

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

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Planning Commission Special Meeting July 10, 2025, 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, Dloski, Hall, Hornberger, Shanafelt; Township Planner: Elise Loud
4. Approve Agenda

Motion by Hornberger to approve the agenda as amended to allow to public comment on agenda items and non-agenda items, seconded by Shipman. Motion Passes

5. Brief Citizen Comments:

Jay Milliken, 13795 Seven Hills Road: thanks the Planning Commission and provides an update on the revisitation of their Special Use Permit (SUP). Reports having productive meetings since the last Township Board meeting with Dave Sanger, Julie Alexander, Becky Chown, the County Health Department, and the Road Commission, which help clarify various issues. Praises new township planner Elise for her competence, transparency, and strong communication, and express appreciation for the collaborative working relationship. Notes that they are available to answer questions and looks forward to resolving remaining items and express confidence that Elise will present strong recommendations on how to proceed with the SUP.

Sylvia Rombis, 10895 Peninsula Drive: speaks in opposition to the proposed increase in the number of boats and hoists allowed per shoreline frontage. Argues that tripling the current allowance would be a detriment to the lakeshore, resulting in more noise, pollution, and shoreline debris. Displays trash collected weekly from the beach and states that increased boat traffic will not lead to a cleaner or quieter lakefront. Urges the township to maintain the existing “one boat per 50 feet” rule and to improve enforcement. Cites a neighboring association with 330 feet of frontage, which should allow six boats under the current rule but currently has 13. Under the proposed change, that number could rise to 18, which she says would resemble a marina rather than a residential shoreline. Claims the proposed change would primarily benefit the 13 out of 33 shoreline associations that are currently non-compliant. References a 2020 survey in which 60% of respondents support the one-per-50 rule and its enforcement. Urges the township to uphold the current ordinance.

Jeff Spencer, 6450 Peregrine Court: Responds to the previous comment opposing increased boat and hoist allowances. Expresses sympathy regarding shoreline trash but emphasizes that litter is not the intent of those using the water. Notes that he personally helps care for the shoreline and does not condone negligent behavior. Describes driving down East Shore Road on a recent Tuesday evening and observing only one boat on the water despite ideal weather conditions. He says this suggests the bays are underutilized rather than overcrowded. He also questions the assumption that litter comes from hoist or dock users, noting that people can access the bays via public launches and that non-residents may also contribute to shoreline debris. Argues that shoreline owners care about and actively use their waterfronts and should not be solely blamed for pollution.

Lauri Gartner, 6262 East Shore Road: expresses strong opposition to increasing allowable boat hoists, citing long-standing issues with the Hidden Ridge subdivision. She explains that residents opposed the original 2001 development due to environmental concerns but were assured the Special Use Permit (SUP) would limit density and beach usage. After Hidden Ridge expanded its frontage, the number of boat hoists grew beyond what was permitted. Describes years of unsuccessful enforcement efforts, including repeated complaints to the township and citations issued without lasting impact. She recounts a direct conversation with a Hidden Ridge representative who refuses to remove hoists and warns that challenging them legally would fail due to their financial resources. She concludes by urging the township not to increase hoist limits, citing the failure to enforce existing rules.

Kip Nickel, 1014 Quaker Valley Drive: supports the Shoreline Regulation Study Group's recommendation to allow three boats per 50 feet of frontage, calling it a well-reasoned compromise. Notes the prior regulation was outdated and largely unenforced. Explains the study group focused on safety, responsible shoreline management, and dispute resolution, and emphasizes that the proposed change would not increase the number of boats at most properties. Criticizes claims of a dramatic increase as inaccurate and urges respect for the study group's 18 months of work. Addressing prior comments about shoreline trash, he says his nearby beach does not have the same issue, and his neighbors are responsible about cleanup and waste disposal.

Tom Barnhart, 10895 Peninsula Drive: opposes increasing the boat hoist limit from one to three per 50 feet, arguing it contradicts the stated goals of the township's shoreline regulations, including protecting water quality, ecological health, and scenic views. Describes the issue as narrow but loud, noting that the majority of shoreline associations are already compliant and that changing the rule to accommodate 13 non-compliant groups is excessive. Questions the effectiveness of the proposed change, pointing out that some associations—like Hidden Ridge—already exceed current limits and dispute township jurisdiction beyond the shoreline. Warns that such groups may not comply even if the rules are changed. Concludes by emphasizing that Peninsula Township is a bay community with diverse recreational uses beyond boating and urges the committee to maintain existing regulations and focus on enforcement.

