



PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City
MI 49686

www.peninsulatownship.com

Township Board Special Meeting September 12, 2023, 6:00 p.m. Township Hall Minutes

1. **Call to Order** by Wunsch at 6:01 p.m.

2. **Pledge**

3. **Roll Call**

Present: Wunsch, Achorn, Sanger, Rudolph, Shanafelt, Chown

4. **Citizen Comments:** none

5. **Approve Agenda**

Achorn moved to approve the agenda with a second by Rudolph. Motion passed by consensus.

6. **Conflict of Interest:** none

7. **Consent Agenda:**

8. **Business:**

1. Interview candidates for ZBA and Planning Commission (Cram)

Wunsch: we will go through applicants as they appear in your packet. How would the board like to do this?

Shanafelt: a brief introduction that explains why the planning commission?

Donna Hornberger, 6730 Mission Ridge: it's not easy being on the planning commission. Part of the problem is, whatever decision you make, half the time somebody's going to be mad. My feeling for the planning commission is, you put your personal feelings aside. Look at what's in the ordinance. Listen to your planner, listen carefully to your lawyer, then analyze what is right in terms of what the ordinance says. I want to stay on because I think it's good to have the continuity of somebody who's been on for nine years. I was here when we started the first ordinance change reviews. One of my strengths is I am a good wordsmith. I can go through a document and make it say what it's meant to say. That was what I did in my career when I was back in Cincinnati.

Chown: what do you feel is the biggest challenge facing the planning commission going forward?

Hornberger: to carry through on revising the ordinance in the next three years. It's a living document. You're not looking for perfection. As you go on, revise and change. Listen to what people say and make the ordinance work with the community.

Shanafelt: coming up on a bunch of ordinance rewrites, are you able to devote the time necessary for several special meetings?

Hornberger: yes. I live here. I attend almost all of them.

Shanafelt: outside of the planning commission, what other involvement in government or

committee services do you have?

Hornberger: I worked at the Hamilton County Library for 30-odd years. The reason I'm on the planning commission is that Lanny Leak called me and said, "Are you interested in doing this?" I'd never thought about it. But I did join, and I did do the citizen planner course.

Wunsch: you were an elected library board member, right?

Hornberger: yes, I was.

Chown: you chaired precinct two for the 2020 Presidential Primary.

Hornberger: yes. I am also involved in other organizations. I'm on the TADL board. I just stopped being president. I was president of our historical society for a while. Recently I started volunteering at the Humane Society.

Wunsch: any other questions?

Hornberger: I don't want to say I enjoy it. It's sometimes painful because the decisions you make make people unhappy. But I like seeing things done right. And I like looking back and saying, "We made the right decision. We asked the right questions." We had some small committees that would sit down with developers and hash out how we could arrange things so that everybody would be happy. I was on the committee that did that with Vineyard Ridge. I like working in that committee structure. When I was president of the board before, we had some roundtable discussions with the agricultural community, inviting them to sit and talk when we were working on revising the ordinance [to learn] what they wanted and how we could achieve that.

John Snow, 10605 Bluff Road: I've been a resident here since 1997. Part of what I've enjoyed about living here has been the opportunity to be involved in local government. Back when our fire department was a volunteer fire department, I had the luxury of them putting me through EMT and firefighter school. I was on our fire department for nine years. I was on the Bowers Harbor Park expansion committee. I think we got a really nice piece of property out of that. Following that I was elected to the old park commission. I was one of the few people on the commission who thought it would be better off run by the township. It didn't make sense that it had no taxing authority but a great deal of responsibility. I think it's good the way it's turned out and excellent things are happening with it. I was on the zoning appeals board for nine years. That gives me a perspective on where we need to go with the planning commission. I've been actively involved with the Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society. What I believe we need to do with the planning commission is completely redo our zoning ordinance. It's contradictory. It's confusing to the people who want to use it and to the people who have to enforce it. I have a history of writing and enforcing governmental regulations. My primary career was with the federal district court in Chicago. I was in a management role where I worked with the U.S. courts, U.S. Parole Commission, and the U.S. Sentencing Commission in drafting and implementing criminal justice procedures. I know that doesn't relate to redoing our zoning, but I'm used to government language and how the government process works. I'm known as a team player who gets along with other people to accomplish a consensus and get goals done. I'm not somebody who has trouble making a definitive decision after hearing all sides. I think this gives me a unique perspective on being on the planning commission.

