

# PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

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**Township Board Special Meeting**  
**January 10, 2023, 2:30 p.m.**  
**Township Hall**  
**Minutes**

1. **Call to Order** by Chown at 2:34 p.m.

2. **Pledge**

3. **Roll Call**

Present: Achorn, Sanger, Shanafelt, Rudolph, Chown

Excused Absence: Wunsch, Wahl

4. **Citizen Comments:** none

5. **Approve Agenda**

**Shanafelt moved to approve the agenda with a second by Sanger.**

**Motion approved by consensus**

6. **Conflict of interest:** none

7. **Consent Agenda:** none

8. **Business**

1. Interview and appoint candidates for the Peninsula Township PDR Selection Committee

**Cram:** per section six of PDR ordinance #23, amendment #3, the township board will appoint a five-member selection committee. We received ten letters of interest, which are included in your packet. Interviews have been scheduled in alphabetical order. Each applicant will have ten minutes, and our last interview will be via zoom. There is also a copy of section 6 in your packet. In part, it says, "The selection committee shall consist of residents and/or property owners of the township chosen to provide equitable representation of geographical and agricultural interests." A full copy of the PDR ordinance is included as well. I look forward to starting work with the committee at the end of January or first part of February.

**Chown:** thank you all for applying to serve on the PDR selection committee. We are grateful to have this tremendous level of interest. Let's have each candidate begin by introducing themselves and telling us why they'd like to serve on this committee.

**Dennis Arouca, 850 Neahawanta Rd:** I came to live here full time after retiring from a career in law and business, mostly in law firms, manufacturing, and other types of industrial activities. I started falling in love with Old Mission Peninsula in 1978 when I married my wife, whose family co-founded a cottage colony here in 1890. They've been consistent residents throughout. That love affair continued not only with my wife but with

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Old Mission Peninsula. When we retired from our working careers, we built a full-time home here. I'm very active in the community generally; I'm not someone to just hunt and fish and play golf all the time. I've had a lot of fortunate breaks along the way; people helped me a lot. It's time for me to give back to my community and try to keep it as good as it is and hopefully make it better. Currently, I'm a board member of the Grand Traverse Economic Development Corporation (EDC), am on the board of the Grand Traverse Manufacturing Council, and on the board and an investor in Northern Michigan Angels Investor Group. I've done a couple of agricultural activities along the way. Unfortunately, the EDC has not gotten as active on the agricultural front as I'd like; it's obviously a very important industry here as well as in the state. There's a group of siloed agricultural interests, there's a group of industrial interests, and there's a group of retail interests. A group like ours comes together with a vision on all of it. I also think I'm qualified to serve on this committee because I've already done so. I served in 2017 to 2018 at the tail end when there were several hundred thousand dollars still to be allocated. I'm very familiar with the ordinance and the process by which applications are reviewed, scored, discussed, debated, then recommended to the township board. I also happen to think that PDR is one of the most important things we can do to promote the long-term economic and sustainable health of our township. PDR not only preserves open agricultural space but also helps our farmers be financially successful by essentially reducing the costs of what it takes to actually farm. I think that's an underappreciated aspect of the program. The PDR program isn't just about preserving everybody's viewsheds; it's also meant to help the farmers stay in farming and prosper. I was listening to the news the other day about global challenges with inflation and food prices. I was shocked to learn that when we go to the store, 15% of the total cost of the commodity we buy is actually on the farm. The rest is processing and agriculture and marketing and sales and all that. It just means more pressure to try to [implement] this program as well as we possibly can.

**Shanafelt:** what do you feel will be the biggest challenges for the committee itself?

**Arouca:** the program doesn't start until a farmer raises a hand to apply. Is there enough demand? Taxpayers have voted to tax themselves to build a fund. There is still a need for good communication to make sure a flow of people are raising their hands. I think we had a handful still in the cue in 2018, but circumstances change. That's more than four years ago.

**Shanafelt:** what do you feel will be your biggest challenge if you're elected to the committee?

**Arouca:** I hope we have access to the same talented staff we had before. We were fortunate to have Laura Rigan from the conservancy in a job that's funded by American Farmland Trust. She did a lot of the heavy lifting and compilation, provided a lot of insight. We citizens will have different skills.

**Shanafelt:** what do you think might derail the work of the committee?

**Arouca:** I'm at a loss. If no one comes forward, we won't have much to do. Last time around we were pretty good at developing consensus. The vote to do this a third time was tremendously strong; the citizenry really supports it. If we do a good job of communicating and making sure people understand the pros and cons, I think we'll be successful.

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**Rudolph:** you're involved in a lot of other activities. This one will be pretty active initially to get off the ground. Can you commit to meeting a few times a month?

**Arouca:** absolutely. I have a busy schedule but I will be rolling off some of those boards, and I like the work.

**Sanger:** it's a very comprehensive resume. Thanks for applying.

**Cram:** to answer a comment, I have been keeping a list of interested agricultural operators. There are people ready to step up and apply once we get the program rolling.

**Chown:** that is my understanding as well, that there is a robust list of farms and farmers who are interested in selling their development rights.

**Angela Baldyga, 9707 Montague Rd:** I'm originally from Grand Rapids but I've been here off and on for 30 years, full time for about 20 years. My husband and I own one main farm and a farm at our house as well. I have spent the majority of the last 20 years raising kids and being on school fundraising committees, things like that. I have a lot of energy. One of my kids is now in college and I have a lot of free time on my hands. Frankly, I just think I would be good at this so I thought I would step up.

**Rudolph:** it's going to be a lot of work getting this rolling. Will you be able to participate in meetings a few times a month?

**Baldyga:** absolutely. I work part time in the city, I drive my kid who can't drive yet. Other than that, I have a lot of free time and would love to help Peninsula Township move forward with this program.

