

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City MI
49686 www.peninsulatownship.com

**Planning Commission
Zoning Rewrite Ad Hoc Committee
August 11, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
Township Hall
Minutes**

1. **Call to Order by Loud at 7:00 p.m.**
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call – Present:** Alexander, Beard, Hornberger; Township Planner of Record -- Elise Loud; **Virtual:** Sara Kopriva – Zoning Administrator, Peninsula Township; Brad Misner & Ethan Senti from McKenna Associates
4. **Approve Agenda**

Motion by Beard to approve the agenda as written, seconded by Alexander.

Motion Passes

5. **Brief Citizen Comments (for non-agenda items only):**

Nancy R. Heller, 3091 Blue Water Road: Suggests numbering and page counts for agenda items. Notes sign ordinance chart is unclear and incomplete, particularly for agricultural uses. Requests a contact person to address multiple detailed questions; advised to contact the township planner. Asks about opportunities to ask clarifying questions during discussion; advised such questions should be held until the second citizen comment period (Item 9).

6. **Communications**

- Marie-Chantal Dalese, Chateau Chantal
- Craig Haddix

7. **Conflict of Interest: none**

8. **Business**

- a. **Elect Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair)**

Motion by Hornberger to appoint Beard as Chair and Alexander as Vice-Chair, seconded by Alexander.

Motion Passes

- b. **Confirm Meeting Schedule – Second Monday (1-3 p.m.)**

Committee discusses regular meeting time: Second Monday of each month, 1:00–3:00 p.m., Township Hall. Agenda item was included to allow discussion if a different date/time was preferred; members agree current schedule still works (Alexander to verify availability). Question raised regarding the number of members required to establish a quorum; answer not immediately available and will be confirmed at a future meeting.

- c. **Ordinance Language Discussion**

- i. **Signage**

Draft language updated for content-neutral compliance under *Reed v. Gilbert*; focuses on size, location, and appearance rather than message. New Definitions: Temporary Directional Agricultural Use Sign, Temporary Seasonal Product Attraction/Readerboard Agricultural Use Sign. Agricultural District Standards (proposed): Off-premises ag signs: max 20 sq. ft., 8 ft. height, permit, property owner approval. On-premises: up to 20 sq. ft. plus 20 sq. ft. seasonal, 8 ft. height, permit, setbacks, possible lighting. Farm stand/roadside signs: suggested 9

sq. ft., max one sign (point for discussion). Next Steps: Send draft to Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) for Aug. 19 review, with crosswalk mapping AAC recommendations to draft. Provide visual examples, ordinance comparison memo, and confirm compliance with township attorney. Consider time limits for temporary/event signage and possible amortization for nonconforming signs.

ii. **Shoreline**

McKenna proposed a new section (3.13J) with more comprehensive standards for approvals, size, placement, storage, lighting, hoists, and shared waterfront (“keyholing”). Dock Length: Recommended length sufficient to reach ~6 ft water depth; current PC policy is no fixed max length, only “reasonable access” standard. Placement: Proposed midpoint of parcel + 20 ft either side, 50 ft between docks; simpler than projecting lot lines into water. Committee noted need for diagrams and possible minimum setbacks from property lines. Hoists: Draft allows 3 per 50 ft of dock; number remains debated (some prefer max 2). Discussion on whether moorings should count toward limit; enforcement history suggests 3 reflects current usage. Shared Waterfront: Special use permit proposed; must also comply with state/federal permits (e.g., Army Corps, EGLE). Other Issues Raised: Clarify when land use permits are required to avoid administrative burden. Consider limits for dock patios/swim platforms (current avg 12x16). Address safety/visibility for docks/hoists entirely in water. Possible regulation of structures/awnings on docks. Allow flexibility for existing seawalls and limited winter storage space. Next Steps: Reconvene Shoreline Subcommittee (Randy Hall & Susie Shipman) to review draft, resolve hoist number, clarify mooring rules, and refine placement/size standards with visuals.

iii. **Short-Term Rentals**

Non-owner-occupied dwellings in residential districts must be rented for 30 days or more; rentals for less than 30 days are not permitted. McKenna verified that this restriction is clearly stated in both the land use table (Section 3.06) and in the use standards for each residential zoning district, using the 2019 draft ordinance as reference. Proposed Clarification: Add definition/provision prohibiting subletting arrangements that circumvent the 30-day minimum (e.g., one lessee rents for 30 days but then rents out in shorter terms).

