

**Packet
October 20, 2025
Parks Committee
Meeting**

Consent

Minutes from the August 25, 2025 Parks Committee Meeting

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City MI 49686
Phone: 231.223.7322 Fax: 231.223.7117
www.peninsulatownship.com

**Peninsula Township
Parks Committee Meeting
August 25, 2025
Notice/Agenda
3:00 p.m.**

1. **Call to Order** by D. Murphy at 3:02 p.m.
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call** C. Murphy, Caviston, D. Murphy, Zebell, Chown
4. **Approve Agenda C. Murphy moved to approve the agenda as presented with a second by Chown.**
Approved by Consensus
5. **Brief Citizen Comments (for agenda items only)** None
6. **Conflict of Interest** None
7. **Consent Agenda:** any member of the committee, staff, or the public may ask that any item on the consent agenda be removed and placed elsewhere on the agenda for full discussion.
 - A. Minutes from the June 23, 2025 Parks Committee Meeting
 - B. Minutes from the July 23, 2025 Parks Committee Meeting
 - C. Budget as of July 31**Chown moved to approve the consent agenda with a second by Caviston.**
Approved by Consensus
8. **Business**
 - A. **Introducing New Parks Committee Members**
 1. Liz Bruning
 2. Erin Gartland

New members Liz Bruning and Erin Gartland were welcomed and introductions highlighting their backgrounds and interests in local parks were shared. The committee includes experienced members who oversee specific parks, such as Pelizarri, Bowers Harbor, Bowers Harbor Natural Area, Kelley Park, and Archie Park. Members expressed commitment to collaborative stewardship and shared responsibilities across all of the township parks.
 - B. **Discussion of Parks Responsibilities**

Discussion centered on the parks budget and highlighted the complexity and historical challenges in tracking expenditures and revenues. Efforts to reconcile budget discrepancies are underway, with C. Murphy playing a key role in organizing and clarifying financial records. C. Murphy continued to provide the committee with monthly updates to the budget. The committee emphasized adherence to budget line items and the importance of involving the township treasurer in budget discussions. Monthly budget reviews and timely submission of agenda items were encouraged to maintain financial clarity. Pelizarri is a focal point with ongoing expansions and improvements, including new

kiosks, signage, the hemlock wing boardwalk, and a meadow project. The committee has worked closely with volunteers and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) on stewardship, invasive species control, and educational outreach.

Bowers Harbor Park has seen substantial enhancements such as a new parking design, courts (pickleball, basketball, volleyball, tennis), and playgrounds. The adjacent Bowers Harbor Natural Area is targeted for invasive species management and ecological restoration, supported by volunteer efforts and periodic treatments. The goat grazing for vegetation control occurred the month of July and made a significant start to control invasive autumn olive. The committee values the park's recreational and natural assets, aiming to balance use and conservation.

Kelley Park faces challenges. The committee has been involved in a complex, multi-year effort to obtain permits for a new boat launch separate from swimming areas, navigating regulatory hurdles with agencies like the Army Corps of Engineers. Recent storms have damaged existing infrastructure, underscoring the need for careful planning and community input.

Haserot Beach continues to receive maintenance attention, with concerns about overlapping uses and safety.

Archie Park was managed for 6 years by Mary Sue Milliken, who has now stepped down from the committee. Milliken was a dedicated steward of Archie Park. The park has benefited from volunteer-led projects such as fencing, a bike repair station, and signage updates. The committee noted the need for continued support and building a volunteer parks group.