**Rudolph:** what is it specifically about the PDR program that attracts you?

**Baldyga:** as farmers, it's interesting to know what's happening on the inside of this program, not that we would be applying for it. I've always been interested in it. I worked twenty years ago at the conservancy as an intern, where I worked on easements and things like that for two to three years. I have a base of knowledge and serious interest.

**Shanafelt:** can you detail a bit more how your experience makes you an appropriate member of the committee?

**Baldyga:** I have a degree in geography and environmental studies with a base of knowledge through that. I worked at the conservancy for about two and a half years where I was in communications and education and did a lot of organizing of easements and deeds that were in different places. I also did a little bit of monitoring of easements. I have a base knowledge through that and also being out here for the last 20 years. My husband runs the farm, so I don't have a lot of experience with other farmers in the community. I would love to get to know the other farmers and learn more about the program and how we can help save agricultural land.

**Shanafelt:** what do you think will be the most challenging thing for the committee?

**Baldyga:** choosing which properties [to purchase development rights from]. The ranking system doesn't seem difficult, but there's so much wonderful land to protect. I think it's going to be difficult to rank those farms and come to a consensus on that ranking. If we do it analytically like we should, it should be easy but I don't know that it will be.

**Shanafelt:** if appointed, what do you see as your biggest challenge on the committee?

**Baldyga:** I guess it would be that same thing, as well as if you feel a personal frustration. I

would try to stay analytical, but if you feel strongly about one piece of property over another, I think that might be difficult. But of course you just move past that. You do what's best for the committee and the community.

**Shanafelt:** what do you think could derail the work of the committee?

**Baldyga:** I honestly don't think anything could derail the committee. As long as we work together as a community like we should, it should move forward beautifully. It's a great program. It was set up beautifully, and it should work.

**Chown:** can you give us an example of a time when you worked with a group to come to a consensus?

**Baldyga:** I've been working with kids and schools for a long time. I would say that happens on a daily basis in any situation when you're working in a classroom. Right now I work at a dance studio. It's just making decisions on a daily basis as a group so that everybody agrees.

**Rebecca Couch, 17259 Tompkins Woods Rd.:** my maiden name is Ligon; I'm a fifth generation agricultural worker here on the Old Mission Peninsula. I grew up on a cherry and apple farm north of here. My family sold our farm's development rights through the PDR program long ago in the 1990s. I'm very passionate about being able to help other people have the same opportunity we did. It gave us an infusion of cash. I think that puts me in a unique situation. I don't have a conflict; I don't have a farm in this vetting process. I also work in agriculture, but I don't work with grapes. I don't have any ties to a winery, grape growing, or processing, but I do work in agriculture. I think that's a little unique. I'm excited to be able to help the community. As soon as I came back to town, I started helping Eric [Dreier] water the trees at Bowers Harbor Park and then I started coming to the agricultural committee meetings to give my input. I'd like to continue to help the community.

**Chown:** how old were you when your family sold the development rights on your family's farm?

**Couch:** I was in high school. It was a big deal. It gave us money to be innovative and keep the farm in the family, so I remember when it happened.

**Chown:** so it was a very positive experience for your family. You now live just a few miles north of the family farm?

**Couch:** I do, probably a mile. I can see my dad's barn whenever I go for a walk. It feels really nice. It was my great-grandparents' barn.

**Chown:** can you give us a little more information on what experiences you have that would make you a valuable member of the PDR selection committee?

**Couch:** I have a master's degree in community health education and have worked in numerous professional capacities. I worked for Oregon State Extension Service for years. In that job, I worked as a liaison to the community and built relationships with key stakeholders. Then I went on to work for Eastern Michigan University for several years. During my time there, I helped draft policy. I created the tobacco-free campus policy that still exists today. I served as a representative for the student body for the board of directors for the college. Then I went on to work for them in a professional capacity after

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my master's was done. I also worked for the University of Michigan doing outreach for a program in the department of psychology. I traveled the state, met with veterans, built relationships, and spoke publicly about our programs across the state. I have a background in building relationships with key stakeholders. In this case, it might be people in different parts of the agricultural and residential community. I'm good at analyzing information and looking at things analytically. Part of this job is being able to look at different locations and properties around the peninsula. I see that there's a ranking system. We need to be able to look at that analytically and keep detailed records and communicate clearly with members of the committee. I'm good at those things.

**Shanafelt:** can you give us an example of how you are effective at analysis?

**Couch:** my master's dissertation is about the effectiveness of a program to reduce anxiety and depression in military and veteran spouses. I analyzed years of data about the program and the intervention I conducted, then presented that analysis about the effectiveness of reducing anxiety and depression in that population in order to achieve my degree. So that's doing the actual numerical crunching to look at different effectiveness data rates. I can do that and I can also communicate that information effectively.

**Sanger:** I was unaware that you served on the agriculture committee; can you tell me why you applied?

**Couch:** I didn't serve on the committee but I came to as many meetings as I could, and I frequently spoke and gave input.

**Sanger:** what was your motivation to come forward?

**Couch:** I manage two farm stands, one just up the road. I work for Ben and Jen Bramer. I grow vegetables and the things we sell. I wanted to give input to the new agricultural [farm processing] zoning [ordinance]. It's important. I'd like to be able to own agricultural property myself, and my dad's farm is 80 acres, which is a big chunk. Succession doesn't always work the way we think it should, so I may or may not have the opportunity to own that particular land, but it's important to me that other young farmers get a chance to farm on this beautiful peninsula.

**Shanafelt:** what do you think will be the most challenging thing for the committee?

**Couch:** this is really my first foray into living here as an adult. I've been surprised at the passionate, divided feelings I've noticed. I talk to a lot of members of our community as they come buy produce, and I see that many people are passionate about continuing agriculture on the peninsula. I hope we can come together and that there aren't strong divided feelings but that we can all see that PDR is a great way to continue to [protect] agricultural land on the peninsula. That might be a challenge, but hopefully everybody can see that the peninsula is worth working together for.

