

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

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**Planning Commission
Zoning Rewrite Ad Hoc Committee
October 14, 2025, 1:00 p.m.
Township Hall
Minutes - Approved**

1. **Call to Order by Alexander at 1:03 p.m.**
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call – Present:** Alexander, Hornberger; **Excused/Absent:** Beard; **Planner of Record:** Elise Loud; **Virtual:** Representatives from McKenna & Associates
4. **Approve Agenda**

Motion by Hornberger to approve the agenda as written, seconded by Alexander. Motion Passes

5. **Brief Citizen Comments:**

Katharine Pike, 6095 Red Fox Run: acknowledges the township’s intent to restrict short-term rentals to preserve the peninsula’s natural character. Asks whether the committee has considered the potential for houseboats to be used as short-term rentals, noting that increased shoreline density and dock usage could create unregulated rental activity if not addressed in future regulations.

Curt Peterson, 1356 Buchan Drive: recommends forming a joint citizen and township subcommittee to study short-term rentals in greater detail. States belief that the 2009 ordinance restricted short-term rentals only in the R-1A residential zone, not in agricultural areas, and that prior planners confirmed this interpretation. Notes that recent FOIA requests yielded no recorded complaints about short-term rentals and questions whether the township’s lighthouse lodging, located in an agricultural zone, would become a nonconforming use under new rules. References the Agricultural Advisory Committee’s proposal to allow “farm stays” and urges broader community input before finalizing any zoning changes.

David Spinweber, 966 Bayside Drive: reads a statement from another resident expressing concern that new shoreline regulations might require property owners to obtain a special use permit (SUP) and Army Corps of Engineers/EGLE approvals before installing temporary seasonal docks and hoists. Warns this could create unnecessary costs and administrative burdens for shoreline property owners and the township.

Committee/Loud respond that no such requirement exists and clarify that the proposal does not mandate an SUP or EGLE permit for individual docks. Agrees to review the draft language to ensure the misunderstanding did not stem from an error in the document. Notes that current permitting applies only to shared waterfront situations, such as homeowners’ associations, and that recent discussions have focused on simplifying those requirements, not expanding them.

6. **Communications:** in packet
7. **Conflict of Interest:** none
8. **Approve Meeting Minutes**

- a. **September 8, 2025 Zoning Rewrite Ad Hoc Subcommittee Regular Meeting**

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

9. Business

a. Signage

McKenna and Associates review attorney redlines to the draft signage chapter, noting revisions primarily address compliance with Reed v. Gilbert restrictions on content-based regulation. Committee discusses allowable off-premises agricultural signage, sign measurement standards, illumination, and dark-sky compliance. Members request clarification on size and number limits for flags, simplification of sign-area language, and cross-references to existing ordinances. It is confirmed that the proposed 20-square-foot maximum for agricultural signs originated from Ag Advisory Committee research. McKenna will incorporate feedback and attorney guidance before returning a revised draft.

b. Special Use Permits

McKenna outlines updates to the SUP process, including a consolidated table of uses and new criteria defining “minor” versus “major” amendments. Minor amendments must meet seven strict conditions ensuring no change to use, footprint, impact, or approved conditions. Members suggest adding flexibility for small accessory structures (e.g., sheds under a set square footage) and clarifying privacy and economic-impact language. The group agrees to forward these points and potential wording refinements—such as replacing “privacy” with “safety, security, and enjoyment”—to the Planning Commission for further review.

c. Land Use Tables

Committee reviews McKenna’s consolidated land use tables for consistency and accuracy, noting issues such as pet and marina listings. Discussion follows on potential new residential uses, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and backyard chickens. Members express interest in allowing ADUs for family or home-office use (not rentals) and find the sample ordinance for chickens—allowing one hen per 0.1 acre, no roosters or slaughtering, and enclosed coops—a reasonable starting point. State daycare standards are reviewed; McKenna will correct zoning inconsistencies to ensure compliance and prepare draft language on these items for future consideration.

d. Short-Term Rentals

Committee reaffirmed that short-term rentals are prohibited in all zoning districts and discussed adding a ban on advertising such rentals to aid enforcement. Legal counsel will review the proposed language for compliance with free speech protections. Committee also recommended relocating the prohibition to a standalone section for clarity before forwarding it to the Planning Commission.

e. 40 Acre Minimum for Processing Facilities

Committee reviews the Ag Advisory Committee’s recommendation to standardize the minimum acreage for all farm processing uses—wholesale, retail indoor, and retail with outdoor seating—at 40 acres. The change aims to lower barriers for agricultural operations while maintaining existing setbacks and buffering requirements. Members agree the proposal aligns with the master plan’s goal of supporting local agriculture and should be advanced to the Planning Commission for discussion and feedback at its November meeting.

10. Brief Citizen Comments

Seth Blackman, Smokey Hollow (unnumbered): Supports allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to help families manage rising housing costs and care for multiple generations. Emphasizes that ADUs should not be used as rentals but as independent living spaces for relatives. Suggests permitting ADUs above garages and matching their height to the primary residence for affordability and efficiency. Also proposes that the township explore regulated short-term rentals as a potential revenue source—suggesting a per-night township fee to offset infrastructure and service costs tied to tourism—while maintaining strict enforcement to prevent neighborhood disturbances.

11. Committee Comments: none

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Hornberger, seconded by Alexander.

Motion Passes

Meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.