal of making decisions that balance the diverse needs of our community.

The feedback we have received has helped this Board gain a deeper understanding of the community's concerns, values, and aspirations for Lansing's future. Many comments were thoughtful, well-reasoned, and respectfully expressed. In fact, several changes to the proposed moratorium have been made directly in response to your input. We sincerely appreciate the high level of civic engagement shown throughout this process.

That said, to fully appreciate the reasons behind the proposed moratorium and its importance, it's helpful to take a step back and review the background and context that have brought us to this point. Understanding this history is crucial as we move forward together as a community.

In 2018, the Town of Lansing adopted a Comprehensive Plan. This plan outlined a long-term vision for growth, development, and conservation across our town. Following that, discussions began about updating our zoning laws to better reflect the goals and values expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

Since then, the Town has taken several important steps. In 2019, the Town Board created the Conservation Advisory Council. That council produced two foundational documents: the Natural Resources Inventory, adopted in 2021, and the Open Space Conservation Plan, adopted in 2024. In 2022, the Town also adopted the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan, which supports the long-term vision of balanced growth and environmental stewardship.

In 2023, the Town began its first zoning update by splitting the RA district into two new zones: RA and AG. However, it quickly became clear that updating zoning across the entire Town would be an extremely time-consuming and resource-intensive effort. Staff were stretched thin, and the pace of progress was not sustainable. A budget request to hire outside help was denied due to financial constraints.

In response, the Town applied for the New York State Smart Growth Community Planning Zoning Grant in 2024. We were awarded that grant on February 3, 2025, which allowed us to move forward.

The Town initially hired Colliers Engineering to conduct a Zoning Gap Analysis as part of our grant application. Following the success of that analysis, Colliers was later awarded the contract to lead the full zoning update process.

That report highlighted several key issues that demand our attention:

- It found clear discrepancies between the current Zoning Map and the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan, showing that our zoning regulations are not aligned with the future we have envisioned.
- The report recommended that the Town revise its zoning districts and zoning map to better match the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
- It advised the Town to encourage denser development in areas with existing sewer and water infrastructure, and to ensure that areas without those services are appropriately zoned to manage growth responsibly.
- Additionally, the analysis recommended integrating form-based elements into the zoning code to guide the design and character of new development. This would apply to multi-family housing, commercial projects, and scenic byways, helping to preserve the rural and small-town character that so many of us value.

As part of our compliance with the grant, the Town began holding monthly meetings with the state and created a Zoning Advisory Committee, officially appointed in August. We then issued a request for proposals and formally selected Colliers Engineering in September to lead the zoning rewrite process.

With the consulting firm now in place, the zoning rewrite project is officially underway. This has prompted the need for a moratorium to maintain the status quo while we complete this important and detailed work. The moratorium is not about stopping growth; it is about ensuring that development during this transitional period does not conflict with the Town's evolving vision.

I understand that the idea of a moratorium raises questions and concerns, especially when people are already deeply invested, emotionally, financially, and personally. That is why, tonight, without the pressure of a pending vote, I invite us all to pause and reflect. Let us keep in mind that we share a common goal: to protect what we love about Lansing while planning responsibly for its future.

Please continue to share your thoughts. Your voices are shaping this process, and they will continue to guide it. This Board is listening, and we remain committed to making thoughtful, inclusive decisions for the benefit of our entire community.