**Shanafelt:** if you're appointed, what do you think your biggest personal challenge will be as a member of the committee?

**Couch:** I'm wondering when it will meet. In the summer, I work a lot of hours growing vegetables, 12-hour days. It was suggested that I apply by my employers, so I do have their support to take time out of my day to do this. That will probably be my biggest challenge.

**Shanafelt:** do you see an issue with meeting twice a month?

**Couch:** I can meet that obligation.

**Shanafelt:** anything you see that might derail the work of the committee?

**Couch:** I hope not. We've re-upped this millage multiple times and it's worked well in the past. I re-read the history of the program. People in the township are passionate about it. It was innovative. People want to continue the program. I think we should have no problem as we continue to work through what is, I think, the third iteration? It should be smooth sailing, I hope. I'm optimistic.

**John Dolton, 10862 Eagles Landing Dr.:** my wife and I moved to the peninsula in 2011. I retired fully in 2019. Looking at the ordinance itself, it says the committee is to represent "geographical and agricultural interests," and I'm hearing a number of folks who have a long background in terms of third-generation farmers or families who have lived on the peninsula for a very long time. That's not the case with me. I suppose I represent the residents. My family does goes a long way back in Michigan. My grandfather was a physician in Detroit. In the 1930s, he bought 640 acres on Douglas Lake. When the property tax got too much, he sold more than 500 acres to the University of Michigan. They have a biological station there also known as Bug Camp. I spent my entire career in public service. I worked for the Colorado Housing Finance Authority in various positions, including CFO. It was a public entity created to assist low to moderate income folks in buying homes and helping small businesses grow. Public service, community service, is very important to me. I'm on the ZBA. I've been in front of this board a couple of times to apply for the planning commission and township board, so my interest in public service continues. I think it's remarkable how successful the PDR program has been. The foresight that went into creating it initially, how successful it's been to date, and the fact that the community has supported it once again. It's important for our entire community. In my time on the ZBA, I've shown myself to be a thoughtful, balanced person who's respectful of the process. I don't approach anything with an agenda other than to do what's best for the community.

**Rudolph:** any conflict with meeting a couple times a month?

**Dolton:** not at all. I've found myself not having enough to do.

**Shanafelt:** what do you see as being the most challenging thing for the committee itself?

**Dolton:** I see the process in terms of scoring is well laid out. I guess where I see a couple of potential challenges is when you have properties that score equally, then we have to prioritize. Another challenge is when you might have disagreements in terms of assessed values, where the property owner might not agree with a particular assessment that came in. Some negotiation or additional assessment might be needed to close that.

**Shanafelt:** for you on the committee, what do you see as your challenge?

**Dolton:** not to come in with an agenda, making sure we're being fair and balanced and working with the facts on the ground.

**Shanafelt:** what do you think might derail the work of the committee?

**Dolton:** hopefully nothing but it could happen if people did come in with an agenda and the work were politicized in an unfortunate way.

**Chown:** can you tell us about a time when you assisted a group to reach consensus?

**Dolton:** in some ways, I feel that way every time we meet as the ZBA. It's about balance,

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being respectful of all members' viewpoints, listening intensely to what the applicant wants and why they want it. Our goal is to make sure we're meeting the needs of the community. The ordinance is there for a reason.

**Sanger:** what key element could you contribute to the committee?

**Dolton:** perhaps a slightly different perspective. My history is a little different. I'm a resident; I have no agriculture business interest.

**Eric Dreier, 12434 Peninsula Dr.:** you guys have a great problem: a lot of qualified people. Just as a plug for Rebecca Ligon, I was her math and science teacher. She is one of the finest students I had and I can assure you that she's three standard deviations above the norm at the very least. Thank you for considering my application. It's gratifying to apply for what I consider to be a landmark program. This was the first purchase of development rights program of any township in the nation. I worked on that first one in 1994 and then the second one and this last one. You can see through the progression of those three elections that while there might have been some reservations at the beginning, it still [passed] by a solid majority. In addition to working on the three PDR millages, I was on our parks committee and continue to volunteer for the parks. In my career working as public school administrator, I came to appreciate the necessity of public bodies, in school districts or townships, working in an open and transparent way. Because our citizens have put a lot of faith in this program, it would be incumbent upon those who have the honor to serve to recognize that to maintain that support, we must be transparent in every aspect. I also work for the National Park Service as a volunteer doing work on the North Country Trail and have been a past board member of one of our local credit unions.

**Rudolph:** initially there will be meetings at least twice a month; are you able to commit to that?

**Dreier:** yeah. There's a lot to learn. I have the availability. I am a year-round resident.

**Chown:** you haven't served on the selection committee before, but you were actively involved in the campaigns?

**Dreier:** right. I was interested but at the time heavily involved in work and didn't have the time. I'm glad to see so many qualified applicants because I think they had to reduce the number of people last time because they couldn't get enough.

**Shanafelt:** what do you feel will be the biggest challenge for the committee?

**Dreier:** the biggest challenge is that we will have more interest than money. It's a good problem. We wouldn't be here if there was money left over and not enough interest.

**Shanafelt:** what will the challenge be for the committee in that context?

**Dreier:** we have some things we've learned from the two previous rounds in terms of demand to participate in the program and not enough money. I think it'd be very hard for somebody who comes sincerely to the committee and has a good case, a desirable piece of agricultural land that we would like to see protected, and we don't have the resources because we've used up the money. We've seen it happen.