George Weber, 10846 Peninsula Drive: expresses support for boat hoists and challenges claims made by previous speakers about shoreline pollution. He states he has lived next to the referenced property for nearly 50 years, participates in annual beach cleanups, and does not observe the level of debris described. Emphasizes that hoists in his neighborhood are set over 300 feet from the beach and do not interfere with public access or enjoyment. Argues that, given population growth on the peninsula, a 50-year-old ordinance should be updated to remain relevant. Criticizes what he sees as hypocrisy from opponents, pointing to a large, environmentally disruptive home built on the water's edge with a bright, glassed-in light fixture. Questions the sincerity of ecological concerns raised by those objecting to the hoist increase.

Louis Santucci, 12602 Center Road: expresses appreciation for the Planning Commission's flexibility in allowing public comment. Recounts a township board meeting where he says he was nearly removed for requesting to speak on a related agenda item. Shares his view that Peninsula Township is a water community and says he enjoys seeing boats and docks in use, noting surprise that there aren't more boats on the water. Voices general support for the Seven Hills development and encourages a resolution that allows the project to move forward. Calls for a more collaborative and constructive tone in township affairs, urging the community and officials to shift toward asking, "How can we help?"—whether the concern is from a homeowner or a business.

Sally Erickson, 2228 Kaukauna Court: commends the Shoreline Study Group for its work but expresses concern about the proposed increase from one to three boats per 50 feet. Notes that, under the new rule, her property could accommodate nine boats and questions whether non-compliant associations like Hidden Ridge would follow the new regulations, given their past disregard for both township and Army Corps permits. Raises concerns about visual impact, describing how the spacing of boats and piers could create a boardwalk-like effect along the shoreline. While emphasizing that she is a boater herself, she stresses the importance of balance and mutual respect—highlighted, she says, by adhering to established rules.

Jeff Spencer, 6450 Peregrine Court: responds to prior comments about his development. He asserts that Hidden Ridge is not intentionally violating regulations and states that the association is compliant with its Army Corps of Engineers permit, as recently confirmed by the Corps. He questions the township’s authority to regulate below the ordinary high-water mark and notes that the ordinance does not address moorings, raising concerns about enforcement clarity. Explains that homeowners in the development added boats based on a 2016 township memo—issued in consultation with legal counsel—that stated the township lacked jurisdiction over bottom lands. Emphasizes that this reliance persisted until enforcement actions resumed under a new administration five years later. Attributes confusion to changes in township leadership and staff and argues that current Hidden Ridge residents are not expanding hoist use but maintaining what was previously allowed.

Notes widespread ordinance violations elsewhere on the shoreline and warns that if township rules remain unclear or overly restrictive, residents may turn to moorings, leading to cluttered waterfronts.

Frank Bennett, 9662 Center Road: shares that his family has lived on East Bay for decades and expresses concern about the impact of nearby dock systems. Explains that since a 1973 subdivision of neighboring land, he now faces a dock setup with 12 boats, jet skis, and sun decks, which blocks his view and limits his use of the water—despite paying taxes for waterfront access. Urges the township to implement stricter controls on dock placement to prevent encroachment on neighboring views and property lines. Suggests counting large decking areas as part of a hoist system, noting that some docks extend 20–30 feet and are used like patios.

Lauri Gartner, 6262 East Shore Road: expresses frustration with the lack of enforcement of Special Use Permits (SUPs), specifically regarding the Hidden Ridge development. She says neighbors were promised protections through the SUP, but over time, those conditions have been violated. Emphasizes that the resulting dock system now obstructs their view and feels the township has failed to uphold its commitments.

