PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City
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Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
July 27, 2026, 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, Eckstein, Lyon, Shanafelt; **Absent/Excused:** Hornberger, Shipman; **Planner of Record:** Sara Schroeder
4. **Approve Agenda**

Motion by Alexander to approve the agenda, seconded by Eckstein.
Motion Passes

5. **Brief Citizen Comments (For Agenda Items Not Scheduled for Public Hearing):** none
6. **Communications:** none
7. **Conflict of Interest:** none
8. **Approval of Minutes**
   a. July 9, 2026, July 13, 2026, & July 21, 2026 Minutes

Motion by Alexander to approve all minutes with the correction of the date for the Special Meeting , seconded by Eckstein. **Motion Passes**

9. **Business**

a. Lighting Amendment – From Rewrite Committee

Schroeder/PC reviews proposed lighting ordinance amendments updating standards for LED technology, dark-sky protections, commercial and residential applicability, foot-candle measurements, automatic controls, uplighting, and eliminating several exemptions. Existing nonconforming lighting may remain until altered or replaced. Commissioners request a redlined version showing deleted language and correct a table heading error.

Motion by Shanafelt to schedule Lighting Amendment #213 for a public hearing during August 24, 2026 meeting of the Planning Commission, seconded by Alexander.
Motion Passes

b. Steep Slopes & Tree Clearing Amendment

Schroeder/PC discusses potential steep-slope and tree-clearing regulations. Steep-slope provisions may address measurement standards, construction setbacks, erosion, drainage, emergency access, surveys, engineering reports, and applicability to smaller structures. Tree-clearing standards may protect significant and native trees, require vegetation inventories and replanting, establish development buffers, and exempt legitimate agricultural activity while limiting clear-cutting before development. Staff will research options and prepare draft language, with steep slopes and tree clearing proceeding separately from the broader ordinance rewrite.

c. Draft Zoning Ordinance Update/Timeline

Schroeder/PC reviews a proposed timeline for completing the zoning ordinance rewrite, beginning August 24 and targeting a public hearing and referral to the Township Board before year-end. Review will proceed by grouped articles, with agendas identifying the sections under discussion and the public encouraged to submit written comments citing specific provisions. Previously adopted or separately pending amendments will be incorporated into the draft. The schedule remains flexible based on the complexity of discussions and public input, with the overall goal of modernizing the ordinance, improving definitions, reducing ambiguity, and consolidating related provisions.

d. Small Processor Information from Agricultural Advisory Committee

Schroeder/PC reviews Agricultural Advisory Committee recommendations concerning small agricultural processors on farms under 40 acres. Discussion focuses on allowing limited, wholesale value-added processing—such as vinegar, pickles, or maple syrup—while separating those uses from alcohol licensing, restaurants, events, retail farm markets, farm stays, and other activities involving greater public access or neighborhood impacts. Members seek additional examples from local producers and nearby communities. Staff will continue consulting legal counsel and place the matter on a future agenda.

10. Reports & Updates - Verbal

a. Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) - (Beard)

The Agricultural Advisory Committee does not meet in July and is scheduled to meet August 18.

b. Township Board (Alexander)

Alexander reports that the Board has adopted the shoreline amendment with several revisions intended to address shoreline density. New parcels with less than 40 feet of frontage may not have a dock or hoist, while existing lawful docks on parcels of record remain unaffected. The amendment also establishes graduated allowances for additional shore stations based on frontage and retains the existing 15-foot side setback rather than increasing it to 30 feet. Alexander says that the Board concluded that the longstanding setback has generally worked and that the ordinance now provides a mechanism to address individual problem properties without imposing broader restrictions. She also reported that Hidden Ridge moved a portion of its dock closer to the center of the parcel and is considering a future T-shaped configuration. The short-term rental clarifying amendment is returning to the Planning Commission for additional review after consultation with Township counsel.

c. Non-Motorized Plan (Schroeder):

McKenna will present the non-motorized plan on August 24, including whether it should remain standalone or become part of the Master Plan.

11. Brief Public Comments: none

12. Other Matters or Comments by Planning Commission Members

Discussion: Commissioners are encouraged to complete available planning and zoning training.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Alexander to adjourn, seconded by Eckstein.

Motion Passes

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.