

# PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City MI 49686

[www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com)

## Township Board Regular Meeting Minutes

October 12, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

Township Hall

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

2. **Pledge**

3. **Roll Call:**

Present: Sanger, Wahl, Manigold, Chown, Achorn

Absent: Wunsch, Bickle

4. **Brief Citizen Comments (for agenda items only)**

Lou Santucci, 12602 Center Road: at last week's meeting, several younger farmers brought up two important points in favor of the winery lawsuits: the opportunity for more employment and the lack of affordable housing in the area. We should look at the master plan and zoning for more multi-family housing construction.

Mike Skurski, 14696 Mallard: represents the Mission Hills Home Owners Association. We strongly urge the township to advocate for the repair of Bluff Road and ask you to not allow the petition to permanently close Bluff Road go unanswered [see letter included at the end of the minutes].

Dave Edmondson, 12414 Center Road: feels encouraged by the young farmers' comments at the community meeting in favor of the wineries. Wants right-to-farm language included in the zoning ordinance rewrite.

5. **Approve Agenda**

Manigold removed item three from the agenda. Achorn added two items to the Consent Agenda: 1) temporarily fund the low balance in the water account by taking \$75,000 from the Tower Fund with an interest payment of .12% for one year; 2) pay the Peninsula Township Zoning Administrator a stipend of \$1,500 [for undertaking some of the planner's responsibilities] while [the township is] without a planner. Wahl moved to approve the amended agenda and the additional consent agenda items with a second by Chown.

Roll call vote: Yes: Sanger, Wahl, Manigold, Chown, Achorn

Passed Unan

6. **Conflict of Interest:** none

7. **Consent Agenda:** any member of the board, staff, or the public may ask that any item on the consent agenda be removed and placed elsewhere on the agenda for full discussion

1. Invoices (recommend approval)

2. Reports

A. Grand Traverse County Sheriff Daily Officer Summary for August 2021

B. Grand Traverse Sheriff's Office Citation, Accident & Arrest Statistics for September 2021 and third quarter totals for July–September 2021

C. Peninsula Township Fire Department for September 2021

D. Cash summary by fund for Peninsula Township for September 2021

E. Peninsula Township Ordinance Enforcement Officer for September 2021

F. Peninsula Community Library for October 2021

3. Minutes from September 14, 2021, township board regular meeting
4. Correspondence
  - A. Karen Reiser
  - B. Rich and Susan Pierson
  - C. Jim Raphael
  - D. Brad Kluczynski and David McClary
  - E. Llewellyn Seibold
  - F. Lesli Humphrey
  - G. Karen Rieser
  - H. Dave Murphy
  - I. Andy Smits
  - J. Andy Smits
  - K. Fire Chief Fred Gilstorff and John Baker
  - L. Andy Smits
  - M. Rex Hite and 13 other township residents
  - N. Dinah Kretschmer
  - O. Carolyn and David Taylor
  - P. Cheryl and Richard Naperala

8. **Business:**

1. Peninsula Township Zoning Ordinance rewrite (tabled from last meeting)

**Sanger moved to take the Peninsula Township Zoning Ordinance rewrite off the table with a second by Chown.**

**Roll call vote: Yes: Sanger, Wahl, Manigold, Chown, Achorn**

**Passed Unan**

**Manigold opened the public comment portion of the meeting.**

Monnie Peters, 1425 Neahtawanta Road: the zoning ordinance rewrite needs to be passed now. Do not wait for the master plan, as it will take well into next year to complete the approval process.

**Manigold closed public comment.**

Board discussed the pros and cons of passing the zoning ordinance rewrite now and agreed to put the issue on next month's agenda.

**Wahl moved to table the public hearing until the next meeting with a second by Sanger. Passed Unan**

2. Update from Peninsula Township Parks Committee (Murphy)

Skurski: updated the board on the LIAA project, baseball field grass seeding, and need for warning signage regarding the upcoming hunting season at Mission Point Lighthouse Park and Old Mission State Park (see Peninsula Township Parks Committee October Update at end of minutes).

