Town of West Point
Plan Commission Minutes
September 3, 2026

Pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes s. 19.84 the Plan Commission of the Town of West Point held its semi-monthly meeting on September 3, 2026, at the West Point Town Hall, N2114 Rausch Road, Lodi, WI 53555, and via Zoom. The meeting agenda was posted in three places as required by law and on the Town's website. Chairman Kevin Kessler called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. Members in attendance were: Kevin Kessler, Jennifer Brooks, Brooke Milde, Nathan Sawyer, and Darrell Lehman. Also present was Taffy Buchanan, Clerk. Absent were Ron Grasshoff (excused) and Les McBurney (excused).

Agenda #2 – Approval of Agenda – A motion was made by Nathan Sawyer to approve the agenda as presented, 2nd by Jennifer Brooks – motion carried unanimously.

Agenda #3 Approve Minutes – August 6, 2026 – Copies of the August 6, 2026 Plan Commission meeting minutes had been emailed to each member for their review. A motion was made by Nathan Sawyer to approve the August 6, 2026 minutes, 2nd by Brooke Milde – motion carried unanimously.

Agenda #4 Correspondence – Columbia County Board of Adjustments will meet on September 9, 2026 about the Timmon's variances. The Town has received multiple emails from residents stating their opposition to the possible routes of a 765-kV transmission line through the Town from Midcontinent Grid Solutions. Columbia County approved a resolution opposing the transmission line routes.

Agenda #5 Citizen Input – None

Agenda #6 CSM for Roger L & Marian H. Thistle Living Trust Dated 5/31/1996, N2142 Lake Drive, Parcel #11040-22.03. Marian Thistle would like to divide her lot that is currently zoned R-1 Single Family Residential and that is approximately 8.26 acres into 4 residential lots. – Darrell Lehman spoke with Scott Hewitt, Grothman & Associates, about whether the access to road frontage for each lot is needed or if it would be satisfied by one 66ft wide access through a

shared driveway easement. Doug Richmond will talk with Columbia County Planning & Zoning to see if each lot must have the 33ft road frontage or would the 66ft shared driveway agreement satisfy the requirement. The Town just received the draft "shared driveway agreement" and "grass waterway" easement agreement on Wednesday and the Town Attorney has not had a chance to review them. A motion was made by Darrell Lehman to postpone consideration pending completion of the application and discussion with Columbia County and the Town Attorney reviewing the minimum of the two easements, 2nd by Brooke Milde – motion carried unanimously. The Clerk noted when this would be approved, three "park fees" would need be collected.

Agenda #7 Informal Presentation by Tyler Bergstrom for Land Division for Jim Ballweg – Parcels 11040-303, 11040-304, 11040-305, 11040-307, 11040-610.B, 11040-611, and 11040-612 – Tyler Bergstrom, Bergstrom Land Surveying LLC, gave a presentation on a potential land division for Jim Ballweg. He would like to divide off a parcel to rezone 2-acres to Rural Residential to build a house. The Plan Commission suggested he contacts the Driveway Administer, MSA, to make sure the driveway can be put in the spot that they want it. They also suggested that he looks at Chapter 6 Land Division and Chapter 12 Driveway of our Town Ordinances.

Agenda #8 Work on Town Agreement with Ballweg / Yahara Materials for Quarry – The Plan Commission asked that the Clerk send the CUP and current Town Agreement with Yahara to the Town Attorney for suggested revisions. The Plan Commission wants the revised agreement to include the new area of expansion and the Town Engineer's requirements for fencing.

Agenda #9 Plan Commission Comment Letter on 765 kV power line project – Kevin Kessler, Jennifer Brooks, and Darrell Lehman all drafted letters for the Plan Commission to consider. The Plan Commission discussed the letters, made modifications, and formed a letter to send to Midcontinent Grid Solutions commenting on the BECI 765-kV Proposal. A motion was made by Kevin Kessler to approve and sign the letter and send to the recipients, 2nd by Nathan Sawyer – motion carried unanimously. A copy of the signed letter is attached to the minutes.

Agenda #10 Recommendation to the Town Board regarding density requirements for mobile homes and any additional amendments to Chapter 9 – A motion was made by Kevin Kessler to postpone until the next meeting, 2nd by

Jennifer Brooks – motion carried unanimously.

Agenda #11 Next Meeting Date – The next Plan Commission will be scheduled as needed.

Agenda #12 Adjourn - A motion was made by Darrell Lehman to adjourn the September 3, 2026, Plan Commission meeting, 2nd by Jennifer Brooks – motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:12pm.

