PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City MI, 49686
www.peninsulatownship.com

Planning Commission
Rescheduled Regular Meeting
March 5, 2026, 7:00 p.m.
Township Hall
Minutes

1. **Call to Order by Beard at 7:00 p.m.**
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call – Present:** Alexander, Beard, Eckstein, Hall, Hornberger, Shanafelt; **Absent/Excused:** Shipman Township Planner of Record - Sara Kopriva; **Virtual:** Chris Patterson, Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes
4. **Approve Agenda**

Motion by Alexander to approve the agenda as written, seconded by Hall. **Motion Passes**

5. **Brief Citizen Comments (for non-agenda items only): none offered**
6. **Communications: none beyond packet inclusions**
7. **Conflict of Interest: none declared**
8. **Approve Meeting Minutes**
    a. **Approval of Meeting Minutes: February 5, 2026**

Beard identifies the need to update minutes to include the name of an applicant as well as relabeling the meeting from special meeting to rescheduled regular meeting.

Motion by Hornberger to approve minutes as amended, seconded by Eckstein. **Motion Passes**

9. **Business**
    a. **Public Hearing - Zoning Amendment #207 to conditionally rezone parcel ID #28-11-009-029-10 from R-1A/R1-C to R1-C**

Kopriva reintroduces the request to rezone a split-zoned parcel to entirely R1C, noting applicant-proposed conditions limiting development to four new lots and preserving 20% slopes with existing vegetation. Staff report provides decision-making criteria. Applicant (Suzanne Schulz) presents rationale to eliminate dual zoning, align with surrounding R1C uses, and remain consistent with the township's Master Plan. Proposal suggests up to four buildable lots may be possible subject to future engineering, with no disturbance of steep slopes. PC discussion centers on slope, stormwater, road access, and whether increased density is appropriate given topography. Applicant acknowledges final lot yield may be reduced following engineering. Staff clarifies layout is conceptual, conditions would be deed-restricted, and detailed review of stormwater, slopes, and road design occurs during subsequent township permitting. PC confirms consideration is limited to rezoning, not site design, and that technical concerns will be addressed during later review stages.

Beard opens the public hearing portion of the business item.

Leslie Young, 10720 Center Road: states property is adjacent to the subject parcel and zoned R1A. Notes a prior PUD request did not meet minimum acreage, and current rezoning request would allow an additional building site. Raises concern regarding increased surface coverage and runoff, citing significant drainage issues from nearby Eagles Landing, including flooding of an adjacent field. Young states subject property has steeper slopes

and similar development could exacerbate impacts. Requests PC consider stormwater and density impacts. Offers to submit photographic evidence to staff for review prior to decision.

Bill Smethells, 10547 Bluff Road: states his property is located below the subject parcel. Raises questions regarding location of the top of the slope, potential future soil movement or grading, and applicable setback requirements in relation to the slope. Notes uncertainty whether his questions pertain to the rezoning stage or later review.

Robert Binder, 10467 Bluff Road: states his property adjoins the subject parcel, including the separately platted fifth lot extending to the water. Raises questions regarding septic and drain field locations, potential impacts to nearby wells, and whether lots would share or have individual systems. Seeks clarification on parcel configuration, tax IDs, and whether lot lines or access (including potential lake access) could change in the future. Notes general concern regarding development impacts, particularly to his water supply.

Beard closes the public hearing.

Further discussion: Staff clarifies setbacks are the same in both districts and current ordinance does not regulate building proximity to slopes, grading, or vegetation removal. Notes proposed slope and vegetation protections are voluntary conditions tied to the rezoning and exceed current regulatory authority. PC discusses limitations of regulating steep slopes under existing ordinance and acknowledges development could occur on slopes absent proposed conditions. Concerns raised regarding topography, runoff, and rationale for original R1A zoning. Beard emphasizes decision is limited to rezoning, not site design, and that conditional rezoning must be accepted or rejected as proposed. Notes applicant is offering conditions in exchange for increased development potential. Confirms no action taken at this meeting and matter will return in April for decision.

b. Introduction - St. Joseph Catholic Church SUP #117 Amendment #2, Accessory Building

Kopriva introduces request for a 760 sq. ft. accessory building at St. Joseph Catholic Church, noting compliance with setbacks on a large parcel and minimal review requirements. Indicates stormwater review not automatically triggered due to location.

Eric Mulvany, St. Joseph Catholic Church: explains need for additional storage due to space limitations and fire inspection concerns. States building will be located behind existing garage, designed to match footprint and minimize visibility, while preserving flat area for church events.