6. Conflict of Interest: none

7. Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion by Hornberger to approve Minutes of the Town Board, Planning Commission, and Park Joint Special Meeting with Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society, Peter Dougherty Society, and Mission Point Lighthouse Keepers Association, on May 27, 2025, seconded by Alexander. Motion Passes

Motion by Dloski to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting, June 3, 2025 minutes with a correction by Shipman of the reference to a joint meeting with the "Historic District Commission". Should instead read "Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society", seconded by Hornberger. Motion Passes

8. Planner Report

Loud: announces the relaunch of the zoning ordinance rewrite and notes upcoming training for the online permitting system, set to launch this fall. An update on zoning map digitization is pending. The commission will discuss expiring member terms, review the Seven Hills SUP in response to Township Board concerns, consider a draft zoning rewrite timeline, and provide feedback on revised shoreline zoning policies.

9. Communications

- a. Memorandum from Chris Patterson (Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes)
- b. Letter from George Weber regarding shoreline
- c. Email from Scott Duensing regarding shoreline
- d. Letter from Shelly Houchins regarding Seven Hills Development
- e.

10. Business

a. Planning Commission Terms Expiring August 31, 2025

Discussion of upcoming expiration of terms for Commissioners Shanafelt and Shipman. Both express willingness to continue serving and wish to be reappointed. The planner is asked to forward this to the Township Board for formal action. The group is also reminded that officer elections (chair, vice chair, secretary) will take place at the September meeting, as outlined in the bylaws.

b. **Seven Hills Special Use Permit Discussion**

Loud leads an initial discussion on potential SUP violations at Seven Hills, including parking, noise, and occupancy concerns. She emphasizes the need to distinguish between allegations and confirmed violations and proposes preparing a detailed memo to support the Planning Commission's review. Commissioners agree their role is advisory, not enforcement-based, and request further information before taking action. Dloski and Shipman volunteer to assist with fact-finding. The matter is tabled until the August meeting.

Motion by Dloski to table action related to Business Item 10b until the August meeting, seconded by Hall.

Motion Passes

Motion by Beard to appoint Commissioners Dloski and Shipman to a subcommittee whose function is to work with Planner Loud and Seven Hills to bring information back to Planning Commission, seconded by Alexander.

Motion Passes

Jay Milliken, 13795 Seven Hills Road: offers to promptly share documentation previously provided to township staff and the board, expressing surprise that the Planning Commission had not yet received it. He acknowledges inaccuracies discussed at the recent board meeting and clarifies that past guidance on occupancy limits was incorrect, as the county does not set such limits. Milliken admits frustration with the distinction between alleged complaints and violations and expresses willingness to work collaboratively with Elise, Shipman, and Dloski to move the process forward.

Discussion centers on clarifying occupancy limits at Seven Hills, with applicant stating past guidance was inaccurate and based on septic, not parking. Loud and PC emphasize focusing on verified facts and future solutions. Milliken reports progress on noise, occupancy, and parking issues and expresses commitment to amending the SUP to resolve gray areas and ensure compliance moving forward.

c. **Zoning Rewrite Project Plan Discussion**

Discussion: a phased, topic-by-topic zoning ordinance rewrite using 2019 McKenna draft as a starting point. Loud outlines a flexible timeline prioritizing clear policy areas first, with more complex topics to follow. Commissioners support the approach and emphasize the need for context and comparisons. Urgent items like the noise ordinance may proceed ahead of the full rewrite. Beard, Hornberger and Alexander serve on the working group, and public engagement will be integrated throughout.

No action taken.

d. **Shoreline Zoning Amendment Discussion**

Discussion: proposed updates to shoreline zoning, including optional shared docks, clarified dock placement to avoid side yard encroachment, lighting requirements, and a unified definition for hoists. The group agrees to drop a proposed annual registration for shared waterfronts, citing enforcement concerns. Discussion centers on whether to raise the hoist limit to 3 per 50 feet, with mixed views and calls for stronger justification. PC emphasizes balancing boating access with neighbor impacts and public concerns about shoreline crowding and safety. Group supports moving forward with draft ordinance language, referencing state and federal regulations without assigning township enforcement responsibility. Public hearing in the fall is proposed, with a possible second hearing in spring for broader input.