Respectfully Submitted by
Taffy Buchanan, Town Clerk

West Point Plan Commission

Town of West Point, N2114 Rausch Rd, Lodi WI 53555 www.townofwestpoint.us

DATE: September 3, 2026

TO: Midcontinent Grid Solutions (MGS) Project Team
Email: Connect@MGSWisconsin.com
USPS Mail: MGS, 3902 Milwaukee St., PO Box 7426, Madison, WI 53714

FROM: West Point Plan Commission
Town of West Point, Columbia County, WI
N2114 Rausch Rd., Lodi, WI 53555

SUBJECT: BECI 765-kV Proposal, Segments 13, 14 and 17

The purpose of this letter is to comment for the record, within the comment period MGS has set to close on September 7, 2026, on the proposed routes of Segments 13, 14 and 17 of MGS's BECI 765-kV project proposal and the conflict between these proposed routes and the "Town of West Point Comprehensive Plan 2030" adopted by the Town of West Point. Many other important public comments on Segments 13, 14 and 17 have been (and are being) submitted by the Town Board and citizens of the Town of West Point. These Plan Commission comments, however, are limited to the issue of compliance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and to the siting recommendations that the Plan directs the Town to provide. These comments were considered and approved by the West Point Plan Commission at a meeting noticed under section 19.84, Wisconsin Statutes.

For the reasons described below, the Plan Commission has concluded that MGS must remove Segments 13, 14, and 17 from further consideration and exclude them from the routes ultimately submitted to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC). If MGS continues to consider any of these segments, the Plan Commission requests that MGS perform and document the segment-specific analysis identified in this letter as part of its route-selection record and its application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN).

BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to sections 60.22(3) and 62.23(2) and (3), Wisconsin Statutes, the Town of West Point prepared and adopted a comprehensive plan as defined in sections 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2), Wisconsin Statutes. The "Town of West Point Comprehensive Plan 2030" was recommended by resolution of the West Point Plan Commission and adopted by the Town Board via Ordinance No. 061407 after extensive deliberation, public discussion, and citizen input, and was amended through December 9, 2010. The Plan is posted on the Town of West Point website at: https://www.townofwestpoint.us/government/comprehensive-plan/. The Plan directs the Town to "provide recommendations to PSC for siting new electric transmission and natural gas facilities within the town" (Element 4, Utilities and Community Facilities, Goal 5, Objective 3). These comments are submitted in fulfillment of that directive.

The "Town of West Point Comprehensive Plan 2030" is comprised of 236 pages of narrative and tables, 33 primary Plan Maps and various appendices. The Plan identifies "Environmental Corridors" (Map 5-5 in Appendix I, and the Lake Grant Study environmental corridor map in Appendix IV) and "Critical Eagle Habitat" (Future Land Use Map 8-3 in Appendix I, and the Ferry Bluff Eagle Council critical eagle habitat maps in Appendix IV) as well as numerous conclusions, recommendations and requirements throughout the text for protection of those areas. Protection of lines of sight and scenic beauty are among the issues identified. Specific areas included are the Gibraltar Rock State Natural Area (Map 5-6 in Appendix I), the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, leather-leaf bog adjacent to the Gibraltar Rock State Natural Area, the mapped environmental corridors and the critical bald eagle habitat. The Plan Maps and appendices identifying these areas are available from the Town Clerk, and the Plan Commission will provide parcel-level detail on request.

The Plan also addresses electric transmission directly. Section 4.4.8 records that the high voltage transmission lines traversing Columbia County operate at 69, 138 and 345 kilovolts, and that a single 69 kilovolt line crosses the Town of West Point (Map 4-5 in Appendix I). The Plan further provides that new or updated roads or utility transmission lines "should be located and constructed in a manner that would minimize any impact on prime farmland and other natural resources." A 765-kilovolt line is an order of magnitude beyond any transmission facility the Plan records in the Town.

The proposed BECI 765-kV Segments 13, 14 and 17 bisect the entire Town of West Point from west to east.

Map 8-3 designates Critical Eagle Habitat along the Lake Wisconsin shoreline and inland across the Town's northern tier, and again along the Wisconsin River in the southwestern portion of the Town. The same map locates the Ice Age Trail Corridor, the Plan's mapped alignment for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, running from the Lake Wisconsin shoreline southeast along County Highway V and County Highway J to Lovering Road. Map 5-5 shows mapped Environmental Corridors distributed through every section of the Town. Segments 13, 14 and 17 as proposed would cross mapped Environmental Corridors repeatedly, and any crossing of Lake Wisconsin would make landfall along a shoreline that Map 8-3 designates as Critical Eagle Habitat along its length.

