

# PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City MI 49686

[www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com)

## Township Board Regular Meeting

April 8, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

### Township Hall

### Minutes

**1. Call to Order by Sanders at 7:00 p.m.**

**2. Pledge**

**3. Roll Call**

Present: Alexander, Chown, Clark, Milliken, Sanders, Sanger, Wunsch

**4. Brief Citizen Comments (for agenda items only)**

**5. Approve Agenda**

**Motion by Alexander to approve agenda as amended** (add Government Updates as Agenda Item #6; Consent Agenda reorganized: Consent Agenda Item #10 (Kelley Park Boat Launch) was removed from Consent and moved to Business as Item #7; Items #8, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were grouped under the Consent Agenda as items C–H; Correction noted by Pat Sharpnack: Item #9 (Old Mission Church request) should reflect a request to erect a tent, not for what is currently listed), **seconded by Sanger.**

**Roll Call** – Yes: Alexander, Chown, Clark, Milliken, Sanders, Sanger, Wunsch

**Motion Passed**

**6. Government Updates:**

**Dave Murphy, 6943 East Shore Road: Parks Committee Update:**

• **Old Mission State Park & Shoreline Inventory**

Christine Murphy led a hike involving community members and officials. The park comprises 80 percent of township parkland and includes an estimated 2.7 miles of shoreline. A management plan for the park is now a key priority.

• **Bowers Harbor Park Improvements**

Parking upgrades—including gravel, grading, and bumpers—are planned for spring, with temporary access disruptions expected. Bathroom improvements remain a top goal, though funding is a challenge.

• **Increased Coordination & Survey Involvement**

The parks committee is staying aligned with the township board, tracking the Maner Costerisan report and upcoming community survey. A parks representative will contribute to the survey design.

**Chown:** Brian Peace from Elmer’s indicated that—weather permitting—driveway renovations at Bowers Harbor Park could begin next week. Efforts will be made to maintain some parking access throughout the work, though spots may be less convenient during construction. Work is expected to proceed efficiently.

**7. Conflict of Interest:** Isaiah Wunsch recused himself from the discussion on the Festival of Races under business due to his role as a vendor.

**8. Consent Agenda**

A. Invoices

B. Reports

1. Peninsula Community Library

2. Fire Department

3. Treasurer’s Office

C. Minutes from March 12, 2025, Township Special Board Meeting

D. Request from Old Mission United Methodist Church to Erect Tent for Annual Barbeque

Peninsula Township  
Township Board Special Meeting  
Recording Secretary, Shaina LaFond

- E. Second Violation Notice – Order to Restore – to Michael and Brooke Foguth from EGLE
- F. Brine Locations for Spring 2025 from Grand Traverse County Road Commission
- G. Robert’s Rules of Order “Cheat Sheet”
- H. Correspondence (Scott Phillips; Robert Heine; Scott M Rokos, GTC Register of Deeds; Bill Byrne; Kasey Cline, DNR, and Grant Parsons; Dan Watkins, GT County Road Commission)

**Chown:** clarified that, despite concern from a member of the public, it is acceptable for the township supervisor to make motions.

**Motion by Clark to approve the consent agenda as amended, seconded by Milliken.**

**Roll Call – Yes:** Alexander, Chown, Clark, Milliken, Sanders, Sanger, Wunsch **Motion Passed by Consensus**

**9. Business:**

**1. Public Hearing for Festival of Races**

**Motion by Clark to recuse Wunsch from stated part of discussion, seconded by Chown.**

**Motion Passed by Consensus**

**Garrett Boursaw, Logistics Director for Festival of Races:** shared plans for the upcoming half marathon scheduled for July 5. The race will begin at Old Mission Peninsula School and proceed south on Peninsula Drive, merging with the 15K course near the McKinley Rd. hill. Approximately 790 participants are expected in the township, with around 500 running the half marathon. All runners will be off township roads by 10:00 a.m., in keeping with previous years.

Warning signs for temporary closures on Peninsula Drive will be posted no later than June 27. As in past races, residents and caregivers will be encouraged to use nearby crossroads—such as Gray or Wilson roads—for access to Center Road, avoiding the busier McKinley intersection. The traffic plan, coordinated with the Grand Traverse County Sheriff’s Department, has proven effective over the years, and organizers are looking forward to returning.

**Sanders opened the public hearing.**

**Hearing no public comment, Sanders closed the public hearing.**

**Board Discussion:** Milliken asked for clarification on the total number of runners, noting a discrepancy between the 4,000 runners mentioned and the numbers listed. Boursaw explained that the 4,000 figure includes all Cherry Festival races that morning, but the 5K and 10K—accounting for the majority—take place within the city and do not impact Peninsula Township. Only around 400–500 runners will start from Old Mission Peninsula School, with additional participants joining via the 15K course. Boursaw confirmed that this is the same course and plan used in recent years, since moving the start to the school. In response to a question from **Chown**, Boursaw clarified that the school is not overburdened, as organizers bring in portable toilets and limit facility use. **Sanger** added that the race operates under a rolling closure model, with roads reopening as runners pass, minimizing disruptions and avoiding full road closures like those used for the Bayshore Marathon.

