

# PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

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**Planning Commission**  
**October 7, 2025, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Township Hall**  
**Minutes - Approved**

**1. Call to Order by Beard at 7:00 p.m.**

**1. Pledge**

**2. Roll Call – Present:** Alexander, Beard, Dloski, Hornberger, Shipman; **Excused/Absent:** Hall, Shanafelt

**3. Approve Agenda**

**Motion by Dloski to approve the agenda as written, seconded by Shipman.**

**Motion Passes**

**4. Brief Citizen Comments:**

**Katharine Pike, 6095 Red Fox Run:** supports preserving hand-painted farm signs for their community and health value. Shares experience as a long-time Airbnb user and offers input on related issues. Expresses interest in a safe biking route between Traverse City and OMPS, noting current safety concerns on Center Road.

**Curt Peterson, 1356 Buchan Drive:** discusses item 11A on short-term rentals and recommends forming a citizen committee to review data and impacts before forwarding any zoning changes to public hearing. Notes that a prior committee met once about seven years ago. Questions how an ordinance might affect the lighthouse rental and potential farm stays mentioned by the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

**Louis Santucci, 12602 Center Road:** reports submitting a FOIA request for Airbnb complaints and receiving only redacted listings from an assumed single individual, with no written or transcribed oral complaints provided. Expresses concern that banning short-term rental advertising could violate constitutional protections for commercial speech and references an existing lawsuit involving similar issues. Urges the township to delay action until factual data and survey results are available and supports creating a citizens committee to study the matter.

**Holly Mullins, 1153 Braebury Way:** expresses concern that the upcoming shoreline planning meeting is scheduled for 1:00 p.m., as the time may exclude many working residents. Recommends offering an additional meeting outside regular work hours to allow broader participation. Notes she is a new resident, having recently purchased a lake-access home after many years vacationing in the area, and supports the SRSR recommendation of three docks per 50 feet to maintain existing conditions within her HOA.

**Kuang-Yi Lu, 13241 N. Queen Ann:** opposes reductions to hoist and dock density, stating that such limits would restrict lake access, reduce property values, and cause economic harm to compliant homeowners. Acknowledges that some residents have concerns about aesthetics or environmental impacts but urges the township to find targeted solutions rather than broad restrictions.

**Carolyn Mammen, 10878 Wood View Terrace:** expresses concern about the recent township survey and asks if it/responses can still be amended. **PC clarifies that the survey was created and issued by the Township Board of Trustees, not the Planning Commission.**

**5. Communications:** in packet from Chief Gilstorff, Planning Commissioner Armen Shanafelt, and Pete & Kim Morrison regarding Seven Hills, as well as correspondence from Ag Advisory Committee and George Weber concerning shoreline matters. Staff confirms no additional communications.

**6. Conflict of Interest: none**

**7. Approve Meeting Minutes**

a. **September 2, 2025 Planning Commission Regular Meeting**

**Motion by Hornberger to approve the minutes, seconded by Alexander.**

**Motion Passes**

**8. Planner Report**

**Loud:** reports progress on the county digital permitting system and ongoing interviews for a full-time planning, zoning, and assessing assistant. Reviews the zoning rewrite focusing on signage, shoreline, short-term rentals, and special use permits. Notes the signage draft returns to committee October 14, the shoreline ordinance is pending legal review before public hearing, and short-term rentals are under initial discussion. Outlines AAC recommendations on signage, a 40-acre minimum for agricultural zoning, and agritourism materials. PC discusses workload concerns; Loud states coordination is manageable with continued communication and clear timelines.

**9. Public Hearing**

a. **Seven Hills Special Use Permit 35, Amendment #4**

Loud introduces requested amendment to SUP #35 and explains that it is the result of collaboration between the township and the applicants (present: Troy Daily and Jordan Valdmanis) to address enforcement challenges and clarify outdated or unenforceable conditions. Proposed updates include aligning occupancy limits with applicable building and fire codes, revising noise conditions to reference the township's noise ordinance, and modifying traffic study requirements to apply only when land use changes occur. Applicant requests additional changes to remove the requirement that all outdoor uses end by 10 p.m. and to allow mobile kitchens and mobile bars on site. PC discusses requests, clarifying that food trucks are not currently permitted under township ordinances and opines that any allowance would require a zoning amendment applicable to all commercial properties. Loud advises that such a policy discussion should occur before approving the request. PC and applicants agree that amplified outdoor sound should cease by 10 p.m., replacing the broader restriction on outdoor activity. Applicant confirms compliance with parking and noise standards and expresses appreciation for the township's collaboration. PC supports clearer language to ensure enforceable, consistent standards while maintaining alignment with forthcoming updates to the township noise ordinance.