**Shanafelt:** in that context, what would you see as your personal challenge as a committee member?

**Dreier:** I think showing empathy and understanding to that farmer, keeping

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communication up to date on what the committee is doing, what challenges it is facing and has addressed. I was a public school administrator. You always had a situation where you had more demand for the service than you were able to provide.

**Shanafelt:** do you see anything that might derail the functioning of the committee?

**Dreier:** in terms of the actual functioning, no. I think the people volunteering for this are not the ones with the loud voices. They're the people willing to sit down and do the analytical work. We're going to have to get to know each other and learn how to work together. I'm optimistic. It won't be 80 miles an hour on a smooth road, but we can expect people to come in with pretty pure hearts. If they do have an agricultural background or they own a farm, those are valuable insights.

**Chown:** do you consider yourself a consensus builder, and can you give an example of when you overcame disagreements to figure something out?

**Dreier:** yes, I would consider myself a consensus builder. Even at times when you don't agree with the majority, you want to get stuff done. You have to be able to work with that. I was the chairperson of our science department here at the Traverse City schools; that comprised about 50 teachers, part time and full time. Science is an expensive program to run and has a limited budget. As the chairperson, what I think I was successful at was rather than doling out this money [over the long term], trying to solve a quantitative problem, we did better by targeting those assets to get higher qualitative outcomes. Then the next year, [we'd] roll it over to the next need.

**Cristin Popelier Hosmer, 17593 Shii Take Trail:** I purchased my home in 2007 with my husband Brian, the winemaker at Chateau Chantal and Hawthorne Vineyards. We've been in the wine industry out here for the last 15 years. Before that we went to Michigan State University, where I studied agricultural economics. The best way to make money farming is to take whatever you grow and turn it into alcohol. That's what I've been teaching at Michigan State for the last seven years. I also teach for an organization called VESTA, which is a national organization made up of 22 different community colleges and universities. I am currently listed as the instructor for nine different programs. I sell my grapes and flowers locally and am also a yoga teacher. I have a son, age 11, and an Australian shepherd.

**Chown:** can you tell us why you're interested in serving on the PDR selection committee?

**Hosmer:** I think the viability of agriculture is the most important issue on Old Mission Peninsula today. The future of farming is at a crux where we're either going to continue to enhance the viability or not. PDR is one of the tools in the toolkit. It's known statewide as well as nationally as being one of the best programs in the country. When I moved here in 2007 and attended my welcome to the neighborhood party, Rob Manigold and at the time Penny Rosi were on the township board and Gordon Hayward [was the planner]. They all said, "Hey, you worked on land policy initiatives; you should get on the planning commission." At that time, I thought the planning commission had more to do with PDR than it does, but I didn't understand how the process worked. I worked on the planning commission for six years and the zoning board as the PC member for two. I'm very familiar with the program. I've been following it since I was an undergrad. I first learned about it in

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probably 2000. It's the envy of the country, and I think it's probably the most impactful thing I could do in order to preserve, protect, and promote agriculture on this peninsula.

**Rudolph:** sounds like you're really busy. We need a commitment of a couple times a month to get things rolling. Do you see a problem?

**Hosmer:** absolutely not. I'm self-employed. I have a very flexible schedule with the exception of Tuesday evenings this semester, when I teach. Most of my courses are in the evening. If our time for meeting is during the day, I'm fully available.

**Shanafelt:** what do you see as the biggest challenge for the committee?

**Hosmer:** there's only a certain amount of money available, and I'm assuming there's still a backlog of applications that exist. So, first, how to get through the backlog of current applicants. How to address any changes in the PDR ordinance with any new criteria that have been introduced, the old versus the new, because I understand there was a change in July. I think the committee needs to hit the ground running on what is currently there and codify what the mission and goals are, what the budget is. What information and details do we need? How does this committee get started? Is it by starting with a backlog of applications or starting from scratch? I think it kind of boils down to that.

**Shanafelt:** if you are appointed, what do you see as your biggest challenge?

**Hosmer:** the criteria and using my analytical brain to compare apples to oranges or farm to farm. There's only a certain amount of money available; we want to spend that money wisely. We're at this tipping point. We've got about 4,500 acres already preserved; we have 10,000 to 12,000 acres identified. We're only about halfway there. What is the biggest bang for our buck we can get with the funds that are coming in? If our goal is to preserve 6,000 to 7,000 more acres, how are we going to do that most effectively and efficiently?

**Shanafelt:** do you see anything that might derail the work of the committee?

**Hosmer:** people have opinions on what is the most important thing to do first, but as long as we have a solid set of criteria for decision making and we can use our analytical brains and not our personal passions, then I think we will move forward effectively. And use Robert's Rules of Order.

**Chown:** can you give us an example of a time when you had to use consensus to solve a problem?

**Hosmer:** I was on the planning commission for six years and the zoning board for two. At the monthly meetings, we used consensus to make decisions. I think one of the best things that came out of my early work was what went into what is now called the Regional Land Transportation Plan. We all sat down at a meeting between everyone in Grand Traverse County, Leelanau County, and Benzie County and looked at all the roads and transportation. One of the things that clearly came from Peninsula Township is that we truck 60 million pounds of fruit off this peninsula to the other end of the county and even further. This township was very clear to that organization and that organization understood just how important that trucking pathway is to our vital agricultural community. I do have some questions for you guys. You recently updated the purchase of development rights ordinance. What changed in July versus the previous version?

**Cram:** there were two changes. The ranking criteria, the priorities, changed. The other

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thing that changed was...

**Achorn:** the financial.

**Cram:** the financial changed but John Wunsch reminded me of one important thing. I can't think of it.

**Hosmer:** how is the criteria information collected? A spreadsheet, a report, does the owner provide that information, do we ask questions of the applicant?

**Cram:** those are things the selection committee will be working on, finalizing the process. I will create forms based on the ordinance on how each property is ranked.