Map 5-6 records, at the section level, the rare, threatened and endangered species and natural communities observed in the Town, drawn from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Inventory. Occurrences are recorded throughout the Town, and the sections along the Lake Wisconsin shoreline and along the Wisconsin River in the southwestern portion of the Town are recorded as containing both aquatic and terrestrial occurrences. The Plan states that further study of the impacts a particular development may have on these resources may be needed, and that consideration should be given to requiring review where development takes place in habitat that might contain them. The Plan further notes that threatened and endangered species including the Bald Eagle and the Whooping Crane may use portions of the County or the Town during part of the year. The Plan also notes that parts of Columbia County "have not yet been inventoried and therefore the list is not a complete and comprehensive list," which argues for site-specific survey before a route is fixed rather than against the designations that have been recorded.

The Plan's protections for the affected areas are stated in mandatory and near-mandatory terms. Section 8.6.12 provides that Critical Eagle Habitat "should have little to no development." Section 9.2.6.1 provides that development within Bald Eagle roosting and feeding areas "shall be consistent with the current U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines," a copy of which the Plan carries at Appendix IV. That same section identifies habitat loss and habitat fragmentation as the primary threats to wildlife in the Town, fragmentation occurring when "large contiguous areas of wildlife habitat are broken apart." A continuous cleared corridor bisecting the Town from west to east is fragmentation in the form the Plan describes.

The design MGS proposed for this project uses guyed-Y lattice towers standing just under 200 feet tall, held below that height to avoid Federal Aviation Administration lighting requirements, within a cleared right-of-way 180 feet wide. MISO, BECI 765 kV Competitive Transmission Project Selection Report (Jan. 6, 2026), at 10. Towers and a cleared corridor of that scale would

have long-term visual, habitat, recreational and land-use effects materially different in kind from ordinary rural development in the Town. The Town recognizes these are proposed rather than permitted dimensions.

APPLICABLE PLANNING AND SITING CRITERIA:

The Town recognizes that the PSC, rather than the Town, will determine whether the BECI project may be constructed and which route may be approved. The Town's Comprehensive Plan nevertheless bears directly on the findings required for a CPCN. Under Wis. Stat. § 196.491(3)(d)3., 4. and 6., the PSC must determine, among other things, that the selected route is in the public interest after considering alternative routes and environmental factors; will not have an undue adverse impact on environmental values, aesthetics or recreational use; and will not unreasonably interfere with the orderly land use and development plans for the affected area.

Wisconsin's transmission-siting policy also directs that, to the greatest feasible extent consistent with engineering, reliability, economic and environmental considerations, new transmission facilities use existing utility corridors first, followed by highway and railroad corridors, before creating new corridors. Wis. Stat. § 1.12(6).

Segments 13, 14 and 17 would cut an entirely new corridor across the Town. Under the order of priority above, a new corridor is the last resort, not the starting point. The Plan Commission is not aware of any showing that existing utility, highway, or railroad corridors were evaluated and found insufficient here, and asks that any such analysis be identified. Absent that showing, MGS has selected the least-preferred option under Wisconsin law and routed it through the resources the Town's Comprehensive Plan singles out for protection, a further reason these segments should be removed rather than refined.

The PSC/DNR Application Filing Requirements for Transmission Line Projects further require an applicant to identify concerns raised by local governments, explain how those concerns were addressed in route selection, provide relevant land use plans, evaluate alternative routes, and analyze aesthetic, recreational and natural-resource impacts. See, among other provisions, Sections 5.1.4–5.1.6, 7.1.4, 7.2, 7.3, 7.6 and 7.7.

CONCLUSIONS:

The West Point Plan Commission has concluded that the proposed locations of Segments 13, 14 and 17 of the BECI 765-kV project proposal are in direct conflict with the Town's Comprehensive

Plan. The state Gibraltar Rock Natural Area would be visibly encroached upon, the adjacent leather-leaf bog threatened, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail crossed, mapped Critical Eagle Habitat threatened, and mapped Environmental Corridors crossed and disturbed. It is our conclusion that MGS must remove their identified Segments 13, 14, and 17 from further consideration. Furthermore, MGS must not include any yet-unnamed segments or routes through the Town in any CPCN application.

West Point Plan Commission Members:

Kevin Kessler, Chair	Darrell Lehman, Vice Chair	*Not Present* Ron Grasshoff
Nathan Sawyer	Brooke Milde	Jennifer Brooks

Not Present

Les McBurney

cc: Jesse Spankowski, Town Attorney
Miller, Spankowski & Waldinger, LLC
311 DeWitt Street Portage WI 53901

Department of Natural Resources
Attn: Director Greg Pils
Bureau of Environmental Analysis And Sustainability
PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
Attn: Environmental Review Coordinator
(upon opening of the BECI docket)

Town Board Members