

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

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Peninsula Township

Parks Committee Meeting

July 23, 2025

Minutes

7:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order** by D. Murphy at 7:01 p.m.
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call** C. Murphy, Caviston, D. Murphy, Zebell, Chown, Milliken. Dahl-Absent
4. **Approve Agenda: Chown moved to move Business Item E up to Business Item A with a second by Caviston.** **Approved by Consensus**
Chown moved to approve the amended agenda as presented with a second by Milliken. **Approved by Consensus**
5. **Brief Citizen Comments (for agenda items only)** None
6. **Conflict of Interest** None
7. **Consent Agenda:** any member of the committee, staff, or the public may ask that any item on the consent agenda be removed and placed elsewhere on the agenda for full discussion.
 - A. Minutes from the May 27, 2025 Township Board, Planning Commission, and Parks Committee Joint Special Meeting with Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society, Peter Dougherty Society, and Mission Point Lighthouse Keepers Association
 - B. Minutes from the June 9, 2025 Parks Committee Special Meeting
 - C. Minutes from the June 23, 2025 Parks Committee Meeting
 - D. GoatWork program budget, informational letter, and materials
 - E. Acreage of owned and managed by Peninsula Township
 - F. Budget as of June 30**Chown moved to approve the consent agenda as presented with a second by Milliken.** **Approved by Consensus**
8. **Business**
 - A. (E). Request to Approve pavilion reservation for Janet Jackson.
Milliken moved to approve the pavilion reservation for Janet Jackson with a second by T. Murphy. **Approved by Consensus**
 - A1. Park Updates
 1. OMSP (C. Murphy)
 - a) Debrief and next steps from 6/24 walk with DNR on management plan
 - b) Recommendation for gate at fire road
 - c) Thank you to volunteers for tree clearing (clarification on tree removal requirements)
 - d) Potential OSHA chainsaw safety training, let us know if you are interested in attending

The committee reviewed the progress at Old Mission State Park management plan. There was a productive walk on June 24, 2025 with three DNR representatives, Steve Lagerquist from the Grand

Traverse Regional Land Conservancy and several park committee members. The shared goal is to preserve the park's wild beauty, and the DNR has expressed willingness to assist with developing parts of the management plan, especially the complex factual appendix. The committee emphasized the need for alignment on strategies before finalizing the plan, particularly concerning trail usage, signage, and resource allocation. Concerns were raised about camping and unauthorized fires along the fire lane. A recommendation was made to move an existing gate approximately 50 feet to enable closure of the fire lane, thus limiting unauthorized activities. The fire chief Fred Gilstorff agreed on an appropriate lock system, and the DNR supported this immediate action. Volunteers have been instrumental in removing large fallen trees in the park, with calls for continued reporting of obstructions to maintain trail accessibility. The committee considered organizing OSHA-certified chainsaw safety training for volunteers, with interest expressed from several committee members and community participants. The training aims to ensure safe and proper tree removal practices. Parking at Old Mission State Park was another focus. The current lot requires resurfacing due to potholes, and cost estimates are being sought. Since the parking lot is on state land, funding and management responsibilities were discussed. The DNR suggested relocating ADA handicap spots to the nearby volunteer lot, which has been recently resurfaced with gravel, potentially freeing space for 10 to 20 additional parking spots without tree removal. However, the committee noted that ADA spots typically require paved surfaces for accessibility, which may impact budget considerations. The possibility of redesigning the volunteer lot to improve traffic flow and parking efficiency was also raised. The committee expressed reluctance to remove trees for parking expansion, emphasizing preserving open spaces for picnicking and natural enjoyment. The need to balance parking needs with environmental and historical preservation was emphasized.

2. BHNA (M. Zebell)

The committee reported on the successful introduction of goats to the Bowers Harbor Natural Area for vegetation management, particularly targeting invasive autumn olive and spotted knapweed. The goats have been present for two and a half weeks, with their presence attracting community interest and educational opportunities. Volunteers have assisted with feeding and care, and additional chainsaw-trained volunteers have offered to help with tree and brush removal. Poison ivy control remains a concern, with Bill Stott, a retired toxicologist volunteer, requesting funding for effective herbicide spray to manage the poison ivy along walking trails. The committee supports Stott's continued efforts and plans to obtain cost estimates for approval. Community events such as the "Gourdie the Goat" gatherings were noted as successes, engaging children, and adults alike.

3. Bowers Harbor Park (Caviston)

Discussions included potential bathroom facility upgrades, considering options for prefabricated septic structures with multiple stalls and ADA accessibility. Two options are being explored: a three-stall facility combined with maintaining an updated vault toilet, or a single four-stall prefabricated facility. Cost estimates are expected by the August meeting, and the committee is considering whether to proceed with one or both options. The committee also discussed fundraising efforts for pickleball court maintenance, including the installation of a donation box at the courts. A proposed split of

donations was 75% for pickleball-specific expenses and 25% for general park maintenance. The use of Venmo QR codes for easier donations was considered, though concerns about security and fraud were raised based on experiences from other organizations.