**Hosmer:** then we would be given the application information? I found some older data from 2015 that indicated we've spent about 18 million to date. Does anyone know how much we've actually spent and the number of properties that have been put into PDR?

**Chown:** we have all that info. I didn't bring it with me today. I think it's on the website.

**Hosmer:** I couldn't find it. Maybe I looked in the wrong place.

**Chown:** to date, we've preserved 55% of the 9,600-some acres of land identified in the agricultural preservation zone. That leaves 4,000-plus acres at risk of development that we hope this committee will have the chance to assess.

**Hosmer:** do we know what the approval rates have been in the past? Has everyone that's applied been approved, or what is the number of approved?

**Cram:** I would have to do some digging.

**Hosmer:** I'd love to know how many applicants we've had in the past, how many we've approved, and what our approval rates are. The last question is, what kind of budget are we're looking at in 2023 given what's coming in from the PDR money?

**Cram:** it will accumulate over time. Some of it was spelled out in the ordinance update as far as when we reach a certain amount, it rolls over to enforcement. But I don't know if we broke it out specifically as to how much we would have in the first year.

**Hosmer:** so it's not based on fiscal year?

**Achorn:** it will most likely be a bond offering. The proceeds from the bond will fund the purchases of development rights.

**Hosmer:** and then we'll pay back the bond with the PDR funds as they're collected.

**Shanafelt:** so your money would be available upfront.

**Achorn:** there are about a million dollars right now in the account, plus the new millage that is coming in the winter tax. The ordinance is very careful to protect the funds that will be needed in the future for monitoring enforcement. That money will not be available immediately. There will be some for an immediate purchase.

**Chown:** unfortunately, no one on the board right now was here when the last cycle wrapped up. I'm sure we can find the information. Thanks for spearheading that.

**Cram:** I forwarded everyone a copy of amendment #3. Section 14 talks about the different accounts that will be set up and how they will be funded.

**Hosmer:** if I were to be appointed, I would hope we would go through this stuff and have a historical work session on what's happened in the past and what the goals are for the future. A visioning session, a team-building vision session, as a way to start.

**Susan Tarczon, 15763 Smokey Hollow Rd.:** we have lived on the peninsula for about 32

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years. I am a retired commercial banker. I worked in various banks in town for the last 30-some years. I've been involved in the PDR campaign program from the start. I worked on the campaign initially as well as the second time and then this most recent one. I was also involved in the ordinance rewrite committee and worked with the finance group that came up with some of the numbers in terms of the bonds and how much we should plan to allocate for future monitoring enforcement. I also worked on the last election committee, which was a pretty short duration because we had just a little bit of funding left. We ended up acquiring just one farm, I think. I have limited experience in terms of working on the selection committee itself other than having done that for the last session. I'm passionate about the program. The first time we went campaigning, I took my little and now 30-some-year-old child with me door to door promoting the program. I'm proud of us for coming up with a program, for being the first in the nation to do this. It's a way of putting our money where our mouths are and being willing to help farmers and citizens protect the viewshed and continue to allow farmers to farm and help them make it economically feasible.

**Cram:** I remembered the other big change to the ordinance: we updated it so it allowed for matching funds to be introduced.

**Rudolph:** the time commitment might be twice a month to start. Are you able to make that?

**Tarczon:** my schedule is flexible now that I'm retired. I'll be gone a couple weeks in April, but other than that I am happy to commit.

**Achorn:** from your experience, can you answer some of the questions that we were unable to? Being involved in the first and second rounds, do you recall how the bonding went?

**Tarczon:** I was only involved in the last selection committee; there wasn't a bonding situation then. I was involved in the finance committee this time around, determining that we would potentially be pursuing a bond, but I don't have the numbers at my fingertips. I'm sure we have that recorded. I also would want the selection committee to go back and go, "Alright, how did this work before? What's the process?"

**Shanafelt:** what do you see as being the biggest challenge to the committee?

**Tarczon:** what we just touched on, getting all of us knowledgeable about the process and then coordinating that with applicants and making sure we're following the rules. Being completely transparent as members of this committee and then just following through. It's always about consensus. You're working on a committee with other people and you don't always get to have exactly what you want, but we need to come together and make it work so that we can move quickly. One of the issues we talked about in the finance group and rewriting the ordinance was timing. There's some rules and regulations related to bonding and spending that money in a period of time. The committee needs to act promptly, both from the landowner's standpoint but also from the bonding standpoint so we meet that criteria.

**Shanafelt:** what do you see as the biggest challenge for yourself?

**Tarczon:** making sure we have coordination between how we get the financing or other financing that comes through from a funding standpoint and then getting it allocated quickly enough to meet that criteria. I see that being my role as well as the committee's in

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general as the most important thing.

**Shanafelt:** do you see anything that might derail the work of the committee?

**Tarczon:** the rewrite of the ordinance really helps streamline the process in terms of making it very clear what the committee is supposed to apply to make the choices. The committee just needs to follow the procedures and then apply the criteria. The ordinance re-write is a really good improvement. I feel great that the folks in the township have re-upped this. They're committed to it. I'm excited to see it implemented, hopefully for the last time, to get the rest of the property that's available under conservation.

**Chown:** I believe the goal was to raise enough money to purchase the development rights of all the farms that are identified in the agricultural preservation zone, should those landowners express interest in selling their development rights. I'm hopeful that is the case and that we won't have to [pass another millage] because we've run out of money. We want to finish the job this round.

**Rick Vida, 9941 Center Rd.:** I've lived on the peninsula for 22 years. About 15 years ago, I volunteered as a backup for the zoning board of appeals, which led to about 11, 12 years on the committee and eight years as the chair. I thoroughly enjoyed that. If anybody's ever been on the ZBA, they know it's not necessarily a forgiving position. About three years ago, I said, "Well, I think I served my time" and resigned. When I saw this email, I thought, "Here's a different way to serve the community." So I threw my hat in the ring.

