PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

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ZONING REWRITE AD-HOC COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2026
1:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order** by Beard
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call**

Present: Jed Hemming, Kevin Beard, Julie Alexander, Donna Hornberger
Also present: Planner Sara Kopriva, Ethan Senti and Chris Khorey with McKenna, all via Zoom.

4. **Approve Agenda**

Motion by Alexander to approve as written with a second by Hemming. **Motion Passes**

5. **Brief Citizen Comments:** None
6. **Communications:** None
7. **Conflict of Interest:** None
8. **Approve meeting minutes:**
    a. **March 3, 2026 Zoning Rewrite Ad-Hoc Committee Regular Meeting**

Motion to approve minutes as submitted by Alexander with a second by Hemming. **Motion Passes**

9. **Business:**
    a. **Airport Overlay Update- Section 3.14 of Draft**

Staff explains that the airport has been updating its own zoning ordinance and operational procedures. After reviewing the proposed changes, staff determines that no changes affect the township's airspace or the airport overlay area within the township. Staff confirms that the township's current ordinance language remains compliant with required regulations and that no substantive regulatory changes are necessary.
Alexander recommends adding an Airport Overlay Zone map to improve clarity for property owners and applicants. Suggests incorporating and reviewing definitions from the current ordinance, restoring an intent statement, and considering whether existing land use guidance zones should be included in the updated language. Supports retaining the township's existing 35-foot height limit.
Staff explains that the airport overlay area is currently shown on the township's interactive zoning map, though not on the original zoning maps. Committee members discuss adding a simple airport overlay map to the ordinance document to better illustrate how the 10-mile airport buffer impacts Peninsula Township. Staff agrees to obtain or create a map, potentially using one already available through the airport committee.
The committee discusses whether airport overlay regulations should continue to be incorporated directly into the township ordinance or instead referenced externally to avoid conflicts if FAA or state regulations change in the future. Members note the overlay already exists in the current ordinance and generally support retaining it, while considering a cleaner reference-based approach. Staff explains the primary impact on Peninsula Township relates to height restrictions within the 10-mile airport buffer, while separate three-mile restrictions address

interference with airport operations and navigation. Members reiterate the importance of including a visual map in the ordinance to show affected areas within the township.

b. Lighting Regulations- Section 8.07 of Draft

The committee begins reviewing lighting regulations and discusses whether updates are needed to address newer lighting technology, including LEDs. Staff explains that most of the proposed language is carried over from the current ordinance and is not considered outdated, but notes concerns about a lack of specificity in certain standards. Staff also notes that current regulations apply similarly across most property types and do not clearly distinguish between residential and commercial uses.

Committee members express concern that the proposed lighting standards may be overly technical and difficult for the average property owner to understand, particularly references to foot-candle measurements and detailed lighting diagrams. Members note that the previous ordinance language requiring full shielding for outdoor lighting was simpler and easier to follow. Staff suggests separating residential and commercial lighting standards, with more detailed technical requirements applying primarily to commercial or site-plan-reviewed projects, while residential enforcement would remain complaint-based and focused on nuisance lighting and glare.

The committee discusses exemptions for decorative, porch, and walkway lighting within the ordinance. Members express concern that “decorative lighting” is too vague and support removing that terminology while clarifying definitions for porch, façade, and walkway lighting. Discussion focuses on balancing safety and accessibility needs with dark-sky protections, including whether all residential lighting should be required to be shielded and downward facing. Members also note ongoing enforcement challenges caused by unclear definitions and inconsistent exemptions in the current ordinance.

Committee members discuss strengthening dark-sky protections by requiring all lighting to be shielded and downward facing, including porch lighting, rather than allowing broad exemptions. Members suggest requiring compliant fixtures when lights are replaced and discuss the need for clearer definitions and standards related to brightness, lumens, porch and façade lighting, dock lighting, and driveway entrance lights. Concerns are also raised about excessively bright LED lighting and glare impacting neighboring properties and roadway visibility.

Staff explains that many of the lighting regulation changes originated during the 2019 ordinance rewrite process and were carried forward into the current draft. Staff also clarifies that foot-candle measurements are intended to measure the amount of light experienced on neighboring properties rather than the brightness of the fixture itself. Discussion focuses on the practical challenges of enforcing lighting regulations on residential properties, since most lighting installations do not require permits and are typically addressed only through complaints. Staff recommends tailoring residential lighting standards toward nuisance and glare prevention while maintaining more detailed technical requirements for commercial and site-plan-reviewed projects.

