

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City
MI 49686

www.peninsulatownship.com

Township Board Special Meeting

August 18, 2022, 3:00 p.m.

Township Hall

Minutes

1. **Call to Order** by Wunsch at 3:03 p.m.

2. **Pledge**

3. **Roll call**

Present: Wunsch, Achorn, Sanger, Chown, Rudolph

Absent: Wahl, Shanafelt

4. **Citizen Comments:** none

5. **Approve Agenda**

Sanger moved to approve the agenda with a second by Rudolph

Motion passed

by consensus

6. **Conflict of Interest**

Sanger: I am a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church. I've had no involvement with the parish other than being a member for the last five years.

Chown: this signage is requested each year. They weren't able to get the item to us prior to our last regularly scheduled meeting. Because it is an innocuous and repetitive request that we've always granted, I added it to today's agenda at the last minute.

Wunsch: I'll have Jenn take a look at whether it would make sense for us to work on some ordinance language to handle this type of sign request. The requests that are approved basically fit nonprofit and religious organizations that are putting up temporary signage to advertise an event. We could put a formal policy in place so that they just come in and request temporary approval from staff. If we have the documented policies that apply...

Chown: ...we wouldn't need to put it under consent any longer. That would be nice.

Rudolph: that would make a lot of sense. It would simplify things for the people in the township too.

Wunsch: it would make our policy clearly stated rather than a discretionary kind of one off from the board. We've never said no to one of those types of organizations, but I think we should explain who we allow temporary signage for.

Chown: remembering to ask the township for permission, especially in time to make a packet deadline, is challenging.

Nancy Heller, 3091 Blue Water Road: who would grant that approval?

Wunsch: probably the zoning administrator. Looks like we pulled that item off and turned it into business item one. We need to approve the consent agenda.

7. **Consent Agenda**

Chown moved to consent the agenda with a second by Rudolph.

Roll call vote: yes - Achorn, Sanger, Rudolph, Chown, Wunsch.

Passed unan

8. Business

1. Interview Ronessa Butler for a three-year term on the parks committee and reappoint Mary Beth Miliken, Pete Dahl, and Mike Skurski to new three-year terms on the park committee.

Wunsch: I recommend that we interview Ronessa, decide on her appointment, then make individual decisions on each of the re-appointments.

Ronessa Butler, 2300 Montmorency Lane: I go by Nessa. We just moved to Peninsula Township back in March; we purchased a house in Bowers Harbor. I've been wanting to get involved in the community now that we're settled and putting down roots. I have a master's in public administration. I'd love to put it to use.

Chown: you have kids who use our parks, I assume?

Butler: goodness, yes. We are walking distance from Bowers Harbor Park and are there daily. I have three teenagers. Skateboarding is a thing at our house.

Chown: thank you for coming forward to express your interest in serving on the parks committee. Why the parks committee specifically, and what particular skills or interests do you have that would be beneficial to the committee?

Butler: even prior to covid, which changed a lot of peoples' understanding of how to access natural resources, parks were very important to our family, both my family of origin and the one I've cultivated with my children, not quite teenagers, at 11, 15, and 17. We visited Old Mission Peninsula even when we lived in other communities. The lighthouse is a big attraction and my children's grandparents live on Neahtawanta. So we've been in touch with the community for quite a while. I've seen amazing things happen at Bowers Harbor Park over the last two decades. It just seemed like a really interesting thing to be part of and something I was already conceptually familiar with. As far as my skills go, I do have that public administration master's degree. I've done a lot of volunteering in nonprofit organizations. I've served on executive boards. I've held director-level positions at multiple organizations. I'm highly organized and have good communication skills. I have strategic planning and vision and can bring groups together. I can do consensus building and those sorts of facilitative things. So those are skills I'd be interested in using.

Wunsch: do you have the time and willingness to roll your sleeves up and actively work on projects? Our parks committee, more so than a lot of the other boards, is more of a direct action board.

Butler: it's more of a working board, absolutely. I actually have a wicked case of poison ivy right now because I was out in my yard all weekend digging it up.

Chown: I'm wondering too if you have any background in fundraising or grant writing?