- Chair - Dave Murphy, davemurphy6943@gmail.com
- Vice Chair - Michele Zebell, mzebell.parks@gmail.com
- Secretary - Torey Caviston, tcaviston.parks@gmail.com
- Member -Liz Bruning, lizbruning.parks@gmail.com
- Member -Erin Gartland, TBD
- Member -Christine Murphy, cmurphy.parks@gmail.com
- Becky Chown- clerk@peninsulatownship.com

If you have questions about a specific park, please contact the parks committee member assigned to that park:

Archie Park = TBD

Bowers Harbor Park = Torey Caviston

Bowers Harbor Natural Area = Michele Zebell

Haserot Beach = TBD

Kelley Park = TBD

Pelizzari Natural Area = Dave Murphy

C. Park Updates

1. Pelizzari – Hemlock Wing Boardwalk

The Hemlock boardwalk project and trail extensions, including the UA trail, are underway with engineering bids and pre-bid meetings scheduled. Material staging and environmental considerations were addressed, emphasizing careful execution to prevent erosion and other damage. The committee expressed interest in engaging experienced volunteers for these projects.

2. Bowers Harbor – Bathroom Quotes

Discussions included options for upgrading vault toilets and installing new restroom structures at Bowers Harbor Park. Quotes were obtained for prefabricated unisex bathrooms with septic systems, acknowledging the high costs involved. The committee recognized the need for improved accessibility and maintenance, but noted current limitations in funding for large projects.

D. Chainsaw Safety Training

There is enough interest in the township that the park's committee could think about hosting a chainsaw safety training. Brian Rathbun of Parshall Tree Care Experts offers a training class for 10-20 people at a cost of \$600 (see email in packet). Steve Lagerquist of the conservancy (GTRLC) will be contacted to see if this is a reasonable price or if the conservancy might have a current program.

E. Overnight Parking Signs

The cars parking overnight at Pelizarri are going to be ticketed. There is \$2,500 in the budget for signage. The committee is actively updating park signage, with assistance from Image 360 and the conservancy (GTRLC). Challenges include selecting appropriate colors distinct from the conservancy and installing main welcome signs at each park. Budget allocations exist for signage, though spending has been limited so far.

E. Lighthouse Committee Assignment

Ginger Schultz, the lighthouse manager, is requesting a new park's committee member to be the contact person for Old Mission State Park and the lighthouse property now that Pete Dahl has left the committee. C. Murphy to reach out to Schultz.

F. Budget Requests

C. Murphy presented the current budget numbers (see Budget ending July 31, 2025 in the packet). There is a recognized need to balance maintenance, improvements, and environmental guardianship within budget constraints. Fundraising and grant writing are ongoing efforts to support major projects, including playground upgrades and restroom facilities.

- 9. Citizen Comments- Nancy R. Heller. 3091 Bluewater Road:** this budget report reflects the expenditures but is missing the mis-classified items (Caviston has the amended budget report). Who is authorized to spend money and make the purchase for this committee? (Chown explained each member is authorized to spend money on behalf of their assigned park). I strongly recommend the treasurer be involved in all discussions regarding the budget. There are 6 months left on this budget.

10. Committee Comments

Chown: Bruning and Gratland will be sworn in at the clerk's office. Each new member will be assigned a park. The member needs to visit their park once a week, report any immediate health or safety problems to the township, and be the point person for issues within that park.

- A.** Long Lake Township Parks Budget-township board member JP Milliken is chair of the board's finance ad hoc committee. Milliken requested estimates for various park needs, saying it is data for long term planning of all financial needs for the township. Long Lake Township shares some similarities with the peninsula and D. Murphy reached out to them for a copy of their parks budget to provide a comparison. (see email and budget document in packet).

11. Adjournment Chown moved to adjourn the meeting with a second by Caviston.

Approved by Consensus

Peninsula Township
Parks Committee
August 25, 2025 3:00 p.m.
Lola Jackson Transcribing Secretary
DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

**Email Correspondence
from Bowers Harbor
Pickleball Group**



Torey Caviston <tcaviston.parks@gmail.com>

Hello Bowers Harbor Picklers!