The committee discusses whether lighting review standards currently contained in the ordinance for special use permits and platted subdivisions were unintentionally omitted from the draft ordinance. Staff suggests the language may have been relocated to the site plan review section and agrees it should at minimum be cross-referenced within the lighting ordinance. Staff also notes that some communities rely on HOA or master deed enforcement for detailed residential lighting standards, as the township may lack capacity to enforce those requirements on individual residential and agricultural properties.

The committee discusses removing vague lighting language related to kerosene lanterns and gas lamps, agreeing the provision is outdated and unnecessary. Members also support removing the proposed 90-day limit on holiday lighting while still prohibiting nuisance lighting such as strobe or search lights.

Discussion continues regarding separate lighting standards for residential and commercial properties. Staff recommends distinguishing between projects requiring site plan review and those that do not, allowing more detailed lighting requirements for commercial or larger developments while maintaining simpler, complaint-based standards for residential properties. Members generally support that approach and note it aligns with past township review practices.

The committee discusses whether additional ordinance language is needed to address string lighting used on decks, patios, docks, and similar areas due to potential impacts on dark-sky visibility. Members also discuss whether all lighting fixtures should eventually be required to comply with dark-sky standards through either a long-term compliance deadline or replacement-based compliance as fixtures are updated. Staff raises concerns about the administrative burden and enforceability of a mandatory compliance deadline, particularly since residential lighting installations do not require permits and are generally enforced only through complaints. Members suggest seeking legal guidance before pursuing broader mandatory compliance requirements.

c. Community Facilities District- Discussion

The committee discusses the potential creation of a Community Facilities District to address public properties such as parks, boat launches, cemeteries, schools, and township-owned buildings that currently exist as nonconforming uses under existing zoning. Members note that facilities such as the DNR's East Bay boat launch face additional review requirements because of underlying residential zoning despite longstanding public use. Concerns are raised about creating a separate zoning district that could limit future flexibility if public properties are ever sold or repurposed. Alternative approaches discussed include modifying nonconforming use provisions or creating policy language to better accommodate improvements to existing public facilities while avoiding broader zoning conflicts.

d. Draft Zoning Ordinance- General Discussion

The committee discusses several ordinance topics for future consideration, including grading regulations, clear-cutting/tree removal standards, and steep slopes regulations. Members note these provisions could help address ongoing land use and neighboring property concerns that are not currently covered by township ordinance language. Staff explains that model ordinances already exist for some of these topics, but cautions that adding additional ordinance sections could impact the project timeline.

Discussion also focuses on potential approaches to tree removal regulation, with members favoring a "clear-cutting ordinance" concept aimed at larger-scale tree removal rather than regulation of individual trees on residential properties. Members also discuss the need to review ordinance language for vagueness in light of recent court decisions involving township zoning regulations.

The committee discusses "new sections" identified within the draft ordinance and requests clarification distinguishing provisions carried over from the 2019 rewrite effort from language added more recently during the current review process. Staff agrees to provide a clearer annotated list identifying the origin of those sections.

The committee also reviews proposed backyard chicken ordinance language and confirms the current draft reflects recommendations recently discussed by the Planning Commission, including a limit of six chickens and restrictions on other fowl. Members note the language appears ready to advance to the Township Board but may have stalled during prior staff and committee transitions. Staff agrees to research the status of the proposal and move it forward in the review process.

The committee discusses proposed ADU language and confirms it is newly drafted language that has not yet advanced through the full Planning Commission approval process. Members revisit prior discussions regarding how to handle the overall zoning ordinance rewrite process and reaffirm support for addressing ordinance updates incrementally rather than adopting the full rewrite as a single document. Members note that the 2019 attempt to adopt the ordinance rewrite in its entirety was unsuccessful and agree that moving topics such as ADUs, chickens, signs, and other major ordinance sections individually through the public hearing and approval process will be more manageable and effective. The committee also discusses eventually compiling all approved sections into a final consolidated ordinance package once the rewrite process is complete.

10. Citizen Comments: none

11. Committee Comments:

The committee discusses the draft ordinance maps and visuals, expressing support for the use of tables, charts, and color-coded maps while also noting that some maps are difficult to interpret due to the amount of overlapping information displayed. Members suggest adding simplified district-specific maps alongside ordinance tables to more clearly identify the location and extent of individual zoning districts and protected areas. Staff agrees the approach could improve readability and public understanding, while noting that future rezoning actions would require corresponding map updates.

Adjournment

Motion by Alexander to adjourn, with a second by Hemming. **Motion Passes**

Meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.