**Motion by Sanger to return Wunsch to the dais, seconded by Chown.** **Motion Passed by Consensus**

**2. Ordinance #23, Amendment #4, Purchase of Development Rights Ordinance**

**Chown:** the board is revisiting the ordinance amendment for a third and final time due to previous procedural errors. This version includes the complete and correct ordinance language and Exhibit A, both of which were available in the board packet and shared publicly in advance. The amendment pertains to the Purchase of Development Rights Ordinance No. 23 and updates the Agricultural Preservation Area Map to include additional parcels.

**Motion by Chown to adopt Ordinance #23, Amendment #4 to amend the APA area map included in Ordinance #23 to include the following additional properties identified more commonly via parcel numbers 11-226-002-00, 11-227-013-03, 11-226-023-00, 11-226-023-30, 11-236-913-00, and 11-225-006-00 and located north of Old Mission east of Center Road as within the APA; the amended APA map is to be included in Ordinance #23 as appendix A, seconded by Alexander.**

**Roll Call – Yes:** Alexander, Chown, Clark, Milliken, Sanders, Sanger; Abstain: Wunsch **Motion Passed**

**3. Resolution 2025-04-08 #1, to Approve Amended FY 2024-2025 Budget**

**Motion by Wunsch to table Resolution 2025-04-08 #1, to Approve Amended FY 2024-2025 Budget, to the next regularly scheduled township board meeting, seconded by Chown. Motion Passed by Consensus**

**4. Update from DNR on East Bay Boat Launch Renovation**

**Sanders:** the township remains in communication with the DNR regarding the East Bay Boat Launch renovation. While recent updates have been via email between the township planner and DNR staff, township records from 1975–’76 confirm the original launch plans were reviewed by the planning commission and included specific conditions such as limits on parking capacity, sanitary facility placement, and overflow control. These documents have been shared with the DNR, and the township expects the project to go through the appropriate special use permit and planning commission review. Additional concerns were raised about a township-owned emergency water access point potentially being blocked by the proposed new exit onto East Shore Drive.

**Chown:** inquired whether an initial response from the DNR has been received.

**Sanders:** the DNR acknowledged receipt but indicated it does not agree and still intends to proceed with the renovation as proposed. The township planner and staff are now consulting with legal counsel to determine an available recourse. This matter does not affect the separate Bowers Harbor Boat Launch project.

**Clark:** clarified that the township is not asserting the 1975 DNR agreement must be followed indefinitely but rather that any changes from the original plans must go through the appropriate review and approval processes.

**Sanger:** If the DNR proceeds under the original assumptions, the appropriate path would be a land use permit, which ensures compliance with zoning ordinances but does not involve public input. However, if there’s ambiguity in the zoning language—such as how it applies to parking lot setbacks—the zoning administrator can make an interpretation. That interpretation can be appealed to the zoning board of appeals for review, which does allow for public process.

**Further board discussion:** the board reviewed the permitting history of the East Bay Boat Launch, noting that while no formal special use permit (SUP) existed in the 1970s, the project did undergo planning commission review. The site currently operates under a land use permit (LUP), with historical records showing a 36-vehicle limit due to space constraints. Board members raised concerns that the DNR’s proposed expansion contradicts these limitations and bypasses the SUP process, which allows for broader community review. While minor upgrades could proceed under the LUP, major changes—like a new exit—would require additional permits. The DNR has declined further discussion, stating it intends to proceed. No permit applications have been submitted, but at minimum, the DNR will need a township LUP, a road commission permit, and a stormwater control permit. Legal counsel is reviewing next steps.

**5. Appropriation Request to Pay for Compactor Station Paving**

The board discussed an appropriation request to fund paving at the compactor station, which is currently in poor condition. Elmer’s provided a favorable bid as part of a bundled project that also includes parking lot work at Bowers Harbor Park and re-graveling at Bowers Harbor Natural Area. Board members agreed the price was a significant improvement over past estimates and would provide a permanent fix to a long-standing issue. The area has never been fully paved and presents safety concerns due to deep potholes. The board also supported reaching out to GFL for a possible 50/50 cost share, given their exclusive use of the site.

**Motion by Clark to approve an unbudgeted appropriation to the compactor station totaling \$34,000 (\$17,000 from cable, \$17,000 from Tower), seconded by Chown.**

**Roll Call – Yes:** Alexander, Chown, Clark, Milliken, Sanders, Sanger, Wunsch

**Motion Passed**

## **6. Discussion on Shifting Land Division Appeal Authority Back to the Zoning Board of Appeals**

The board discussed shifting land division appeal authority back to the zoning board of appeals (ZBA). While the ZBA chair is supportive, the ZBA did not meet this month to discuss the matter. Township Assessor Sally Murray was expected to attend but may be unavailable; if so, Supervisor Sanders will attend the next ZBA meeting to initiate the conversation. The board reached consensus in support of the change, which would require an amendment to the land division ordinance. No formal vote is needed at this time.