B. Budget Requests

1. Archie Park sign design and planning service

The committee reported receiving an estimate of approximately \$486 for the design and production of signage at Archie Park, which is part of the capital improvement plan. Archie Park has significant historical value as a former village with a church, post office, school, and other community facilities. The signage aims to highlight this history and enhance visitor experience. A video project about Archie, led by a volunteer collaborating with local historians, is underway to provide additional educational material.

C. Discussion on budget spending and financial goals for the year

The committee reviewed budget tracking procedures and expressed the need for a dedicated meeting to reconcile expected and actual expenditures for the year. Specific attention was given to ensure grant funds and donations (such as the \$25,000 county allocation for Kelly Park and a \$300 donation to Bowers Harbor Natural Area) are properly tracked and allocated. The committee emphasized transparent accounting and the importance of consistent fundraising communications in township newsletters.

D. Discussion on expiring appointments (Murphy)

Milliken, Caviston, and Dahl have expiring terms. The reappointment process involves confirming their interest and a formal appointment by the township board. Dahl announced his intention to step down after six years of service but offered to remain a resource for the committee. The committee acknowledged Dahl's significant contributions, especially in chainsaw work and park maintenance. The committee discussed the process for filling vacancies, including posting openings and conducting interviews, with the goal of appointing new members by September 29.

E. Request to Approve pavilion reservation for Janet Jackson (Murphy) **MOVED TO A**

F. Discussion on forming a Friends of the Peninsula Township Parks Group.

The idea of establishing a nonprofit "Friends" group to support the parks was introduced. This group could facilitate fundraising and volunteer coordination, potentially appealing to donors who prefer contributing to a nonprofit rather than the township directly. The committee noted prior discussions on this topic and the success of similar groups like Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes. Plans include inviting representatives from existing friends' groups and local organizations such as the Peninsula Community Library to share insights and explore starting a local group.

9. Citizen Comments

Nancy R. Heller 3091 Blue Water Road: when considering your gravel parking lots, I could not help but notice Archie Park has parking all over the place, under trees, on the grass. I do not know if it is possible to designate parking spots on grass. I go to the lighthouse once a year and I do park in the

renovated lot. It is too exhausting to walk from the far parking lot to the facility. That is my problem. It is a beautiful renovation of the lot but has no designated parking and some spaces were lost. I asked if I could use that entrance as it is not locked. You do have to manually lift the gate. If you have been working all day and must lift the gate to open, drive in, and then go back and put the gate down. This is probably not a big deal for someone younger and more physically able. We are an aging community and do not lose sight of that. Back to the vault toilets. The playground is too far away from the vault toilets. The little ones let you know when they need go the bathroom, and that means now. I am going to harp on this forever. I really appreciate the discussion and research. If you open the lighthouse renovated parking lot, you are going to have increased vandalism, and might have some problems for the keeper's safety, because people like to wander all over. The priorities list should show wants and needs. I really appreciate this committee's dedication, efficiency, and the time you are spending. I think this is one of the best committees, commissions, whatever you want to call yourselves. You are willing to listen to what people have to say.

Jane Boursaw I would like to be signed up to attend the Goat Tea and I want to get it into this weekend's newsletter. I would like a copy of the Archie Park history from Milliken. The video could be uploaded to my YouTube video site. I was with some friends last night who volunteer at Sleeping Bear.

10. Committee Comments- D. Murphy: it was nice to hear Nancy's (Heller) comments about this committee, when she has called the survey committee the most disjointed. This survey creation has been a tough task given what is going on in the community. We received some advice from the survey company that I have mixed feelings about. The company suggested not to make this a public survey. If the questions are known in advance, there may be an effort to influence the outcome. The survey committee has decided to form sub-committees and turn it over to the town board to decide. We are having some back and forth on the park's questions. Recent developments in the township give pause about where this might go. The non-motorized committee held a public hearing and 100 people showed up. If the non-motorized group comes up with a plan for the township, it's not going to stay with the planning commission where it is now. It will need to be managed in some manner. We hope to have a good relationship with TART if we can come up with something, but it will need to be part of parks and recreation. We may need to revisit what this committee is about. Bids are being prepared to go out for the work on the hemlock wing.

11. Adjournment Chown moved to adjourn the meeting with a second by Caviston.

Approved by Consensus

Adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Peninsula Township
Parks Committee Meeting
July 23, 2025 7:00 p.m.
Lola Jackson Recording Secretary