**Rudolph:** as this gets started, the time commitment will probably be to meet twice a month. Do you think that will be a problem?

**Vida:** not really; we don't have plans to leave this winter.

**Shanafelt:** beyond ZBA experience, what other experience might contribute to your role on the committee?

**Vida:** when I lived in Chicago, in the town of Barrington, I was on a committee for street enhancement to enhance the beauty of the city landscape. I'm not a big political animal. As far as civil experience, that's about it.

**Shanafelt:** what would you see as the biggest challenge for the committee as a whole?

**Vida:** I don't have a full understanding of exactly how the process works to approve funding and purchase the development rights. I think that probably represents the biggest challenge. How do you justify the amount of money to justify the purchase to the landowner?

**Shanafelt:** given that you are appointed, what do you see as your biggest challenge?

**Vida:** I don't see an issue. Working on the ZBA for as long as I did, there were a few issues when some of the board members would disagree, but we always worked it out. I was pretty proud of that.

**Shanafelt:** do you see anything that might derail the process?

**Vida:** not to my knowledge. I think you're going to pick the best people to serve. I see us working together. I think everyone's trying to focus on the same issue, to do the right thing.

**Achorn:** what about your non-public background that might add to the committee?

**Vida:** I had a dual major in college, in accounting and finance. I worked in real estate for 35

years, primarily in the mall business. I have a lot of experience in real estate and either managing or leasing or developing or redeveloping property. I think that brings a positive to the table.

**John Wunsch, 17881 Center Rd.:** my experience with PDR is more along the lines of collaborating and developing the program, co-authoring the legislation for both versions [of the PDR ordinance], and running the campaigns to get the millages passed. I have not served on the selection committee. I have followed its activity from something of a distance. I'm aware of the structure and expectations through having helped design the programs. Additionally, before we had a program, I led a group that studied all the existing programs around the nation. We spoke to government officials, members of the press, general residents, and farmland owners. I think that was the best way to really get a feel for how these programs best function, what some of the potential pitfalls could be, and what the strengths were. I first heard of these programs when I was on the East Coast. It was about 1988, then when I moved here and heard people talking about it, that inspired me to get involved. I think it's important to also have a feel for the function of the farms here. Growing up on one of the farms and working on that farm since I was very young until I was about 40, and owning some farmland at this point, although I don't work on it anymore, helps me to have perspective on what the purpose is, which is to preserve the resource. The purpose is not to preserve a particular farm operation. It is to make sure that, whatever happens, we have the resource, the land. My inspiration is to see what I have been a part of and loved all my life continue in perpetuity.

**Rudolph:** regarding the time commitment of a couple times a month, do you see any issue with your availability?

**Wunsch:** no. I don't travel, really. I have a business I run five days a week, so I'm around. As the owner of the business, I do have enough staff that I can 99% of the time leave whenever necessary. For something this important, I would make sure it's 100% of the time. I would intend to be there straight through.

**Sanger:** you mentioned something about preserving the property as opposed to the business. Can you expand on that?

**Wunsch:** certainly we need to do a lot of the work that we've been doing to improve and ensure that every possible option that fits is available to support the farms on the peninsula. We need to support every operation everywhere we can, but this program's purpose is to make sure that the land is not developed to the point that it can't be farmed. While as a total community and township we want to support every operation and encourage better farm market opportunities and better roadside stand opportunities, that's separate from this program, which really is about making sure that, assuming the landowner's willing, the property can be put under a conservation easement. So whether it's the next owner or 10 owners down the road, we have the resource, the land available in a workable condition.

**Sanger:** let me follow up. You were active in the rewrite this summer. Do you feel the ordinance as written today accomplishes that objective?

**Wunsch:** I think the ordinance as written today is a fabulous step in the right direction.

There are probably some tweaks that, as we go forward, we're going to need to make. We had to get it done; it's been a tough lift. I have an open mind to some possible improvements. I think the biggest improvement is going to be, as Jenn [Cram] has called it, "the missing middle." We've got to have farm markets, we need to make sure our roadside stands are not only compliant but really workable. I'm a proponent for a co-op winery situation so that every winery doesn't have to invest a huge amount of money for a production facility. [I envision] a centralized location where multiple winery owners can collaborate to have a tasting room. I also am a proponent of looking at other forms of agritourism. The hayrides, the farm-on-farm experience, whether that's in the form of what's called WWOOF, work on farm programs...There are so many things over the next few years. Jenn can only move so fast; we as a community can only reach consensus so quickly. I feel like the work has just started. That farm processing [amendment #201] we passed is step one. The PDR is there to keep the opportunity, the land, so we can use all these tools, but we need a lot of tools. Back to the first question, I see improvements we can make in the ordinance.

**Shanafelt:** what do you see as being the potential biggest challenge for the committee?

**Wunsch:** we built in a new primary scoring rubric with matching funding, so in an initial round of applications, a landowner will likely say, "Yeah, I like this federal match program." Another will say, "I'd like to donate some of the value and use it as a tax write off." And a third one might say, "There's a neighborhood here that really wants to see this farm preserved and they're pulling together a fundraiser as a match." So they start out scoring on that basis. We'll be using a professional to negotiate this, and then the landowner sees details and might say, "Oh, with a federal program, there's more restriction. I don't want to federal match." And the one who was going to do donation says, "Yeah, I'm still going to do it but the person who was going to raise some private money decided they weren't up for that." You're going to rescore once that happens. I do not foresee farms that score high enough to be in an initial batch falling out of the batch, but it's possible. But I do see a reshuffling. I think the biggest challenge will be dealing with that. It will likely be two steps forward, one step back, then we can move on.