1 message

Bowers Harbor Pickleball <bhpickleballclub@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: Bowers Harbor Pickleball <bhpickleballclub@yahoo.com>
To: Bowers Harbor Pickleball <bhpickleballclub@yahoo.com>

Fri, Sep 19, 2025 at 4:54 PM

Fall is quickly approaching and we have a few housekeeping items to bring up as we close out the pickleball season ~

1. Remember to **wipe your feet** when entering the courts. The heavy morning dew is causing quite a bit of sand to be tracked in. A volunteer has been blowing the courts weekly to help address this problem.
2. There is quite a collection of lost and found items in the **yellow metal box** ~ clothes, paddles, paddle covers, sunglasses, water bottles, towels. Please **claim YOUR items by October 15th** when a volunteer will take what remains to donate.
3. A **trash can** has now been placed inside the gate and will be emptied weekly by a volunteer. Please make sure to **close the lid**.
4. A little **fall maintenance will begin soon** as we have volunteers who will be scraping and repainting the court surface areas needing the repair.
5. Lastly, a heads up that the **Skedda reservation system will be available through October 31st** at which time it will be discontinued until next spring.

A huge thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who have stepped up to generously give their time and energy!! WE APPRECIATE YOU!!

Enjoy what's left of this pickleball season!

Your Bowers Harbor Leadership Team

Budget as of September 30

PERIOD ENDING 09/30/2025

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2025-26 AMENDED BUDGET	YTD BALANCE 09/30/2025	ACTIVITY FOR MONTH 09/30/2025	AVAILABLE BALANCE	% BGD USED
Fund 208 - Parks Fund						
Revenues						
Dept 000						
208-000-580.000	County Funding	25,000.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00	0.00
208-000-607.EVT	Parks Lg. Event Fee	28,000.00	33,005.00	0.00	(5,005.00)	117.88
208-000-664.000	Interest Income	1,700.00	206.67	0.00	1,493.33	12.16
208-000-667.000	Rental Income	700.00	500.00	0.00	200.00	71.43
208-000-675.000	Donations	0.00	315.00	0.00	(315.00)	100.00
208-000-675.CAP	Donations/Grants Capital Fund-Kelley Pk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
208-000-675.DNR	GRANT-DNR KELLEY BOAT LAUNCH	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
208-000-675.EVT	LARGE EVENT-PARKS DONATIONS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
208-000-675.GNT	Park Grants Received	0.00	2,072.00	0.00	(2,072.00)	100.00
208-000-675.NMT	GRANT: NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL	8,000.00	0.00	0.00	8,000.00	0.00
208-000-675.PLK	Donations-Pickleball Court	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
208-000-676.000	Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Dept 000		63,400.00	36,098.67	0.00	27,301.33	56.94
Dept 930 - APPROPRIATIONS-TRANSFERS IN						
208-930-699.000	Appropriated Transfers In	110,000.00	110,000.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total Dept 930 - APPROPRIATIONS-TRANSFERS IN		110,000.00	110,000.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
TOTAL REVENUES		173,400.00	146,098.67	0.00	27,301.33	84.26
Expenditures						
Dept 000						
208-000-710.WRK	Workers Comp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Dept 000		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dept 751 - PARKS						
208-751-703.000	Per Diem	7,490.00	1,130.00	0.00	6,360.00	15.09
208-751-710.LIB	Liability Insurance	3,240.00	3,469.38	0.00	(229.38)	107.08
208-751-710.WRK	Workers Comp	775.00	117.50	0.00	657.50	15.16
208-751-715.000	Employer Social Security	775.00	174.42	15.30	600.58	22.51
208-751-726.000	Supplies	10,000.00	209.80	0.00	9,790.20	2.10
208-751-726.PRK	Park Signs	2,500.00	0.00	0.00	2,500.00	0.00
208-751-783.000	Seeding and Planting Services	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00
208-751-801.000	Legal Fees	1,000.00	659.50	0.00	340.50	65.95
208-751-807.000	Audit Fees	525.00	245.00	0.00	280.00	46.67
208-751-818.000	Contractual Services-R Wilkinson	81,000.00	36,047.04	12,015.68	44,952.96	44.50
208-751-818.010	Recording Secretary	2,625.00	1,150.00	200.00	1,475.00	43.81
208-751-818.200	Contract Services	27,000.00	6,900.83	(42,925.00)	20,099.17	25.56
208-751-818.PLO	Plowing	3,100.00	5,210.00	0.00	(2,110.00)	168.06
208-751-855.DEQ	Noncom. Public Wat. Sup. Fee	1,500.00	415.00	0.00	1,085.00	27.67
208-751-881.000	Community Activities	1,500.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00
208-751-900.000	Legal Notices	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
208-751-900.PNP	Printing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
208-751-921.000	Electricity	2,675.00	1,597.71	470.44	1,077.29	59.73
208-751-926.000	Street Lighting	1,550.00	729.79	96.69	820.21	47.08
208-751-930.000	Repairs and Maintenance	15,000.00	4,865.49	375.84	10,134.51	32.44
208-751-958.000	Memberships and Dues	700.00	711.73	0.00	(11.73)	101.68
208-751-965.000	Meetings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

