

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

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AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2026

2:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order** by Kroupa at 2:02 p.m.
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call**

Present: Kroupa, Hemming, Heller, Baldyga, Johnson, Gomez, Edmonson, Coggon, Beard

Also Present: Maura Sanders, Township Supervisor

Absent: Bramer

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

Garry Manor, 17368 Peninsula Dr: Speaker thanks committee members for volunteering their time to support the local farming community through research and recommendations to the Planning Commission and Township Board. Expresses concern that recent Township leadership does not appear to promote sustainable farming and states that past ordinance changes restrict farming and farm processing activities that were previously permitted by right. Notes concern that Township leadership acts more as regulators than representatives and references frustration among farmers and residents regarding Township decision-making. Expresses concern that recommendations related to agricultural issues are not acted upon or are dismissed. States that questions are previously distributed to the committee and acknowledges they cannot be addressed at this meeting. Requests time at a future meeting to ask questions and discuss concerns regarding support for the farming community. Asks to be notified of objections to submitted questions and indicates additional questions may be provided in advance of a future meeting. (Handout can be found on last two pages of these minutes)

5. **Approve Agenda**

Motion by Heller to approve as written with a second by Baldyga.

Motion Passes

6. **Conflict of Interest:** None

7. **Consent Agenda**

A. **Approve meeting minutes:**

- **Agricultural Advisory Committee Regular Meeting February 17, 2026.**

B. **Correspondence**

Motion by Gomez to approve consent agenda with second by Baldyga.

Motion Passes

8. **Business:**

A. **Planning Commission Updates**

- **Sign Ordinance**

Beard reports continued PC review of the draft sign ordinance and notes that revisions remain necessary as additional concerns are identified. Explains concern that the current draft could allow excessive signage beyond intended limits and states that language is being developed to establish a maximum cap on total sign area and further restrict permitted sign types. Notes discussion of exempting incidental signs from permit requirements and clarifying that defined sign types are not necessarily permitted, with direction to ordinance charts for

allowable signs and permit requirements. States that progress continues toward a recommendation to the Township Board, though urgency has lessened following suspension of sign ordinance enforcement through the end of the year.

Beard confirms removal of an additional setback requirement from the right-of-way in the draft sign ordinance and invites feedback or clarification requests. Heller requests opportunity for committee review of near-final draft language before Township Board consideration to better understand the final product and provide informed comments and clarifies that review is intended to avoid delaying the process. Beard states that an updated draft is expected to be available before the June 4 PC meeting and will be shared with the committee for comment prior to Township Board consideration.

Hemming asks whether the draft sign ordinance will proceed given comments in a Township attorney letter recommending caution regarding merchandise and sign regulations. Sanders states expectation that the sign ordinance will continue through the PC process, with introduction anticipated at the first June meeting and a public hearing scheduled for a subsequent meeting and clarifies that discussion pertains only to signage regulations and not alcohol-related matters.

B. Town Board Update

- **Clarification on topics AAC is allowed to consider**

Sanders provides clarification regarding Township Board direction limiting AAC consideration to signage-related topics and excluding recommendations involving alcohol, including MLCC-related processing or sales. Discussion occurs regarding previously submitted recommendations for small processor and farm market uses and whether alcohol-related language can be removed so non-alcohol-related provisions may continue moving forward. Discussion continues regarding whether the PC should revise recommendations to remove alcohol-related references and proceed with review rather than return materials to the AAC and delay the process. Discussion continues regarding the value of advancing work on non-alcohol-related topics despite uncertainty surrounding future legal decisions. Kroupa requests clarification and formalization of the process for selecting and advancing AAC discussion topics.

It is clarified that AAC recommendations are intended to move from the committee to the PC for review and direction. Members question whether topics should be broadly submitted to the PC before significant committee work occurs or developed in greater detail prior to review.

Sanders explains that the PC reviews recommendations for consistency with the Township master plan and may provide direction on whether topics warrant further development. Recommends presenting broad concepts before extensive drafting or research occurs.