Rudolph: it's a lot of work. Do you have availability?

Snow: I'm not going anyplace. I look forward to immersing myself into it. And I know from previous commissions how much work it is for the humorous amount of stipend. I'm looking forward to another opportunity.

Shanafelt: you made the comment, "I know where to go with the planning commission." What did you mean by that?

Snow: to get a new zoning ordinance. It's piecemeal. It's been added on to from time to time. Before you do anything else, you have to have a zoning ordinance that is current and understandable. Your planning can flow from that.

Shanafelt: agree with that. Have you followed the changes to the farm processing ordinance?

Snow: yes. I think what has been done has been good. We need a complete ordinance. It will take a lot of time and effort and people who have experience in drafting government regulations to get it done.

Brian Craig, 8799 Dawn Circle: I'll start with the question, "Why do you want to do this?" We first arrived in Bowers Harbor by sail in about 2001. We'd been here over the years many times but that's the first time we arrived by water. The next year we were fortunate to be able to buy a slip there. Been a proper taxpayer in the township for about 21 years. We were struck by the incredible beauty and incredible quality of place. We had lived in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Zambia. When I talk about incredible quality, I mean global. It's an incredible quality of place that should never be underestimated. When I saw this posting, I sent you a long resume. I love the work of doing good work. When I read the 2021 master plan draft, the first word that came up is "stewardship." How can we be great stewards of this amazing place? It's a collaborative effort. When I sent the list of things I've done, almost everything on there is collaborative. It's the result of positive work with other people. Sometimes hard work, where you're conflicted. Like when I had to meet with members of the public when I was president of a school board in Grand Rapids. They were closing their neighborhood school. Not a fun meeting, but we came to positive outcomes. It's work I love doing. It's work that's really necessary. I'm honored to be here with the quality of candidates you have.

Chown: are you here year-round?

Craig: yes, we live here year-round.

Shanafelt: why specifically the planning commission?

Craig: the word "planning." Making decisions that impact the future. That has always been my great passion in design. The work I do is looking forward, looking to the implications. As an architect, I've appeared before a lot of planning commissions. I'm familiar with how the work with designers goes. I'm familiar with how to use those tools and create responses to them. I saw you had a board opening recently and I thought, "No that's not the right thing for me." This is the right thing for me because this is the kind of work that I do well.

Shanafelt: have you attended any planning meetings here?

Craig: I have not. Part of why is that I bought a house here three years ago. I spent the first two and a half years renovating it myself. I'm just emerging in some ways from that.

Shanafelt: in your experience presenting to planning commissions, what did you see them do that could be done better?

Craig: trying to design the project and a meeting for the person before the commission?

Probably not a good idea. I have to remember from the planning commission, I'm an architect, I love design, but that's not my job, helping the planning commission. My job is to take the tools we have and apply them to what's in front of us.

Kevin Beard, 221 Mathison: this is the fifth summer my spouse and I have been in the township. We have recreated in this area for over 35 years. If you read my letter of interest, a couple of things that I omitted in the interests of brevity I'll share with you today. In my professional life, dealing with education and training for General Motors and the United Auto Workers, I wrote a lot of training manuals and delivered a lot of training to folks on the floor, hourly and salaried people. I designed and coordinated a lot of the training. Was responsible for safety training for about 5,000 people at a single plant in Lansing. I've worked collaboratively with lots of different groups over the years. In my volunteer life, I was president of the board of a small nonprofit in East Lansing that delivered respite services to families with members with special needs. In that capacity, I organized and ran a search for an executive director there. Crafting job descriptions and running a search, conducting interviews, was all part of that responsibility. You can't do that unless you have the ability to collaborate with your board of directors, get their input, respect their opinions, and pick the right person for the job, which we did. In East Lansing, I served for several years on the planning commission. I chaired it for six years. One of the things I grew to appreciate was the value of your zoning administrator. Too often they get too much disrespect from the community at large. The work they do dealing with applicants and walking them through the zoning code to get them to a spot where they have a plan to present to a planning commission is tremendous. I don't think they get the respect they deserve. I think if you chatted with the staff in East Lansing, you'd find I was one of the good guys. The esteem I held them in and listening to their opinions and guidance on these issues served me while I was a planning commission member and then later as a member of the elected city council in East Lansing.

