PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City MI
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Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
August 24, 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, Hornberger, Lyon, Shanafelt, Shipman; **Planner of Record:** Sara Schroeder; **Consultant:** Chris Khorey, McKenna
4. **Approve Agenda**

Motion by Alexander to approve the agenda, seconded by Shipman. **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 27, 2026 Minutes

Motion by Alexander to approve, seconded by Lyon. **Motion Passes**

9. **Business**
   a. **Introduction - Peninsula Township Non-Motorized Transportation Plan**

Chris Khorey of McKenna presents the draft Plan, developed through the Non-Motorized Committee and public engagement as an implementation item of the 2024 Master Plan. The plan seeks to improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, agricultural equipment, and other roadway users while preserving the Township's rural character. Recommendations include separated pathways, paved and advisory shoulders, intersection improvements, pedestrian crossings, roundabouts or other alternatives, signage, neighborhood pedestrian connections, and improvements tailored to roadway constraints. Center Road remains the primary free-flowing north-south corridor, while shoreline and other secondary roads receive greater emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle safety.

PC is generally supportive of the plan and discusses agricultural equipment compatibility with roundabouts, possible use of J-turns, steep-road conditions, the legality of Idaho stops, possible signage prohibiting passing on shoulders, advisory shoulders and removal of centerlines, use of private roads and utility rights-of-way, and whether the plan should remain a standalone Township policy or eventually be incorporated into another planning document. Requested revisions include consideration of J-turns at Mission Road, additional attention to improper shoulder passing, correction of language regarding neighborhood pedestrian connections, and photographs demonstrating proper pedestrian practices and local agricultural equipment.

The Chair opens the Public Hearing.

Kurt Dost, 7478 Peninsula Drive: asks whether the mapped recommendations are intended as concrete proposals and emphasizes the importance of continued public input before implementation.

John Casteel, 12337 Bluff Road: objects to a roadway concept for Bluff Road/East Shore that would narrow or reconfigure the travel area and asks that the idea be removed rather than retained as a lower-priority option.

Mark Dost, 7455 Peninsula Drive: expresses concern about widening or altering narrow portions of Peninsula Drive, noting existing unsafe passing behavior and physical constraints created by the bay and nearby homes. He urges careful, location-specific review of any proposed roadway changes.

Hearing no further remarks, the Chair closes the Public Hearing.

PC discusses recommending to the Township Board the establishment of an implementation committee, prioritizing projects, coordinating with the Road Commission and other agencies, and allowing additional time for public review, and agrees to proceed to a public hearing after minor revisions are completed.

Motion by Alexander to schedule the Non-Motorized Plan for a public hearing during October 26, 2026 meeting of the Planning Commission, seconded by Eckstein. **Motion Passes**

b. Public Hearing: Lighting, Amendment #213

Schoeder/PC reviews Amendment #213 which updates existing lighting regulations for newer technology, maintains dark-sky and full-cutoff standards, and distinguishes between commercial site-plan requirements and residential lighting.

The Chair opens the Public Hearing.

Hearing no remarks, the Chair closes the Public Hearing.

During discussion, PC requests that a clear redline showing both new and deleted language accompany the ordinance to the Board and be available to the public. The PC is comfortable forwarding the ordinance without reviewing another draft.

Motion by Hornberger to recommend approval of Zoning Ordinance Amendment #213 to the Township Board, seconded by Alexander. **Motion Passes**

c. Public Hearing: Accessory Dwelling Unit, Amendment #212

Schroeder/PC reviews Amendment #212, which would establish accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as a permitted use subject to specific standards. The amendment is drawn from the broader draft zoning ordinance and has previously been reviewed by the Rewrite Subcommittee and PC. Since the PC's prior review, the principal change clarifies that the property owner must occupy either the principal dwelling or the ADU. The draft distinguishes ADUs from the Township's existing allowance for a second dwelling on larger parcels and creates a formal regulatory framework addressing lot area, unit size, setbacks, owner occupancy, and related standards. PC notes that the minimum lot-size requirement has been a recurring point of discussion and has also generated public comment.

The Chair opens the Public Hearing.

J. Polito, 20118 Center Road: supports allowing ADUs but questions whether the proposed standards were adequately reflected in the public notice and argues that requiring twice the minimum lot area for a detached ADU is overly restrictive and undermines the purpose of treating the unit as accessory.

Hearing no further remarks, the Chair closes the Public Hearing.