**Motion by Dloski to open public hearing, seconded by Hornberger.**

**Motion Passes**

**Holly Mullins, 1153 Braebury Way:** expresses support for local entrepreneurship and concern that township regulations, including those affecting Seven Hills, hinder business operations. States that communities across the country face similar challenges balancing preservation and economic activity but urges the township to avoid over-regulation that limits business opportunities. Cites court decisions involving local wineries as examples of government overreach and asks officials to use taxpayer funds responsibly. Emphasizes the importance of allowing entrepreneurs to operate freely and contribute to the community's vibrancy.

**Katharine Pike, 6095 Red Fox Run:** describes herself as a wine educator and frequent visitor to wine regions worldwide. She states that OMP is a beautiful area comparable to other wine destinations but lacks sufficient food options to complement its wineries. Expresses support for additional restaurants and food trucks, viewing them as enjoyable, adaptable, and attractive to visitors. Questions why local policies appear to restrict such offerings and notes that similar conflicts between tourism and regulation are uncommon in other wine regions.

**Louis Santucci, 12602 Center Road:** states agreement with prior speakers and argues zoning should prioritize public health, safety, and welfare rather than aesthetics. Cites objections to shoreline hoists and food-truck bans as lacking a health-safety basis and questions restrictions on pulling docks ashore and on short-term rentals. Asks whether renting and advertising a room in an owner-occupied home is lawful; the Commission responds that it is permitted as a bed-and-breakfast with a special use permit and that advertising is allowed, followed by brief discussion of the term "bed-and-breakfast." Reiterates that ordinances should be grounded in health, safety, and welfare.

**Motion by Hornberger to close public hearing, seconded by Shipman.**

**Motion Passes**

Members discuss whether to vote immediately or table the matter. Several commissioners express a preference to delay action until November to review a clean version of the document and clarify new elements introduced at the meeting, including requests for mobile kitchens and mobile bars. Commissioners agree that more information is needed regarding legal compliance, definitions, and licensing under state regulations.

**Motion by to table discussion of SUP #35, Amendment #4 to November 4, 2025 meeting of the Planning Commission by Dloski, seconded by Hornberger. Motion Passes**

## 10. Business

### a. Short-Term Rental Definition

Discussion over a proposed amendment to clarify enforcement of the township’s existing short-term rental prohibition. Loud explains that short-term rentals are already not permitted in any zoning district, and that this rule is not changing. The proposed update, drafted by McKenna & Associates, would add language explicitly prohibiting the advertisement of short-term rentals. This addition is intended to strengthen enforcement by allowing the township to act on listings before a violation occurs, reducing the need for neighbor complaints or property investigations. Loud notes that similar language appears in East Bay and Long Lake townships’ ordinances and recommends legal review to ensure compliance with free-speech protections. Commissioners agree that the change is procedural and does not alter the substance of the existing prohibition, only clarifies it to make enforcement more efficient and consistent. Amendment is referred to the zoning rewrite ad hoc committee and McKenna for further review and attorney input.

### b. Section 8.10 Building Height Discussion

Loud explains that removing the provision in section limiting height to two stories or 28 feet would default to the maximum height in all zones to 38 feet, consistent with other structures in the ordinance. Reviews related 2019 McKenna draft language addressing hotel and motel standards for comparison. Commissioner Alexander references that draft, noting it included clearer standards for activities and outdoor gatherings and suggests incorporating that language. After discussion, PC agrees that instead of adopting the full 2019 standards, they will simplify the current ordinance by deleting the phrase allowing activities “on lands under the direct control of the operator” and retain only that activities must occur on the lot used for the facility and that outdoor gatherings must not disrupt neighboring properties. Members concur that setting a specific ending time, such as 9:30 p.m., is unnecessary. A motion is suggested to amend Section 8.10 to remove the 28-foot height cap and to revise Section 8.10(14) with the simplified language.

