PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City MI
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Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
April 9, 2026, 7:00 p.m.
Township Hall
Minutes – Corrected 5/18/2026

1. **Call to Order by Beard at 7:00 p.m.**
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call – Present:** Alexander, Beard, Hall, Shanafelt, Shipman; **Absent/Excused:** Eckstein, ~~Hornberger~~; Township Planner of Record - Sara Kopriva;
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):**

Curt Peterson, 1356 Buchan Drive: states he is not contesting compliance with statutory notice requirements but expresses concern that although notice is posted 15 days in advance and written comments are due by April 1, materials for the proposed zoning amendments are not available until the Monday prior to the meeting. He requests improved timing and availability of information for future public hearings.

6. **Communications: Craig Haddox, Armen Shanafelt, Bob Eckstein**
7. **Conflict of Interest:** none declared
8. **Approve Meeting Minutes**
   a. **Approval of Meeting Minutes: March 5, 2026**

Motion by Shanafelt to approve minutes as written, seconded by Hall. **Motion Passes**

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

Kopriva reports that the applicant is unable to attend. Indicates the item remains on the agenda for notice purposes and will return for consideration at the May regular meeting.

   b. **Public Hearing - St. Joseph Catholic Church SUP #117 Amendment #2, Accessory Building**

Kopriva explains the request is a minor amendment to the previously reviewed site plan and notes clarification is needed regarding the size of the structure. Indicates prior conditions of approval remain in effect and provides additional conditions and background in the staff report.

Eric Mulvany, St. Joseph Catholic Church, 12675 Center Road: requests approval to construct a storage building and clarifies the intended size as 24 by 20 feet, while also requesting consideration for a larger structure up to approximately 760 square feet.

Kopriva advises that approval may be granted for the larger size, with the option to construct a smaller building, and outlines the next steps, including Township Board review and subsequent land use and building permits.

Beard opens the public hearing portion of the business item.

Hearing none, Beard closes the public hearing.

PC discusses the application and agrees to proceed with consideration of the larger building size as reflected in the site plan.

Motion by Alexander to waive the delay required under Planning Commission Bylaws Section E(8)(7) , which provides that decisions shall not be acted upon until the following meeting unless waived, in order to allow action on the application at the current meeting, seconded by Hall. **Motion Passes**

Motion by Beard to recommend approval of the amendment to Special Use Permit No. 117 for the property at 12675 Center Road, permitting construction of an accessory building. Shipman offers a friendly amendment to revise the square footage to 768 square feet to match the submitted documentation, and the motion is further amended to reflect "up to 768 square feet.", seconded by Shipman.
Roll Call Vote: Alexander: yes; Beard: yes; Hall: yes; Shanafelt: yes; Shipman: yes; Motion Passes Unanimously

c. Public Hearing - Zoning Amendment #208 Signage

Discussion considers Zoning Ordinance Amendment No. 208 regarding signage. Staff provides an overview of the draft language, noting it is derived from a prior draft and updated to align with the current ordinance structure. Revisions related to flag regulations, lighting, and clarification of sandwich board and portable sign standards are discussed, and staff indicates additional formatting and section updates will be required prior to adoption.
Beard opens the public hearing portion of the business item.
Pierre Ingold, 1151 Londolyn Terrace: questions the distinction between sandwich board and portable signs, suggesting the ordinance may be overly complex.
Staff responds that the distinction may relate to stability and placement concerns but notes uncertainty regarding the original intent.
Beard closes the public hearing.
PC discusses the proposed amendment in detail, including sandwich board sign placement and redundancy within the ordinance, potential conflicts between permitted and prohibited sign types, and clarity of definitions. Considers revisions to temporary and seasonal sign duration, questions the necessity of certain sign categories, and identifies the need to ensure content neutrality in light of applicable legal standards. Additional discussion includes sign size limitations, particularly within the agricultural district, lighting standards, and the treatment of flagpoles and residential signage. PC reaches consensus on several proposed edits and identifies outstanding policy questions, including appropriate sign size and duration standards, then directs staff to identify what neighboring townships standards are for size and duration, and incorporate the agreed-upon revisions into an updated draft and to forward the revised language to the AAC for further input. PC anticipates continued review and consideration at a future meeting.

d. Public Hearing - Zoning Amendment #209 Short Term Rentals (Record-Eagle notice incorrectly lists as Zoning Amendment #200)

Beard clarifies that the amendment does not propose a policy change but instead reorganizes existing language within the ordinance, affirming that short-term rentals are not permitted in any zoning district and that rentals of 30 days or more are allowed.
Beard opens the public hearing portion of the business item.
Curt Peterson, 1356 Buchan Drive: challenges the underlying assumption that short-term rentals are prohibited in all zoning districts, citing prior ordinance language and past draft materials. Urges the Commission to rely on data and analysis rather than assumptions and recommends forming a balanced committee to further study the issue and its economic and community impacts.
Pierre Ingold, 1151 Londolyn Terrace: speaks in support of the current interpretation that short-term rentals are not permitted in any district.
Beard closes the public hearing portion of the business item.

PC discusses the proposed amendment and identifies the need to clarify language throughout the ordinance to specify "30 consecutive days." Also reviews the definition of short-term rental and raises questions regarding its scope, including potential unintended application to non-commercial uses such as family occupancy. PC considers the balance between specificity and enforceability and discusses seeking input from legal counsel. Acknowledges outstanding questions regarding definitions and interpretation and directs staff to return with revised language and additional information, and thus anticipates further consideration of the amendment at a future meeting.

e. Zoning Amendment #210 Special Use Permits Process

Beard notes the draft provided is dated December 3 and does not reflect several more recent discussions, including correspondence received regarding the inclusion of "substantial improvement" as a standard for decision-making. PC discusses whether to retain the "substantial improvement" standard, with differing views expressed and concerns noted regarding its application, particularly for amendments. Consideration over whether existing criteria related to compatibility, character, and impacts provide sufficient guidance. PC reviews the draft and proposes revisions, including material detriment standards, clarifying language, and refining provisions related to natural resources and agricultural land. Discussion also addresses the framework for distinguishing between minor and major amendments, including planner review with PC concurrence, as well as potential thresholds for minor amendments. PC identifies the need to clarify procedural flow, including application completeness, sequencing of Commission and Town Board actions, and public hearing requirements. PC directs staff to incorporate revisions and return with an updated draft for further review.

10. Reports and Updates - Verbal

- **a. Agricultural Advisory Committee (Beard):** did not meet due to weather and is scheduled to meet on April 21. Kopriva reported that the Township Board recently clarified that the Agricultural Advisory Committee operates as a subcommittee of the Planning Commission, with input provided at the PC's request. Discussion on status of ongoing committee work, including definitions and related topics not yet formally forwarded, and seeks clarification on their relationship to prior ordinance amendments.
- **b. Township Board (Alexander):** Board has directed that further discussion on amendments related to the 201 ordinance be deferred pending resolution of ongoing litigation. PC also discusses upcoming Township meeting dates and scheduling considerations.
- **c. Non-Motorized Plan (Shipman):** update on non-motorized community workshop scheduled for April 28, including outreach efforts, survey distribution, and event planning.

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

Pierre Ingold, 1151 Londolyn Terrace: comments on the proposed expedited special use permit amendment process, cautioning that even minor changes may have site-specific impacts and recommending careful review. Also comments regarding the role and structure of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the need for clarity in its relationship to the Planning Commission and Township Board.

12. Other Matters or Comments by Planning Commission Members

PC discusses the need to review and update Planning Commission bylaws and anticipates forming a subcommittee for that purpose.

13. Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.