PC reviews additional written comments and revisits lot size, minimum and maximum unit size, lot coverage, setbacks, and use of existing accessory structures. Commissioners generally agree to remove the requirement that detached ADUs be located on lots twice the minimum size, rely on existing lot-coverage and building-envelope requirements, reduce the detached-unit setback from 25 feet to 10 feet, and clarify language regarding foundations. PC retains the general minimum-size distinction between attached and detached ADUs while considering an exception for ADUs created within existing accessory structures. Staff will prepare a revised draft for review at the next meeting before the PC takes final action.

d. Public Hearing: Special Use Permit Approval Language, Amendment #210

Schroeder/PC reviews Amendment #210, proposed changes to the special use permit approval language. The chair notes the draft has been under discussion for approximately two years, with the latest revisions consisting

primarily of typographical corrections and clarification. PC discusses wording related to expiration of approvals and extensions, agreeing that language such as "provided" should be revised for clarity. They also revisit whether the term "materially" should remain in the criteria for determining whether a proposed change constitutes a minor amendment, noting the degree of judgment involved in determining whether an alteration is material.

The Chair opens the Public Hearing.

Hearing no remarks, the Chair closes the Public Hearing.

PC reviews a proposed general standard stating that a special use must not diminish the "privacy, safety, security, or enjoyment" of nearby residential properties. Commissioners express concern that the language is overly subjective and could improperly elevate neighboring property owners' expectations over an applicant's lawful property rights. After determining that the language is not contained in the current ordinance and that other standards already address hazardous or disturbing impacts and compatibility with surrounding development, the PC reaches consensus to strike the provision. Eckstein explains that he remains concerned about adequately protecting neighboring property owners, while other commissioners conclude that the proposed language is too ambiguous and that existing standards provide sufficient protection while balancing neighboring interests with lawful property rights.

Motion by Shanafelt to recommend approval of Zoning Ordinance Amendment #210 to the Township Board with the changes discussed, seconded by Alexander. **Motion Passes 5-1 with Eckstein opposed.**

e. Draft Zoning Ordinance – Introduction: Articles 7, 8, 5, 9

Schroeder/PC begins detailed review of the draft zoning ordinance rewrite with Articles 5 and 7. McKenna explains that the draft builds on the unfinished 2017–2019 rewrite, incorporates current and subsequently adopted ordinance language, retains some unadopted 2019 language, and adds work completed by the Rewrite Subcommittee. PC will review each article before considering the ordinance as a comprehensive rewrite.

Article 5 – **Planned Developments and Site Condominiums**. Much of Article 5 reorganizes existing language. PC makes several editorial and clarification changes and agrees to revisit broader PUD density questions separately. Site-condominium language is clarified to require compliance with applicable land-division and minimum-lot standards and to tie Township Board approval or denial to ordinance requirements. Staff will also consult the Township engineer/surveyor regarding whether a 2019 requirement for permanent survey monuments should remain.

Article 7 – **Supplemental Regulations**. PC identifies accessory-building language that conflicts with the proposed ADU regulations and directs that it be corrected. Staff will also refine language regarding non-habitable accessory storage structures on waterfront portions of split-road parcels to ensure compliance with shoreline, setback, and lot-coverage requirements.

PC reviews additional supplemental regulations, with the primary discussion focusing on fencing. Rather than revise fencing policy as part of the current rewrite, PC directs staff to retain existing language, reconcile cross-references and shoreline inconsistencies, and revisit fencing separately at a later date. Swimming-pool fencing requirements are retained for safety, and PC supports allowing temporary residential occupancy of a trailer or similar unit during construction of a principal dwelling for a limited period, subject to extensions based on construction progress. Review concludes after Article 7 due to the late hour. Articles 8 and 9 are deferred to September 14, with Articles 3, 4, and 6 to follow as time permits. Commissioners are encouraged to submit minor editorial corrections to staff in advance.

10. Reports & Updates - Verbal

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

Beard reports that the AAC discussed steep slopes, tree clearing, and a proposed agricultural ordinance submitted by the Citizens Coalition of Old Mission Peninsula. PC discusses whether the Committee should

reconcile that proposal with its prior recommendations or simply consider it as additional input. Staff notes that outside parties may also formally request a zoning ordinance amendment and that any further work must avoid subjects implicated in pending litigation. Commissioners also express concern about misunderstandings surrounding the zoning process and reiterate that the PC retains responsibility for reviewing and recommending zoning regulations.

b. Township Board (Alexander)

Alexander includes acknowledgment of a recent community tragedy, condolences to the affected families, appreciation for first responders, and a call for community support.

c. Non-Motorized Plan (Shipman) None;

11. Brief Public Comments: none

12. Other Matters or Comments by Planning Commission Members

Discussion: PC revisits concerns raised by the AAC regarding potential steep-slope regulations. Commissioners emphasize that no draft regulations or slope threshold have yet been established and that prior discussion has not contemplated regulating legitimate agricultural activity. Members cite erosion and landslide concerns as reasons to continue exploring reasonable steep-slope protections, particularly for properties downhill from development. Staff notes that the County's 20-percent grade threshold for soil-erosion permitting has sometimes been misunderstood as a proposed Township zoning standard, which it is not. Staff also reports that updated ordinance pages reflecting recently adopted amendments, including the shoreline amendment, are being prepared for the Township code books.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Hornberger to adjourn, seconded by Alexander. **Motion Passes**

Meeting adjourned at 10:43 p.m.