## **7. Joint Permit Application for Kelley Park Boat Launch Submitted to EGLE and the Army Corps of Engineers**

**Chown:** a joint permit application for the Kelley Park boat launch has been submitted to EGLE and the Army Corps of Engineers. The township is awaiting feedback and does not yet have a timeline for agency responses. Two recent developments mark positive progress: Consumers Energy has agreed to cover the full cost of removing and relocating underground electrical lines that conflict with the new driveway design, an unexpected but significant savings of approximately \$15,000, and, EGLE has determined that no mitigation will be required for the small, degraded wetland (less than 1/3 acre) impacted by the project, saving additional costs initially expected for mitigation credits. Despite earlier setbacks, coordination between township officials and project engineer Christy Summers (Beckett & Raeder) continues, and steady progress is being made. More updates are expected in the coming month.

**Further board discussion:** the board clarified that while earlier approvals were based on a concept plan, the current version is a more detailed engineered plan. The overall design remains consistent, but with refined measurements and technical specifics. Positive updates include a narrowing of the boat launch "runway" that reduces the amount of dredging and infrastructure needed—an adjustment suggested by the DNR. The Army Corps of Engineers, however, requires testing for possible soil contamination due to past underground gas tanks on the site. If contamination is found, it could jeopardize the project, though this is not anticipated. Former Supervisor Rob Manigold has offered nearby farmland as a dredging spoil site, resolving a key logistical issue. Dredging costs are expected to be about \$1,700 per event, with the parks budget covering the expense. The township plans to dredge twice annually. While the board had hoped the launch would be usable by this year's salmon season, delays related to permitting, infrastructure, and coordination have pushed the timeline back. The target is now to hold a public hearing by fall, with construction likely extending into 2026. Board members also discussed the site's existing septic system, a remnant from when the property was platted for development, and suggested it could potentially support a bathroom facility in the future—though costs for plumbing and water access remain a concern.

## **10. Citizen Comments**

**Dave Murphy, 6943 East Shore Road:** reported multiple recent calls and conversations with residents—particularly from East Shore—expressing ongoing concern about the East Bay Boat Launch project. While public meeting attendance remains low, the issue continues to be a priority for many in the community.

Concerns raised by the Scenic Byways Committee and historical records reflect that the boat launch was a contentious topic even in the 1970s, with longstanding objections to the location. Additional feedback from the non-motorized committee and external stakeholders echoed worries about the proposed egress onto East Shore Drive, citing safety and traffic concerns. While there is widespread support for improving the boat launch itself, there is shared concern about the broader impact of the current

design. Appreciation was expressed for the continued work and research being done on the project.

### **11. Board Comments**

**Sanger:** Interviews for the open zoning administrator position have taken place, with four strong candidates considered. A hiring decision is expected soon. Recent zoning board of appeals (ZBA) meetings have been canceled due to a lack of business. One scheduled April application regarding setback definitions on a corner lot was withdrawn by the applicant, and the fee was refunded. Another potential case involving a non-conforming structure on a floodplain property at 10602 Bluff Road (owned by Acme Pen) was not ready for April review but may be presented in May or June, pending submission readiness.

**Sanders:** discussed a request from a township appointee who was offered Detroit Tigers tickets by McKenna & Associates, a consultant previously hired by the township. Legal counsel confirmed the offer did not present a conflict, as the consultant is not currently lobbying for new work. Board members agreed that elected officials or bodies responsible for approving contracts (such as the township board) should avoid accepting gifts to prevent any appearance of impropriety. However, appointees on boards that do not make financial decisions (e.g., planning commission, ZBA) may accept such offers, particularly when extended broadly and not tied to active decision making. Chown cautioned that we do not want to get so into the weeds on this matter that staff can't accept the occasional donuts or cakes residents occasionally bring in, with broad consensus.

**Motion by Chown to allow the individual appointee to accept the Tigers tickets and to create a formal township policy regarding the acceptance of gifts and gratuities by elected and appointed officials, seconded by Alexander.** **Motion Passed**

**Sanders:** sent a letter on the township's short-term rental regulations to the board of realtors on March 26 that is being shared with all broker participants and agents. The letter was also sent directly to a few brokers currently in violation as well as to Traverse City Tourism for broader awareness.

**Further board discussion:** the township requested a memorandum of understanding (MOU) from the Grand Traverse County Road Commission to take control of three road ends: Mission, Swaney, and Wilson roads. Two are 66 feet wide, and one is 30 feet. The road commission is supportive and is working with its engineering department to verify turnaround access, which is already functioning in practice. The item will be on the road commission's April 24 board agenda, and township representation is encouraged. If approved, the township would gain authority to post signage and enforce usage rules at the road ends, improving code enforcement officer confidence and consistency.

Additionally, the township is in discussions with MDOT regarding a stretch of unattended shoreline at the north end of the peninsula that is state owned but unmanaged. MDOT is exploring the possibility of an MOU that allows the township to maintain and regulate the area under its parks ordinance, though a formal lease is unlikely.

### **12. Adjournment**

**Motion by Sanger to adjourn, seconded by Alexander.**

**Motion Passed**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.**