Butler: absolutely. I used to be the director of community engagement at the Traverse City Orchestra, where I managed our grant writing program and increased revenue by 100 percent.

Chown: would you be willing to assist with grant writing here at Peninsula Township?

Butler: absolutely.

Rudolph: you've been using the parks here for a few years. In your opinion, what do you think is the primary need at this point?

Butler: that's a good question. I'm not familiar with the scope of services that are available at all of the amenities. I know for a while the dog park was a really big point of conversation. I think accessibility and examining accessibility are always going to rise to the top, along with looking at needs for expansion and improvement.

Chown: we actually don't have a dog park here in Peninsula Township. We have many requests, and I think a growing awareness in the community that whether or not we have a dog park, people are behaving as though we do. That's causing a lot of trouble. We're getting a lot of reports of interactions with off-leash dogs. That is something that we do need to address one way or another. There are regular conversations among the parks committee and others about this matter. The Grand Traverse County ordinance applies to all of our parks; dogs are to be leashed and under control unless they are service dogs or hunting dogs. It's difficult to enforce that.

Butler: so it's more of an issue of community buy-in and education.

Chown: and very difficult when everyone thinks they're an exception to the rule.

Sanger: I'm really impressed with your work with the symphony. I know that organization relies heavily on volunteers. To underscore our supervisor's comment, the parks committee is a group of limited people. I haven't counted the number, six or seven. But the work is really multiple times that. I would encourage you to get involved. A thought might be to form some working subcommittees of volunteers. For example, looking at the building across the way, volunteers maintain the flowers out front. Our budget in our township is very tight. So I am pleased with your work with the symphony as a good background for engaging volunteers in the township.

Wunsch: community engagement is something our parks committee is actively working on right now. Figuring out how to engage members of the community who aren't involved with parks. It's something that I've watched wane in the last decade or so. People probably feel less comfortable proactively trying to set up the volunteer opportunities for themselves. Figuring out how to organize those kinds of opportunities for residents who are interested in engaging in that way would be a good thing to work on in the parks.

Chown moved to appoint Ronessa Butler to a three-year term on the parks committee with a second from Rudolph.

Roll call vote: yes – Sanger, Rudolph, Chown, Wunsch, Achorn **Passed unan**

Sanger moved to reappoint Mary Beth Milliken, Pete Dahl, and Mike Skurski for three-year terms on the park committee with a second by Achorn.

Roll call vote: yes – Rudolph, Chown, Wunsch, Achorn, Sanger **Passed unan**

2. Interview Will Ammerman for a two-year term on the zoning board of appeals, reappoint John Dolton and Ashley Wahl to new three-year terms, and reappoint Laura Serocki as an alternate for three years

Will Ammerman, 13415 Bluff Road: it's great to be here; it's been a great meeting already. I live about a mile east of here with my wife and 23-year-old son who just graduated from college. I am a banker; I've been one for about 40 years and work from home. I travel to

Pittsburgh for our headquarters in pretty wide intervals. Most of my days are spent here on the peninsula. The peninsula has been my family's Shangri-La for three or four decades. We've only lived here for five years. I've had the pleasure of working as the president of my HOA but I'm not the current president. I've worked with Dave [Sanger, trustee] and also Christina Deeren [zoning director] in connection with a variety of issues. I have been incredibly heartened by the roll you all perform. You're vanguards of maintaining what the peninsula is. I've gotten to know the ordinance pretty well just by virtue of the role I've played, specifically with waterfront issues and folks believing the township overextends itself and a lot of our rules are unenforceable. I had amazing support from Dave in particular. He mediated pretty serious issues in our little neck of the woods pretty quickly. I told Christina that if she ever need help, I would love to contribute. She outlined the role on the ZBA, and I thought it sounded terrific. I hope that to any such endeavor, I'd bring a sense of humility, a sense of justice, and a sense of honesty, but I'll also bring a bias towards maintaining what this place is. It is near and dear to our hearts.

Chown: are you cloneable?

Ammerman: I hope not.

Sanger: that's a hard act to follow, Will; thank you very much for applying.