11. Reports and Updates - Verbal

a. **Agricultural Advisory Committee**

Beard: Committee continuing discussions on definitions related to agritourism. Submitted a recommendation to amend zoning regulations to allow processing operations on all parcels 40 acres or larger, regardless of current zoning distinctions. The committee believes this change would benefit smaller property owners. The Planning Commission will review the recommendation alongside staff.

b. **Survey Ad Hoc/Township Board**

Alexander: Survey Committee has been meeting weekly, apart from a holiday break. Received a draft survey from EPIC incorporating prior survey feedback, public-submitted questions, and committee revisions. Group is now reviewing, editing, and refining the questions—mainly adjusting language and semantics. Township Board,

recently discussed but chose not to take action on purchasing a new property for the fire station. Township may consider using its own land. A closed session will be held Monday to discuss a recent court ruling, with public comment allowed before and after.

12. Public Comment

Nancy Heller: urges the Planning Commission to consider that increasing the number of boat hoists will also increase the need for boat storage, which hasn't been fully discussed. Emphasizes support for private property rights, noting that waterfront owners pay a premium for their property and should be allowed to use it accordingly—adding that aesthetic objections from others should not override those rights.

Curt Peterson, 1358 Buchan: confirms that the zoning rewrite committee includes Donna, Elise, Julie, and Kevin. Notes that similar past subcommittee meetings were open and well-attended.

Loud clarified that the subcommittee meetings are not currently planned to be open to the public. However, all deliberations and decisions will take place at full Planning Commission meetings, which are always public.

Kip Nickel, 1015 Quaker Valley Drive: attended most shoreline study group meetings, emphasizes that the proposed limit of three hoists was not arbitrary. References Dave Sanger's survey showing that three hoists is already the average not an increase. The intent is to create clear, enforceable rules that reflect current conditions and bring properties into compliance, not to triple the number of boats. Encourages communicating this more clearly to the public.

Dave Murphy, 6943 East Shore: clarified that Dave Sanger's hoist count was informal, not a formal survey. He stressed that while the Planning Commission isn't an enforcement body, enforcement must be central to ordinance changes—especially in a growing, high-stakes community. Urges that any recommendations made must be enforceable.

Sylvia Rombis, 10895 Peninsula Drive: expresses concern about limited public awareness of proposed dock/hoist changes, noting only 2 of 11 lakefront neighbors she surveyed were informed. Opposes differing rules for shared vs. single properties and emphasized that most shoreline owners already have ample frontage for multiple hoists. Urges PC to consider impacts on quality of life and preserve the character of the shoreline.

Jeff Spencer, 6450 Peregrine Court: supports the shoreline work overall, especially shared dock infrastructure to reduce visual and physical impact. Favors flexibility over strict depth requirements due to water level changes. Acknowledges some residents dislike how docks look but questions whether views should be regulated under the township's public safety and welfare rationale. Raises enforcement concerns, noting that property lines do not extend into the Great Lakes, making dock setback enforcement complex and potentially contentious. Reminds the commission that bottomlands below the ordinary high-water mark are state-controlled and for public use—not private.

George Weber, 10846 Peninsula Drive: notes that about 2,200 residences—roughly 60% of Peninsula Township—currently have direct or shared water access. Suggest this marks a significant increase from 50 years ago and highlights the need for updated policies to reflect that change.

Sally Erickson, 2228 Kaukauna Court: expresses appreciation for the planning work and emphasizes the need for thoughtful solutions, especially in the East Beach/Hidden Ridge area, which faces challenges due to a curved shoreline and shifting islands that affect dock placement and boating safety. Supports T- or L-shaped docks to improve safety and avoid swimming areas. Concerned that increasing the limit from 1 to 3 hoists may lead to more boats. Commits to respecting any adopted rules and hope for mutual cooperation and compliance among neighbors.

13. Other Matters or Comments by Planning Commission Members

Peninsula Township
Planning Commission Special Meeting
Shaina LaFond, Recording Secretary

Shipman: update on non-motorized transportation planning effort. Highlights June 24 public workshop at OMPS that drew around 110 attendees. Public participation was strong and collaborative. Input gathered will inform next steps, with McKenna analyzing results for the working group to review. Susie is keeping the public updated

via the township website and encourages continued input from residents through posted materials and printable forms.

14. Adjournment

Motion by Dloski to adjourn this regular meeting of the Planning Commission, seconded by Hall.

Motion passed.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:28 p.m.