PERIOD ENDING 09/30/2025

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2025-26 AMENDED BUDGET	YTD BALANCE 09/30/2025	ACTIVITY FOR MONTH 09/30/2025	AVAILABLE BALANCE	% BDGT USED
Fund 208 - Parks Fund						
Expenditures						
208-751-966.KEL	Grant Cost - Kelley Park	0.00	53,442.90	9,193.30	(53,442.90)	100.00
208-751-967.BHP	Grants - BHNA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
208-751-967.DTE	Grant Costs-DTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
208-751-967.NMT	Grants - Non-Motorized Transportation	0.00	50,583.89	48,285.00	(50,583.89)	100.00
208-751-970.000	Capital Outlay/MiscExpenditures	75,000.00	93,110.85	0.00	(18,110.85)	124.15
208-751-970.PKL	Capital Outlay-Pickleball Court	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Dept 751 - PARKS		242,955.00	260,770.83	27,727.25	(17,815.83)	107.33
Dept 753 - PARKS-PELIZZARI NATURAL AREA						
208-753-710.LIB	Liability - Insurance	405.00	392.88	0.00	12.12	97.01
208-753-807.000	Audit Fees	150.00	61.25	0.00	88.75	40.83
208-753-818.000	Contractual Services	0.00	0.00	(25,360.00)	0.00	0.00
208-753-818.PLO	Plowing	520.00	440.00	0.00	80.00	84.62
208-753-921.000	Electricity	415.00	174.75	31.52	240.25	42.11
Total Dept 753 - PARKS-PELIZZARI NATURAL AREA		1,490.00	1,068.88	(25,328.48)	421.12	71.74
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		244,445.00	261,839.71	2,398.77	(17,394.71)	107.12
Fund 208 - Parks Fund:						
TOTAL REVENUES		173,400.00	146,098.67	0.00	27,301.33	84.26
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		244,445.00	261,839.71	2,398.77	(17,394.71)	107.12
NET OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES		(71,045.00)	(115,741.04)	(2,398.77)	44,696.04	162.91

Business

Parks Millage/Capital & Operating Budget Discussion



Torey Caviston <tcaviston.parks@gmail.com>

Regarding next meeting

2 messages

davemurphy6943@gmail.com <davemurphy6943@gmail.com> Sun, Oct 12, 2025 at 10:30 PM
To: Michele Zebell <mzebell.parks@gmail.com>, Becky Chown <clerk@peninsulatownship.com>, Torey Caviston <tcaviston.parks@gmail.com>, Christine Murphy <cmurphy.parks@gmail.com>, Liz Bruning <lizbruning.parks@gmail.com>, eringartland.parks@gmail.com
Cc: Maura Sanders <supervisor@peninsulatownship.com>

All,

I know that Torey will get our agenda & packet set soon. Michele & I have had a some back & forth about the discussion we'll have about parks needs relevant to the discussion about potential millage.