One of the things the planning commission does that gets overlooked is craft the master plan. It in that master plan that the community expresses its values and beliefs and a guide to the future. What do you want to preserve? What do you want to change? That master plan should guide the language of the code, and your code should be designed to enforce and implement the aspects of that master plan. I've dealt with dozens of site plan applications. I've been through both municipal meetings, planning, zoning training, and MSU Extension citizen planner training. I think I'm in a good position to add value to this township, which is now my home. Immediately upon moving here and participating in the 2019 survey, reading the results of that survey and then diving deeper into the master plan, I felt like our family's values were right in line with what the township has articulated. To the question about the time commitment; I've done it before; I can do it again. At the time I was on the planning commission, I was single parenting four children. I squeezed some time to manage this aspect of serving my community. I think all told between neighborhood associations, planning commissions, parks and rec commission, and council hall, it was probably about 30 years of involvement in that community. The dust is settled now in our home. I'm in a good position now, where if the township would like, I'd be more than happy to serve in this capacity with you folks.

Sanger: how long were you with General Motors? And highlight the work you did there?

Beard: I was there 34 years. Started out on the assembly line. Moved over to the body plant welding parts together, installing doors and windshields. Then moved into positions dealing with safety education and training. Was an instructor dealing with the Hazard Communication Program back in the mid '80s, when everybody had to be informed about the chemicals they were working with and the hazards they presented. Got into quality training to the turn-of-the-century stuff when General Motors decided they needed to begin to copy the Toyota Production System. We had to implement training that would start people thinking differently about their jobs, from mass production to lean production. I played a small part in those efforts along the way.

Rudolph: planning commission for the city of Lansing. Out here we are very rural. Any experience with agricultural community?

Beard: I grew up in a rural township outside of Lansing. Oneida township was 80 percent farmland. The two acres I grew up on were garden and orchard. My whole family are farmers going back to a homestead in 1869. I'm not unfamiliar with an agricultural community. My cousins are still plowing the dirt out there. Specific experience I've had is where the city of East Lansing through 425 Agreements or 108 Agreements with the surrounding townships brought agricultural land in under their jurisdiction, did a revenue sharing program with them, and spurred development on the city's boundaries. We took land out of agricultural production, land that was going to be developed at some point anyway, but the township wouldn't give the developers what they wanted, so they used the mechanism allowed to them under the 425 Agreement. Listening in to some of the recent conversations about the possibilities of governmental changes here, I have some experience with that. In conclusion, I would say that, as we have recreated here, and as we have come to enjoy this peninsula, the necessity of preserving the agricultural character is paramount. I think that's in line with the master plan and with the planning commission's objectives.

Shanafelt: that's a long history of service. Do you still have it in you to continue it?

Beard: I find this stuff fascinating. I'm keenly interested in this because I think these things are important. The work the planning commission does in articulating and working towards preserving the community and implementing the values of the community are really critical and underappreciated. If you can stand on your integrity, if you follow the law, follow the code, then I don't think you have to apologize to anyone for the position you take as long as you can defend it under the law.

Wunsch: any other questions? We have two open positions. Donna Hornberger is seeking reappointment. Al Couture, who's served on the planning commission for seven or eight years, is not seeking reappointment.

Cram: we have two three-year vacancies.

Rudolph: all four of these candidates seem qualified. I like the continuity with Donna.