3. Mannor easement findings of fact and amended conservation easement (Manigold): removed from agenda
4. Resolution to update the township's poverty policy and guidelines (Manigold via Murray)

**Achorn moved to approve the resolution with a second by Sanger.**

**Roll call vote: Yes: Sanger, Wahl, Manigold, Chown, Achorn**

**Passed Unan**

5. Application from the Peter Dougherty Society regarding a proposed pavilion (Manigold)

**Wahl moved to approve the application with a second by Chown.**

**Roll call vote: Yes: Sanger, Wahl, Manigold, Chown, Achorn**

**Passed Unan**

6. Update on township litigation matters; possible closed session per MCL 15.268(e) to discuss the winery lawsuit and return to open session per MCL 15.261 (Meihn)

Meihn: there is no additional update at this time. Information for creating the citizens' committee is on the township website for interested people to apply.

9. **Citizen Comments:** none

10. **Board Comments**

**Chown:** candidates for the planning position are being interviewed on October 18, 2021.

11. **Adjournment: Wahl moved to adjourn the meeting with a second by Sanger.**

**Passed Unan**

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Dear Peninsula Township Board of Trustees,

The Mission Hills HOA has advocated for the repair and reopening of the closed portion of Bluff Road since its closure in January 2020. Although some members of the public might perceive the Mission Hills HOA's efforts as self-interested, it has consistently advocated the public importance of Bluff Road to area residents who rely on a north-south alternative to Center Road and this portion for effective emergency vehicle and firefighting access. The Mission Hills HOA has also highlighted the fact that this portion of Bluff Road is used by both bicyclists and runners who prefer the use of Bluff Road to avoid the higher traffic levels of Center Road. If the HOA was acting merely in self-interest, it would not continue to so advocate after the Road Commission finally recognized its legally separate, private right of access to its properties which survives any temporary or permanent road closure.

At the present, a small minority of home owners to the south of the road closure has submitted a petition for the permanent closure of Bluff Road, for the stated reasons that the current closure has reduced speeding along Bluff Road and has made their portion of Bluff Road, currently still open, more desirable for walking on the roadway. Although there are 14 signatures to this petition, 4 households signed the petition twice, one signature is not a property owner, and one owner does not use this residence as a primary residence.

We invite these petitioners to speak with the Township to discuss the reasons why MDOT has not performed a speed limit study of Bluff Road; namely, it has refused to do so because of the current closure status of Bluff Road. Thus, if petitioners desire a reduction of the speed limit from 55 mph, which everyone in the area would agree with, Bluff Road needs to be reopened for that study to occur.

These petitioners, other area residents, and other members of the public who use and enjoy Bluff Road should also understand two things. First, there is no such thing as a permanent road closure. The Road Commission will seek to abandon this portion of Bluff Road. Once abandoned, the Township will have the option to assume responsibility for repairing, reopening, and maintaining this portion of Bluff Road. Does the Township have any such intention of doing so and do these petitioners understand that Townships no longer maintain and own roads? Second, upon both abandonment by the Road Commission and declination by the Township to assume responsibility for this portion of the road, the road will revert to private ownership by the adjacent property owners, which includes the Mission Hills HOA. In other words, this portion of Bluff Road will no longer be open to the public for vehicle, pedestrian, or bicycle traffic. It will be private property, closed to the public.

It is unclear whether the sponsors of the Bayshore Marathon, various bicycle and running clubs, and area residents share this vision of terminating Bluff Road at the current southern barricade that will prohibit members of the public from either walking, driving, or biking to the north. But this is the reality should the Road Commission decide to abandon Bluff Road. Everyone who has any interest in this issue should understand what an abandonment of this portion of Bluff Road will mean to the public. We encourage the Township to engage these petitioners so that they are fully informed of the consequences of their request should the Road Commission proceed with a road abandonment.

Mission Hills Home Owners Association Board of Directors  
Michael Skurski, President