Ammerman: thank you, Dave, for settling the issue we had. That was a year running. We sent a letter, you came to our neighborhood, and the whole thing resolved in the course of a week. It was getting very acute. Honestly, I can't heap enough praise on the job I see the board doing. There's a lot of very overt instances where we're working very hard to keep this place as it's been for a very long time. Not that it hasn't evolved in its own right; obviously it has. I think it's terrific there are so many residents who willingly toe the line. And I know there are a lot of residents who appreciate this place very deeply just by virtue of the PDR vote and how resoundingly it was renewed. I do have a very long history as a credit executive. I've underwritten every kind of real estate you can imagine, from the single family residential to every commercial asset class you can think of. I say that with complete humility. It's just part part of my own fact pattern. In conjunction with that, I was a bank regulator before I got into banking and spent a lot of time in real estate appraisal schools. I've read the ZBA minutes tracking back in time. I've really appreciated the chairman and vice chairman's perspectives. Frankly, I thought their sentiments were spot on for minor things that were unobtrusive. They were very reasonable. But they say unambiguously that variances should be difficult to get. I would enter into the role with humility looking to learn from the team that's there, but I think I bring some practical real estate experience that can be helpful too.

Wunsch: I think you'll be a great fit. I served on the ZBA for a couple of years before I joined the town board. It's a great way to dip your toe into township government. You have generally eight or nine meetings per year. As kind of the judicial branch of township government, you get to see where our ordinances shake out in term of application. I found the ZBA was a little more cut and dried compared to the planning commission.

Sanger: I served for nine years on the ZBA and some concurrent time with the planning commission. Looking back, the ZBA was probably the most fulfilling and rewarding

because, at the end of the meeting, we had accomplished something. That's often tough to do, whether it's business or government or even leisure work.

Achorn: as Isaiah said, it's a good place to dip your toe in and get to know the township.

Rudolph: you work from home, so you are available for these kinds of meetings?

Ammerman: absolutely. Thursday evenings are what I think I heard. I'll be there.

Sanger: it's the third Tuesday. And then there's a site visit to each site before the meeting, typically with Christina. In my time with the ZBA, I would try to not make a judgement until I actually went on site. Most of the time I was surprised at my lack of gaining from paper what I could gain with the on-site visit.

Ammerman: I was in Pittsburgh yesterday for the first time in three years. I'll probably go twice a year. I can't guarantee that one of those trips won't fall on a Tuesday, but I won't miss more than one meeting a year absent unforeseen circumstances.

Sanger: that's why we're appointing Laura Serocki as an alternate. We have a couple of alternates in case there's an illness or a need to really be out of town.

Wunsch moved to appoint Will Ammerman to the zoning board of appeals with a second by Rudolph.

Roll call vote: yes – Chown, Wunsch, Achorn, Sanger, Rudolph. **Passed unan**

Rudolph moved to reappoint John Dolton and Ashley Wahl to serve new three-year terms and reappoint Laura Serocki as the alternate for three years with a second by Chown.

Roll call vote: yes – Wunsch, Achorn, Sanger, Rudolph, Chown. **Passed unan**

3. Appoint Armen Shanafelt as the township board representative on the planning commission through December 2023 and reappoint Julie Alexander and Susie Shipman for new three-year terms on the planing commission

Chown moved to appoint Armen Shanafelt as the township board representative on the planning commission through December 2023 and to reappoint Julie Alexander and Susie Shipman for new three-year terms on the planning commission with a second by Sanger.

Wunsch: Armen is really filling my shoes by not being at the meeting where he's being appointed.

Sanger: I assume that you've already talked to him.

Chown: he sent an email that if he were appointed, he would accept.

Roll call vote: yes – Achorn, Sanger, Rudolph, Chown, Wunsch **Passed unan**

9. **Citizen Comments:** none

10. **Board Comments**

Rudolph: I'm just continually amazed and gratified to see the quality of people we get to volunteer to serve on these committees to make the work of the township go forward. It really makes me feel good. Thank you very much, all of you.

Wunsch: yes, thanks to all of you for volunteering your time, energy, and talents.

11. **Adjournment**

Sanger moved to adjourn with a second by Chown.

Meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.