Sanger: it's a tough decision. I lean towards a background and experience in immediate capabilities, and in that sense, Kevin's background speaks for itself. This is very difficult. I've known John Snow and his dedication to the township for a long time. I was very impressed with Mr. Craig. Looking at the curriculum vitae, Kevin Beard is someone who will hit the ground landing.

Board discussion.

Sanger moved to nominate Kevin Beard with a second by Shanafelt.

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

Rudolph nominated Hornberger with a second by Sanger.

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

Wunsch: I'll now open the interviews for zoning board of appeals [ZBA]. For those of you who did not receive an appointment to the planning commission, I feel that you're both very strong candidates. If you would be interested in serving as alternatives to the zoning board of appeals, I would be very interested in having you serve in those roles.

Chown: I second that. I hope you consider it. Would love to have your expertise and assistance in the township.

Craig: will consider. Would be happy to help with the zoning and master plan.

Shanafelt: how long is the alternate appointment?

Wunsch: three years. We have historically drawn folks from the ZBA alternate positions as other spots have opened up. You often know you have someone who is interested.

Shanafelt: the roll of the alternate is to step in and function so we have a quorum.

Cram: the ZBA has to make motions in the affirmative. It's to the advantage of the applicant to have a full five-member ZBA. If one of the voting members is not available, we always try to fill it with an alternate so the applicant has the advantage to have the variance approved. We can run the meeting with four, but it's preferable to have five.

Achorn: there are many times that the alternate needs to be there. Even if they're not on the panel, it's good for them to be in the audience to get a feel for what's going on. I know, John, you spent a lot of time in the ZBA. Mr. Craig, that would be a good way to get to know what is going on and the problems that are happening. That would show you have interest, and when there is an opportunity to move somewhere else in the township, you already have firsthand experience with what is going on.

Wunsch: interview with Mike Dunn for the ZBA position.

Michael Dunn, 19313 Whispering Trail: I've owned property on the peninsula for 20 years. Have lived here full time for five. My best background feature is, I was the chairman of the zoning board for Caledonia Township. I was on the township board for five years, and I was chairman of the ZBA board for a total of 15 years. Caledonia Township is similar to Old Mission. Still a lot of farming, still a lot of development. The ZBA was a place I loved because we're really a court of appeals. I'm also a lawyer. The court of appeals takes cases, and we listen to the zoning board administrator, and we look for an opinion. We usually followed the opinion. People would come in front of us and say, "We want this ordinance a little bit different." And we would say, "That's really not how this operates." I would guess even though you evaluate every case, it's really the board of "No." Variances are few and far between. You follow the rules that have been set out by the community. Just like with law, court of appeals is extremely tough. Out of all the appeals, probably 98 percent are denied. The zoning board is a specific and fantastic way to give the community a voice, but we have to follow our rules unless there are certain criteria that are really extraordinary. I'm in the legal profession; I wasn't in real estate. I still have a practice, and I practice out of my home, mostly in front of a computer. I'm available.

Shanafelt: I'm assuming from what I've seen of the ZBA calendar that it's not as much of a time sink?

Jenn: it depends. When we have new applications, sometimes we have multiple meetings. We have had several meetings with no new business. We've been utilizing that opportunity for training. All the ZBA members are conducting training right now through Michigan State Extension.

Dunn: also going to visit the sites and see what is going on is critical.

Rudolph nominated Michael Dunn for the Zoning Board of Appeals with a second by Chown.

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

9. Citizen Comments: none

10. Board Comments:

Shanafelt: I just want to reiterate that this is difficult. Thank you again, everybody. I really appreciate it.

Sanger: I'm impressed with the quality and salute relatively new residents. I realize you have been here for some time, but to step forward is really appreciated.

Wunsch: I'm always amazed by the breadth of experience and skill that exists in this little community. Thank you for taking the time to apply and come out this evening.

11. Adjournment

Rudolph moved to adjourn with a second by Shanafelt. Motion approved by consensus
Adjourned at 6:59 p.m. U.S.