Edmondson questions direction to avoid alcohol-related topics and expresses concern regarding delays to landowner and business opportunities. Sanders explains that alcohol-related matters are deferred to avoid spending Township time and resources on recommendations that may be affected by pending litigation. Discussion occurs regarding impacts of ongoing litigation and Township decision-making on the community and local investment. Baldyga brings up uncertainty surrounding MLCC-related regulations and support for pausing alcohol-related ordinance work until pending legal matters are resolved. Notes that substantial opportunity remains to advance non-alcohol-related agricultural, small business, and value-added farming topics. Encourages focusing committee efforts on areas where progress can still be made.

C. Final standing determination on submitted work from AAC

- **201 acreage reduction recommendation**

It is clarified that acreage reduction proposals related to 201 and parcel size reductions are not under consideration at this time and remain tabled.

- **Agritourism definition recommendation**
- **Small processor (5 acres to < 40 acres) ordinance recommendation**

D. Continued discussion on farm stay language

Discussion continues regarding the appropriate level of detail to include in a farm stay proposal and whether recommendations should be limited to a broad concept preview or include more detailed ordinance language.

Members consider differences between farm stays and existing bed and breakfast provisions, including parcel-based scalability, guest room limits, food service, special events, and the relationship of farm stays to active agricultural operations. Coggon notes concern that overly permissive language could blur distinctions between farm stays, campgrounds, or commercial lodging and complicate future ordinance review.

Kroupa expresses support for providing the PC with a concise overview of the farm stay concept and general areas for consideration, while reserving more detailed language and ordinance refinement for future committee work if PC support is indicated.

Discussion continues regarding forwarding the farm stay proposal to the PC as a preliminary concept rather than detailed ordinance language.

Members note that farm stay concepts may relate to existing bed and breakfast regulations and could require additional research and refinement before ordinance development. Members agree that special events and related activities should be considered separately from initial farm stay discussions.

Motion is made to forward the farm stay section (page nine, items A–E) to the PC as a general outline of concepts the AAC wishes to explore regarding farm stays but discussion continues regarding whether supporting examples, guidance documents, and comparable township language should accompany the farm stay preview to provide context for PC review. Baldyga clarifies that the immediate goal is to seek PC feedback on whether farm stays warrant further consideration, with additional research, ordinance refinement, and scalable standards to follow if support is indicated. Notes the importance of developing clear limitations to distinguish agricultural uses from commercial activities and avoid unintended outcomes. Motion is modified.

Motion by Hemming to forward the farm stay section (page nine, items A–E) to the Planning Commission as a general outline of concepts the AAC wishes to explore regarding farm stays, accompanied by supporting examples, local references, and background information to assist PC review and provide context for future discussion with a second by Baldyga.
Motion Passes

9. Citizen Comments: None

10. Board Comments

Coggon: Shares takeaways from an agritourism event, noting value in hearing different perspectives and challenges faced by agricultural operations in other communities. Discusses a breakout session in which a farm stay in Suttons Bay Township was highlighted and identifies Steve Patmore and Phil Hallstedt as potential resources regarding farm stay ordinances and implementation. Notes that ordinance development in other communities takes significant time and may have limited use to date. Highlights diversification of farm revenue streams as important to maintaining viable agricultural operations and farmland. Notes Ryan Coffey-Hoag as a valuable resource regarding GAAMPs and agritourism-related practices.

Heller: Shares takeaways from agritourism conference sessions, including “The Path to Scaled Retail Growth in Agritourism,” featuring representatives from Lakeview Hills, Pond Hill, Cellar 1914, and Harwood Gold. Notes attendance at a breakout session on agritourism marketing strategies and clarifies that discussion focused primarily on online marketing, social media, and digital outreach rather than direct product sales strategies. Highlights a presentation on right-to-farm issues led by Ryan Coffey-Hoag, noting the session is informative and well attended, with limited opportunity for individual discussion due to time constraints and participant interest. Encourages public involvement in Township meetings and committees and emphasizes the importance of providing input to support informed decision-making by Township representatives.

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Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting
Jenna Beattie, Recording Secretary

Sanders: Expresses support for continued work on agritourism definition, noting discussion at the agritourism summit that the state does not plan to establish a statewide definition and emphasizes the importance of Township-level action. Notes attendance at the summit by AAC members, PC members, TB members, winery owners, and farmers from Peninsula Township, highlighting value in shared participation and discussion. States that summit participation and support from Michigan State University Extension may assist the PC as it continues review of agritourism-related topics.

Adjournment

Motion by Gomez to adjourn, seconded by Coggon.

Motion Passes

Meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.