To prep for that discussion, I think Michele has some documents she might like to add to the packet, but I've been on the run the past couple days, we haven't reconnected, & it's late Sunday night. Without bothering Michele but affording everyone maximum lead time, I'll just ask that at a minimum, each of us review the documents involving parks budgets, capital needs, and planning as follows:

Parks documents are at this link: <https://www.peninsulatownship.com/parks1.html> - and please at least review the [2023 Parks & Rec Plan](#), the [Parks Public Input Study](#), the [Parks Feasibility Study](#), & the [Parks Capital Projects](#) document.

Michele – please add anything else you think is relevant or point to particular concerns. Christine & Torey, please don't hesitate to bring any current budget matters into the discussion

I'm copying Maura on this in case she has anything she'd like in front of us in advance of her attendance at the meeting on the 20th at 3 p.m.

Thanks everyone.

Dave

Michele Zebell <mzebell.parks@gmail.com> Mon, Oct 13, 2025 at 1:05 PM
To: Dave Murphy <davemurphy6943@gmail.com>, Becky Chown <clerk@peninsulatownship.com>, Torey Caviston <tcaviston.parks@gmail.com>, Christine Murphy <cmurphy.parks@gmail.com>, Liz Bruning <lizbruning.parks@gmail.com>, eringartland.parks@gmail.com
Cc: Maura Sanders <supervisor@peninsulatownship.com>

Thank you for referencing the documents we should review prior to the meeting, Dave. I appreciate it. After our discussion, it seemed redundant to include them in the packet when they are already available online.

Dave, I did wonder if we would want to include the recent information you shared with us in our August packet regarding Long Lake Township. If we're looking at budget numbers and including consideration of a parks manager, it might be

Torey,

Please include this note along with the attachment from Long Lake Township's parks budget in our next packet. I can cover it in committee member comments, so no need to make it an agenda item, but the subject is of interest to our committee, so just wanting to share what follows in this note as well as the attachment.

As background, I was contacted by township board member JP Miliken because he's chair of the board's ad hoc finance committee. He asked for ballpark numbers for various parks needs, saying it's data for long-term planning of all financial needs in the township.

JP asked about any knowledge I might have for a parks manager position because the subject comes up, including in the Maner Costersan Report's recommendations.

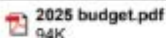
I did a quick web search to answer JP about a parks manager, but numbers are all over the place. We know that Long Lake Township has some parallels to Peninsula Township – a lot of parkland, significant waterfront ownership, a bedroom community to TC, not a lot of commercial zoning, and a good amount of ag land remaining. Long Lake Supervisor Ron Lemcoo has been generous in providing us with comp data for other planning purposes, so I asked if he might provide their parks budget data including what they pay their two parks employees. Again, I made that request per JP's interest.

Ron was prompt in his reply. Many thanks to him for sharing this.

So, to be clear, this is not a proposal to hire a parks manager. But when we get data of value for long-term planning, I think it's of interest to study and file it.

Thank you.

Dave Murphy



2025 budget.pdf
94K

Torey Caviston <tcaviston.parks@gmail.com>
 To: davemurphy6943@gmail.com

Wed, Aug 13, 2025 at 3:51 PM

Thanks, Dave! I will add it to committee member comments!

[Quoted text hidden]

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/3/?ik=2ee1cd127&view=pt&search=all&permthid=thread-f1840365370627551992&siml=msg-f184036537062755199...> 1/2