**Shanafelt:** if you are appointed, what do you see as being your biggest personal challenge working with the committee?

**Wunsch:** you just never know what you're gonna run into. I guess my biggest challenge is to always be open minded and prepared. I think that's usually part of being in a successful committee. We all have life pressures, we all have expectations of what we're going to do today, but something that happened at work in the morning might distract you. You show up and there's a problem you didn't expect. The challenge is to stay calm, focused, and ready for whatever comes up with an open mind. Don't let any unexpected developments stop you.

**Shanafelt:** what might derail the work of the committee?

**Wunsch:** hopefully nothing. There will be the challenge that we comprehend and understand the flow of the bond process so that we are ready. We need to use the bond quickly enough to avoid penalties but we're ready to move forward. Should there be the possibility that enough people on the committee have conflicts that we fall below a

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quorum, I wouldn't expect it to fully derail us but we would have to find new applicants. For me, whatever might derail us is temporary; we'll get past it.

**Chown:** it might not be allowed, but has there ever been an alternate appointed to the selection committee?

**Cram:** the ordinance does say that ex-officio members can be appointed as well.

**Sanger:** there's probably so much detail that continuity is an issue, but it's worth evaluating. I would think continuity is very important in terms of attendance.

**Wunsch:** I doubt it will be an issue. I was reaching for unexpecteds.

**Fred M. Woodruff, 4824 Forest Ave. (via zoom):** I've always been a supporter of the PDR program as a way to manage development in an active and mutually agreeable way with respect to property owners. I recall serving on the selection committee in one of the earlier iterations. I had a few questions in terms of how the town board is going forward. Do you anticipate bonding against the tax revenue to generate substantial funding to acquire and develop rights? I'm interested in how you see the role of the selection committee. Would it be considered a reactive organization, simply reviewing applications and scoring, or is the selection committee with the guidance of professionals going to be proactive in seeking out particular properties that might score well on a priority basis? My interest in raising funds for protecting open space and farmland in the township would certainly [rise] to a new level if I could be involved with the selection committee, helping it to partner with local nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies with my background as an attorney in the state of Michigan.

**Cram:** as to the first question about bonding, yes, that is the plan. If you look at the updated PDR ordinance amendment number three, section 14 talks about how the chart of accounts is going to work and the bonding and all those things. A finance committee supported the work of the PDR study group that helped to draft the amendments to that zoning ordinance, and then we worked with Marge Achorn, our treasurer, to bring that to life. She's in the process of setting up those charts of accounts.

**Woodruff:** that's great. I think that initially bonds were not used.

**Cram:** a new ranking system has been developed that allows for very analytical review. One of the other perks of the updates to the PDR ordinance is that it introduced the ability to utilize matching funds from either federal or state organizations. That would also play into how the properties are ranked. If you're looking at two properties that might have similar [rankings], if one property can bring forward matching funds so that the PDR fund can go further, that property might score a little bit higher. With regard to the role of the committee, the role will evolve. I am new as the director of planning and helping to manage this program, so we'll be working together to develop the process. Laura Rigan will be assisting via the land conservancy as well. The primary role of the committee will be to rank and prioritize the properties for acquisition and make recommendations to the board. But in order to get to that place, we'll need to roll up our sleeves. I would like to set up whoever eventually takes my place so they don't have to do as much digging as I've had to do to get up to speed. We will document the process for perpetuity.

**Rudolph:** regarding the time commitment, would meeting twice a month for the first six

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months or so be feasible?

**Woodruff:** we're selling our house here in Texas. Our current plans are to come back as soon as the house sells, but in any event, probably in early April. When will the committee become active? I certainly could consider coming back or participating via zoom.

**Cram:** I'm hoping to get started as early as the end of January, but the first part of February is probably realistic. We need to get moving to get the word out to the community.

**Woodruff:** will my involvement via zoom be an issue?

**Cram:** it's helpful having in-person meetings, but it won't disqualify you.

**Shanafelt:** how does your experience make you a good candidate for the committee?

**Woodruff:** I was a former real estate lawyer. My practice centered around raising funds and acquiring projects and negotiating arrangements among various parties. I worked many times for a government unit, with someone who wanted to take a project and tried to assemble the package to fund it. My background is real estate and finance.

Subsequently, I've been involved in the grant-making side as a private foundation executive and most recently with the conservancy on raising funds to acquire open space projects in Peninsula Township. The latest one was the Hoffman Farm project, which involved the state raising money and then the property owner contributing some of the development rights that were going to be acquired. It's sort of a pattern as to how the PDR program could move forward with matching funds from state and nonprofit sources.

**Shanafelt:** what do you see as the biggest challenge for the committee?

**Woodruff:** prioritizing the properties. I know we have an analytical scoring system. The ranking permits the committee to be proactive in seeking matching funds, but that will be a challenge. It's not like the old PDR program.

**Shanafelt:** if you are appointed, what do you see as a personal challenge working on the committee?

**Woodruff:** well, I'm getting on in years. Staying sharp?

**Shanafelt:** do you see anything that might derail the work of the committee?

**Woodruff:** not really. I'm still trying to figure out how this process will run parallel to some of the other land use regulation challenges the township faces, the winery lawsuit in particular. The pressure for development in the township is increasing. The Traverse City area has been identified as a very desirable place to live, and Peninsula Township is probably one of the more desirable areas within the Traverse City area. I guess [it could be challenging] to identify property and negotiate arrangements for private property owners who probably are going to be under more and more pressure to sell their property, and maybe the historic acquisition of development rights values are going to increase, so we'll need to figure out how to work through that.

**Chown:** thank you, Fred. That ends the interview portion of this meeting. We are grateful for everyone's time. We have extremely qualified and passionate applicants, so choosing five from the 10 who applied will be hard. What is the pleasure of the board?