iv. **Special Use Permit Amendments**

Existing code requires the same full process for all SUP amendments as for initial applications—time-consuming, costly, and burdensome for minor changes. Proposed Change in Review Standard: Initial SUPs: Keep “substantial improvement” benefit test (property, neighbors, community). Amendments: Use a “no material detriment” test instead. Remove “major/minor” categories. Create technical amendments (e.g., lot line adjustment, small site change) handled by zoning administrator but still reviewed by PC for confirmation. Explore a simplified review path for small, low-impact changes (e.g., playground addition, storage shed) without full SUP process. Concerns & Considerations: Prevent “gaming” the system via multiple small amendments to avoid full review. Address legal non-conforming properties and allow reasonable updates without forcing full compliance. Incorporate public feedback (e.g., Craig Haddix letter). Staff to review past Planning Commission minutes and work with McKenna to draft language, pulling in best practices from similar rural communities. Incorporate prior subcommittee draft language and highlight discussion points for further review. Consider adopting ordinance updates incrementally rather than waiting for full zoning rewrite, ensuring no unintended gaps in definitions or cross-references.

c. **Confirm Next Steps**

Review and update land uses and associated standards for all zoning districts (residential, agricultural, commercial). Ensure allowed uses are appropriate for each district. Determine which uses should be by right vs. special use. Create clear, objective standards to replace reliance on broad SUP criteria where possible. Agricultural Zoning: Will be included in review, addressing current public interest in potential updates. Timeline: Allocated three months for subcommittee and Planning Commission discussion (may take longer due to scope). Next Meetings: September PC Meeting: Review signage, shoreline, short-term rentals, and SUP amendments. September Subcommittee Meeting: Begin land use standards review.

9. Citizen Comment:

Rose Sickle, 9449 Center Road: Has 60 ft of shared waterfront frontage across the road; has been attending meetings on the topic for two years. Expresses desire to see shared frontage regulations resolved soon. Asks whether a special use permit or other agency approvals (e.g., EGLE) are required for their shared frontage situation.

Kopriva: Requirements depend on the property’s prior approvals and existing use; each case is individual. Encourages following up directly for clarification.

Monnie Peters, 1425 Neahtawanta Road: Addresses dock/hoist placement along shoreline. Suggests that requiring placement at the midpoint of a parcel is not always practical; shorelines shift annually. Recommends instead allowing docks anywhere along frontage within a setback from neighboring properties (suggests 10–15 ft). Cites personal experience: dock location changes yearly due to shoreline changes; setback approach would provide flexibility.

Scott Duensing, 1777 Buchan Drive: former member of the Shoreline Study Group; emphasizes the group’s goal to gain citizen buy-in and bring 80–90% of properties (single-owner and shared frontage) into conformity for consistent enforcement. Concerned about proposals to require Army Corps of Engineers permits for docks/hoists. Believes regulation should remain local, with residents policing themselves, rather than ceding control to federal authorities. Cites example: one shared frontage under federal permit limited to 1 hoist per 12 ft—seen as overly restrictive compared to the group’s intended reasonable standards.

Kip Nickel, 1015 Quaker Valley Drive: Shares concerns similar to Scott Duning regarding Army Corps of Engineers permit requirements for shared waterfront docks. Asks for clarification on whether such permits would be retroactive; warns this could create a significant administrative burden for property owners, the township, and state/federal agencies. Notes difficulty in differentiating between shared and private waterfront situations for enforcement purposes. Questions the need for the regulation, citing no changes in dock/hoist numbers in his neighborhood for 42 years. On hoist limits: Opposes reducing from current practice (three per 50 ft) to two, warning it would force boat removals; emphasizes that three per 50 ft reflects long-standing practice in many areas.

Sylvia Rombis, 10895 Peninsula Drive: Opposes increasing allowable hoists to make currently noncompliant HOAs compliant, comparing it to raising a speed limit to match violators’ behavior. Notes 13 of 33 HOAs are noncompliant; believes rule changes would benefit a select few at the expense of the broader community. Expresses concerns about environmental and quality-of-life impacts: more pollution, waste, congestion, and winter storage challenges. Criticizes some HOAs for willfully breaking existing rules. Supports self-regulation where possible and allowing neighbors to share docks to reduce total dock numbers. Emphasizes protecting shoreline, ecology, and community interests over accommodating violators.

10. Committee Comments

September 2 Planning Commission Meeting: Present cleaned-up draft language on signage, shoreline, and short-term rentals, incorporating committee feedback and Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) input where available. Future Agendas: Will include specific dates for each topic’s Planning Commission and committee reviews for clarity to both members and the public. Clarification from Hornberger: 3 hoists per dock comment referred to individual dock owners (often with multiple families or shared docks), not shared/HOAs. Suggestion to invite a member of the Agriculture Advisory Committee to join the Zoning Rewrite Ad Hoc Committee—committee agreed and will be proposed at next AAC meeting.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Hornberger to adjourn, seconded by Alexander.

Motion passes

Meeting Adjourned at 3:03 p.m.