BUDGET REPORT FOR LONG LAKE TOWNSHIP
 Calculations As of 12/31/2024

G. Number	Description	2024 RECOMMENDED	2024 Activity	2024 Amended Budget	2025 RECOMMENDED	2025 ADOPTED
Fund: 101 GENERAL FND						
750 PARKS & RECREATION						
101-750-700-000	SALARY AND WAGES	46,570.00	40,203.72	46,570.00	47,966.00	0.00
101-750-700-001	BAKERS, ASSISTANT	38,233.00	31,238.53	38,233.00	39,380.00	0.00
101-750-700-002	MONITOR-CRES SHRS BOAT LAUNCH	20,000.00	21,725.75	20,000.00	20,000.00	0.00
101-750-709-000	FICA	8,769.00	5,855.39	8,769.00	8,857.00	0.00
101-750-717-000	PENSION	9,135.00	2,638.03	9,135.00	9,669.00	0.00
101-750-757-000	SUPPLIES	8,000.00	9,404.95	8,000.00	10,000.00	0.00
101-750-801-004	CONSULTATION & OTHER	4,000.00	(15,550.99)	4,000.00	10,000.00	0.00
101-750-801-100	CONSULT & OTHER-CRESCENT SHRS	20,000.00	34,140.00	20,000.00	0.00	0.00
101-750-840-000	HEALTH DYSURANCE	18,351.00	21,987.71	18,351.00	28,710.00	0.00
101-750-840-017	HEALTH INS DEBIT CARD	3,500.00	3,000.00	3,500.00	6,000.00	0.00
101-750-900-000	UTELTTES	3,000.00	32,735.98	3,000.00	20,000.00	0.00
101-750-930-000	MAINTENANCE & REPAIR	112,578.59	121,826.64	112,578.59	120,000.00	0.00
101-750-930-003	TREE MAINTENANCE	20,000.00	5,520.00	20,000.00	40,000.00	0.00
101-750-930-100	PORTABLE RESTROOMS	25,000.00	22,270.89	25,000.00	25,000.00	0.00
101-750-956-000	EDUCATION	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00
101-750-970-000	OUTLAY	0.00	360,800.00	87,160.00	0.00	0.00
101-750-970-100	OUTLAY-CRES SHRS BOAT LAUNCH	0.00	(344,917.29)	344,952.39	0.00	0.00
101-750-970-200	OUTLAY-ARAWOOD PARK	0.00	86,759.54	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Department 750:		(517,630.59)	(190,328.25)	(769,748.98)	(386,024.00)	0.00

Park Volunteering – Chainsaw Training Update

PNA – Hemlock Boardwalk Update

Nonmotorized Transportation Committee Update

Friends Group Conversation

Archie & BHP Signage



Torey Caviston <tcaviston.parks@gmail.com>

Archie Park signage and BHP signage

2 messages

Becky Chown <clerk@peninsulatownship.com>

Mon, Oct 13, 2025 at 10:46 AM

To: Michele Zebell <mmzebell@gmail.com>, Torey Caviston <tcaviston.parks@gmail.com>

Good morning, you two!

I just spoke to Tyler at Image360, and they will have the first proof of the Archie Park signage to us late this week or Monday. Torey, put that item on the agenda, and I'll bring copies to pass out at the meeting (assuming I don't get them til Monday).

I also need to catch you up with signage efforts at BHP. I have been working off and on again for more than two years with Karen Rieser to get the big memorial rock and plaque at the Bowers Harbor Boat Launch moved to a more prominent location. Karen worked with the DNR to receive permission to move the rock, and last week, Brian Peace and his son, Mason, came and moved it.

Karen also received permission to redo the historic signage about S. E. Wait and the first school on the peninsula (held on the schooner Madeline in Bowers Harbor). That sign is currently at BHP in the new perennial garden at the main parking lot – it's in terrible shape, points in the wrong direction (toward the pickleball courts!), and really belongs at Bowers Harbor next to the rock with the plaque honoring S. E. Wait.

I am attaching several documents: first, a picture of the existing signage at BHP that's in such terrible shape.

Second, I'm attaching the revised text that we hope to put on the new sign next to the rock at the boat launch. Then we will take down the sign that's in such horrible shape. Note that we are trying to get a drawing of the schooner Madeline (the original schooner, not the new version), for the new sign. We'd greatly appreciate any input you have about the text and pictures. Image 360 is going to create the sign, and the historical society will pay for it.

Third, I'm attaching another document that could be one of our new signs at BHP. It's filled with interesting historical information about BHP. Karen wrote it; I edited it. I told her that the parks committee is redoing signage there and she was very excited and hopped right to it. I hope you don't mind. Jane Boursaw helped with some of the information.. This material, if we use it, will just be one of the new signs we will create/need, but it's a start.