**Motion by Hornberger to recommend amending Section 8.10 as stated and to move the amended version on to the Town Board agenda for approval, seconded by Alexander. Motion Passes**

## 11. Reports and Updates – Verbal

### a. Agricultural Advisory Committee

Beard reviews updates from the AAC including recently developed proposed definitions for agritourism. Notes the existence of both the Right to Farm Act and the 1998 Right to Processing Act as relevant frameworks. AAC recommends standardizing agricultural processing requirements to a minimum of 40 acres and plans to form a subcommittee to explore provisions for smaller producers operating on 5–39 acres, such as those producing maple syrup or vinegar. PC suggests incorporating the “Farmer’s Bill of Rights” - intended to outline farming community concerns and guide future zoning amendments - as a preamble within zoning section rather than as a standalone document and question the AAC’s recommendation to exclude financial metrics when determining whether agritourism is accessory to a farm operation, noting that both the Long Lake Township ordinance and Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs) reference revenue-based thresholds. Loud agrees to review the issue and ensure future recommendations align with GAAMP standards. Zoning rewrite ad hoc committee will continue evaluating agritourism language and comparative models from other townships.

**b. Non-Motorized Plan**

**Shipman:** township received grant funding to support the project and held a well-attended public engagement session at Old Mission Peninsula School in June, with approximately 120 participants. States that consultants are now preparing a draft plan and a presentation of proposed recommendations for a second public event. Next meeting will focus on reviewing concepts section by section to gather community feedback. Funding remains available for continued outreach, and staff plan to replicate the previous postcard mailing and public notifications to maximize awareness and participation.

**c. Township Board**

**Alexander:** reports that the community survey is underway and that postcards have been mailed to residents, with replacements available through the township website for those who did not receive one. Submissions open until October 10, after which results will inform ongoing policy discussions. Notes that individuals unable to complete the survey online may obtain a paper copy at Township Hall to ensure maximum community participation. Reports that the Board continues work on the noise ordinance and is finalizing acceptable decibel levels and enforcement methods, following input from local law enforcement emphasizing the need for clear, enforceable standards.

**12. Brief Citizen Comments (Please keep comments to 3 minutes per person)**

**Louis Santucci, 12602 Center Road:** criticizes the township’s restrictions on short-term rentals, stating that it is inconsistent for residents who use Airbnb elsewhere to oppose its use on the peninsula. Argues that prohibiting Airbnb makes the area less welcoming and burdens visitors with high hotel rates in town. Disputes claims that short-term rentals increase housing prices, citing already high property values on the peninsula. References a Michigan tax authority decision distinguishing Airbnbs from traditional bed-and-breakfasts, noting that state law defines the latter as serving breakfast. Contends that township actions, such as challenges to residential exemptions and costly development processes, discourage both property investment and business, concluding that the township is unwelcoming to development, short-term rentals, and property improvements.

**Curt Peterson, 1356 Buchan Drive:** clarifies that the definition of a bed-and-breakfast is established by state law and requires the serving of breakfast. Notes that nearly all Michigan municipalities, including Peninsula Township, Acme, and Long Lake, use this same definition because it is state-mandated. Emphasizes that serving food introduces specific food safety regulations, distinguishing licensed bed-and-breakfasts from Airbnbs.

**Holly Mullins, 1153 Braebury Way:** states that they are a former business owner who sold a successful brick-and-mortar company and had intended to open a new indoor business on the peninsula focused on community wellness. Asserts that she decided against the investment after learning about what they describe as restrictive township regulations and litigation involving local businesses. Asserts that township policies discourage entrepreneurship and drive potential businesses—and related tax revenue—elsewhere. Argues that supporting local enterprises, including food trucks, would create jobs and benefit the local economy, and urges the township to adopt a more business-friendly and open-minded approach to regulation.

**13. Other Matters or Comments by Planning Commission Members**

Shipman acknowledges the range of public input and notes that Peninsula Township has a long history of maintaining its rural, noncommercial character, a value upheld over decades. Emphasizes that this perspective reflects community priorities rather than bias and expresses appreciation for the constructive working relationship with the Seven Hills representatives. Commends the PC for its balanced, respectful approach and commitment to process. Dloski suggests requiring businesses to operate under SUPs as overly restrictive and limiting economic activity. Noted that township offers very little land zoned for commercial use.

**14. Adjournment**

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

**Motion passes**

**Meeting Adjourned at 8:56 p.m.**