PC briefly discusses placement and site conditions, noting proposal is non-controversial. Directs scheduling of a public hearing for April 5 and approves motion to proceed, with intent to consider action at that meeting.

Motion by Alexander to schedule this item for public hearing at the April regular meeting of the Planning Commission, seconded by Shanafelt. **Motion Passes**

c. Continued Discussion - Zoning Amendment #206 - Shoreline Regulations

PC continues review of draft shoreline regulations revised after the February 19 meeting. Chair explains informal consensus will be used where possible, with formal motions only if needed. PC reviews draft language section by section and agrees to multiple wording revisions for clarity, consistency, and cross-referencing, including use of "requirements" in place of "standards," clarification of shared waterfront ownership references, revisions to dock placement language, replacement of "ordinary high water mark" with "shoreline" in several sections, and clarification of storage and portable toilet setback language. PC also revises hoist language for readability and consistency. After completing revisions, PC discusses overall support for the ordinance. Amendment reflects extensive public input and long-term work, balances shoreline protection with reasonable use, and provides clearer regulation of docks, hoists, storage, and shared waterfront areas. Some concern remains regarding use of "shoreline" rather than "ordinary high water mark" and the number of hoists allowed, but Commissioners express support for moving the amendment forward.

Motion by Beard to recommend approval of Zoning Amendment #206 – Shoreline Regulations, as amended on March 5, 2026, to the Township Board, seconded by Hall.

Roll Call Vote: Alexander: yes; Beard: yes; Eckstein: yes; Hall: yes; Hornberger: yes; Shanafelt: yes

Motion Passes Unanimously

d. Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Discussion

- **Signage - New Language**

PC reviews McKenna draft signage language and discusses several remaining issues, including sandwich boards, flags, feather flags, seasonal sign permits, incidental agricultural signs, ground poles, and sign setbacks. General support is expressed for allowing sandwich boards if properly anchored, and staff is asked to clarify inconsistent treatment of sandwich boards and A-frame signs. Questions restrictions on flags attached to principal buildings and requests additional information on best practices and consistency with flag illumination requirements and dark sky standards. Discussion also supports reconsideration of limits on ground poles and feather flags across zoning districts. PC discusses agricultural sign provisions and expresses support for removing permit requirements for seasonal and incidental agricultural signs, while retaining permits for permanent signs. Concerns raised about setback language and visibility for seasonal signs near roadways.

Motion by Shanafelt to schedule signage ordinance for public hearing at the April 5 meeting, seconded by Eckstein. **Motion Passes**

- **Special Use Permits - Verbal Updates**

Update provided on special use permit (SUP) language, indicating only minor revisions remain and a full draft will be brought back for Commission review in April.

- **Short-Term Rentals - New Language**

Brief review of proposed short-term rental language revisions, noting changes only reorganize existing ordinance language for clarity as outlined in the McKenna memorandum. PC agrees the amendment is straightforward.

Motion by Alexander to schedule the short-term rental zoning code amendments for public hearing at the April 5 meeting, seconded by Hall. **Motion Passes**

- **Amendment 201 Acreage - Verbal Update**

Reported that additional information needed for Amendment 201 (acreage and ownership analysis) is delayed due to Board of Review workload within the assessing office and is expected to return in April.

10. Reports and Updates - Verbal

a. Agricultural Advisory Committee (Beard): Continued work on signage recommendations, pending acreage-related analysis, and upcoming review of a comprehensive agritourism memo, including definitions and permitted uses.

b. Township Board (Alexander): highlights correction of assessment notices due to incorrect calculation, upcoming Board of Review session for appeals, and stay of judgment in WOMP lawsuit.

c. Non-Motorized Plan (Shipman): none

11. Brief Public Comments (Please keep comments to 3 minutes or less)

David Spinweber, 966 Bayside Dr: identifies a drafting issue in the shoreline ordinance regarding timing language for removal of docks and hoists. (PC agrees clarification is warranted and will be forwarded to the Town Board.)

Sally Erickson, 2228 Kaukauna Court: expresses support for the shoreline ordinance, particularly dock alignment provisions, and suggests adding moorings to definitions and reconsidering use of “shoreline” versus “ordinary high-water mark” for clarity and enforceability. (PC notes further revisions are now within Town Board purview.)

12. Other Matters or Comments by Planning Commission Members

Beard acknowledges receipt of a memorandum regarding ex parte communications, tied to prior discussions on decision-making protocols. Discussion deferred to a future meeting to allow adequate time for review. Gives notice of upcoming presentation to the Town Board by Commission/Committee Chairs. References a self-authored township newsletter article on permissive zoning.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Alexander to adjourn, seconded by Hall. **Motion Passes**

Meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.