**Rudolph:** I wish we could appoint ten people. We have very qualified people here. This is an astonishing community.

**Shanafelt:** I spent the weekend going over this. It was extremely difficult. What a good problem to have.

**Sanger:** it is tough but I've come to some conclusions and recommend my slate of five. Dennis Arouca has already served and really adds quite a dimension in terms of background and history. Rebecca Couch brings another dimension, history, and is a very skilled and highly motivated person. Eric Dreier has a proven history with the township and not only as a resident; I've seen him on the parks committee. He's worked on three PDR programs. Susan Tarczon certainly brings a high financial dimension. I'm very much aware of the work she did as a banker on previous programs. I think her background in the PDR implementation is going to be essential. She is probably one of the major components of putting together a group that can [hit the ground running] with her background in the finance aspect. I certainly would be remiss for not recognizing the contributions of John Wunsch. John was one of the first people I met when I offered to help with the program back in 2002 on the renewal. John is really the architect behind the program. He provides the glue in my mind that keeps this group together.

**Achorn:** I came up with the same five for those reasons and some others. When I listen to John Wunsch, I need his assistance to make sure his entire thought process is followed. He knows the ins and outs. He's never been on the selection committee. Now he would be following the rules and regulations and analysis and bonding thought processes that he went through with the bankers. I am just flummoxed by the amount of expertise he would carry on the committee.

**Chown:** because we have so many qualified candidates, it makes sense to elevate certain criteria. Experience with the PDR program is, to me, incredibly important. I want to continue to have those individuals serve who already have a proven track record. I also think it's important to acknowledge individual commitment to this program, whether they've served on past PDR selection committees or not. We have folks who worked tirelessly to promote this program in this township. I like all the candidates you named. I agree with all of them, but I also think Fred Woodruff is a very strong candidate. John Dalton is a superb candidate. Eric worked tirelessly to promote the PDR program through three iterations. I'm very comfortable with your slate but I wish we could appoint some alternates. That's why I mentioned that earlier.

**Rudolph:** I agree with you, Dave, on Dennis, Eric, Susan, and John, but I'm at a loss for the next level. I like John Dolton; he's had a lot of experience on the zoning board of appeals. I know he's able to work through very difficult situations. I like Rebecca very much. She has the agriculture background as well. The only other person on the list who has the ag background is John Wunsch. Fred is a neighbor and friend and a very capable person who has had a lot of interest in the PDR program. So I have a very difficult time trying to make this choice.

**Sanger:** I would add, the ordinance suggests we have a balance between agriculture and residential. That played into my choices.

**Rudolph:** that would put Rebecca at the top then.

**Shanafelt:** I agree with Rebecca, Susan, and John. The previous experience on the selection committee is useful, but I think one person there is enough, so it's either Susan

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or Dennis in my mind. It's good to bring in some other perspectives. I thought Cristin was interesting, mainly because of her breadth of experience as well as depth and working on different committees as well as in the township. She was on my slate, as was John Dolton for similar reasons. I think John brings a very different perspective than anyone else we talked to today. So my slate is Cristin, John Dolton, Rebecca, Susan, and John Wunsch.

**Sanger moved to appoint Dennis Arouca, Rebecca Couch, Eric Dreier, Susan Tarzon, and John Wunsch to the selection committee with a second by Achorn.**

**Shanafelt:** I would like to sub out Dennis with Cristin.

**Sanger:** I have a hard time with that. Dennis worked on the last PDR. He has very impressive experience and background in the community. I think he brings a skillset to the community in terms of experience. Nothing against Cristin; I'm aware of her experience on the planning commission and zoning board. But when I look at Dennis's resume, it's hard to not recognize that he's a major pillar of the community and any expertise that you look at. And I'm delighted to see a man of his credentials applying for this position.

**Shanafelt:** okay, I understand Dennis. As you rank Eric compared with John Dolton compared with Cristin, how do you see Eric rising to the top of those three?

**Sanger:** Eric has worked in the formulation, the capsulizing, of the program for the voters. He has worked on all three campaigns going back to 1992. I think that's experience we need. Eric understands the PDR program much like John Wunsch. Those two guys have worked hand in hand for the last 30 years on the program. I'm aware of John Dolton and I support John in his appointment to the zoning board. I've been impressed with his work, but John doesn't have the background in the program to be able to land on his feet. That's my main concern.

**Shanafelt:** so the basis of your slate leans heavily towards understanding and experience with PDR.

**Sanger:** I would add further, there is going to be a big thrust of activity in 2023. What drives me is that this group is going to be very busy this year.

**Achorn:** I go for the experience because they are going to start off running.

**Shanafelt:** okay, I understand.

**Chown:** we have a motion and a second. May I call the vote?

**Rudolph:** can I confirm who is on the motion?

**Sanger:** Dennis Arouca, Rebecca Couch, Eric Dreier, Susan Tarzon, and John Wunsch.

**Roll call vote:** yes – Sanger, Shanafelt, Rudolph, Chown, Achorn      **Passed unan**

**Chown:** it's very humbling to have so many excellent candidates. We thank all of you.

**Achorn:** I think the first amendment to the PDR ordinance will be to add the opportunity to appoint additional people for substitutes.

#### **Board Discussion**

##### **9. Citizen Comments:** none

##### **10. Board Comments**

**Rudolph:** this is one of the toughest things we've had to face. It's heartwarming that we have so many qualified people who are interested in working on township matters like this.

**Achorn:** I'm humbled that we have so many volunteers who are so experienced and

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talented.

**Crown:** thank you all again.

**11. Adjournment**

**Sanger moved to adjourn with a second by Rudolph.**

consensus

**Adjourned at 4:47 p.m.**

Motion approved by