I hope we will move aggressively to determine what we need at BHP and then create it because we have the budget right now to do it. We did have one long field trip out there some months ago to determine signage needs...Can we resurrect it? Where do we go from here?

I welcome your input!

Becky

Rebecca Chown

Peninsula Township Clerk

13235 Center Road

Traverse City MI 49686

phone: 231-223-7321

fax: 231-223-7117

clerk@peninsulatownship.com

Office Hours: Mondays 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Tuesdays–Thursdays 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and closed Fridays–Sundays and holidays

3 attachments



Existing Historic Sign at BHP.jpg
1231K

 **The Schooner That Became A School with edits.docx**
1527K

 **The History of Bowers Harbor Park signage text.docx**
1081K

Michele Zebell <mmzebell@gmail.com>
To: Becky Chown <clerk@peninsulatownship.com>
Cc: Torey Caviston <tcaviston.parks@gmail.com>

Mon, Oct 13, 2025 at 1:17 PM

Thanks for the connections and legwork, Becky.

I'll look over the materials you sent and think through what I can remember re: signs at BHP and BHNA. I've not contacted the tribe, but this will get me moving. Thank you.

Michele

[Quoted text hidden]

The History of Bowers Harbor Park

For thousands of years, a natural, deep-water harbor on the Old Mission Peninsula (OMP) has provided a haven for all who have called it home. The first human occupants to choose the area as their seasonal home were the Anishinabek, specifically the members of the Odawa and Ojibway tribes.

In the seventeenth century, French fur trappers found the peninsula and its harbor.

After the French and Indian War (1754–1763), the British replaced the French.

In the mid 1800s, a group of Mormons fleeing their settlement on Beaver Island arrived in the harbor area. Among them was Nicholas Bowers, for whom the harbor is named.

In the winter of 1851, a crew of five on the schooner *Madeline* decided it would be beneficial to improve their reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. Seeking a quiet environment, they anchored for the winter in Bowers Harbor. Hiring the young S. E. Wait as their instructor, they achieved their goal. A commemorative plaque can be seen across the road on a large rock at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' West Arm Boat Launch on West Grand Traverse Bay.

Harbor life rapidly evolved. Perry Hannah bought land on OMP, harvested the timber for his sawmill in Traverse City, and sold cleared parcels to eager settlers moving west to farm. Agriculture quickly became a big business on the peninsula, and the abundance of produce led to a prolific shipping industry. Both passengers and produce were moved to and from the dock at Bowers Harbor, with Chicago and Milwaukee among their destinations.

In 1880, Chicago lumber baron J. W. Stickney and wife Genevieve built their home in the Bowers Harbor area. Before long, the home was converted to an inn to accommodate visitors. Today the inn is the home of the Jolly Pumpkin and Mission Table restaurants.

The former Bowers Harbor Store played a major role in the area's development. Initially a general store, it slowly expanded, adding a docking area, fueling station, engine repair facility, and bait shop. In 1960, the store was purchased by the Paul H. DeYoung Company, which added the marina and manufactured fly rods. When the building was sold in the 1990s, it became the Boathouse restaurant.

Bowers Harbor Park existed as a recreational area as early as 1910, when it was a picnic and baseball ground for the Traverse City Resorters. While Peninsula Township now formally owns and manages the park, its history as a public recreational space dates back over a century, with vintage postcards confirming its use as a popular baseball field and picnic grounds at this time.

Baseball has a storied past at Bowers Harbor Park. The game first gained popularity in the U.S. and on OMP in the 1860s. By the 1900s, the park boasted picnic tables, spectator bleachers, and a concession stand selling cigars and treats such as rootbeer and candy. Over the years, the Bowers Harbor Park baseball diamonds have seen Little League and school teams compete. In years past, adult groups such as the Peninsula Hustlers, Mapleton, and Ogdensburg teams played ball against other area teams.

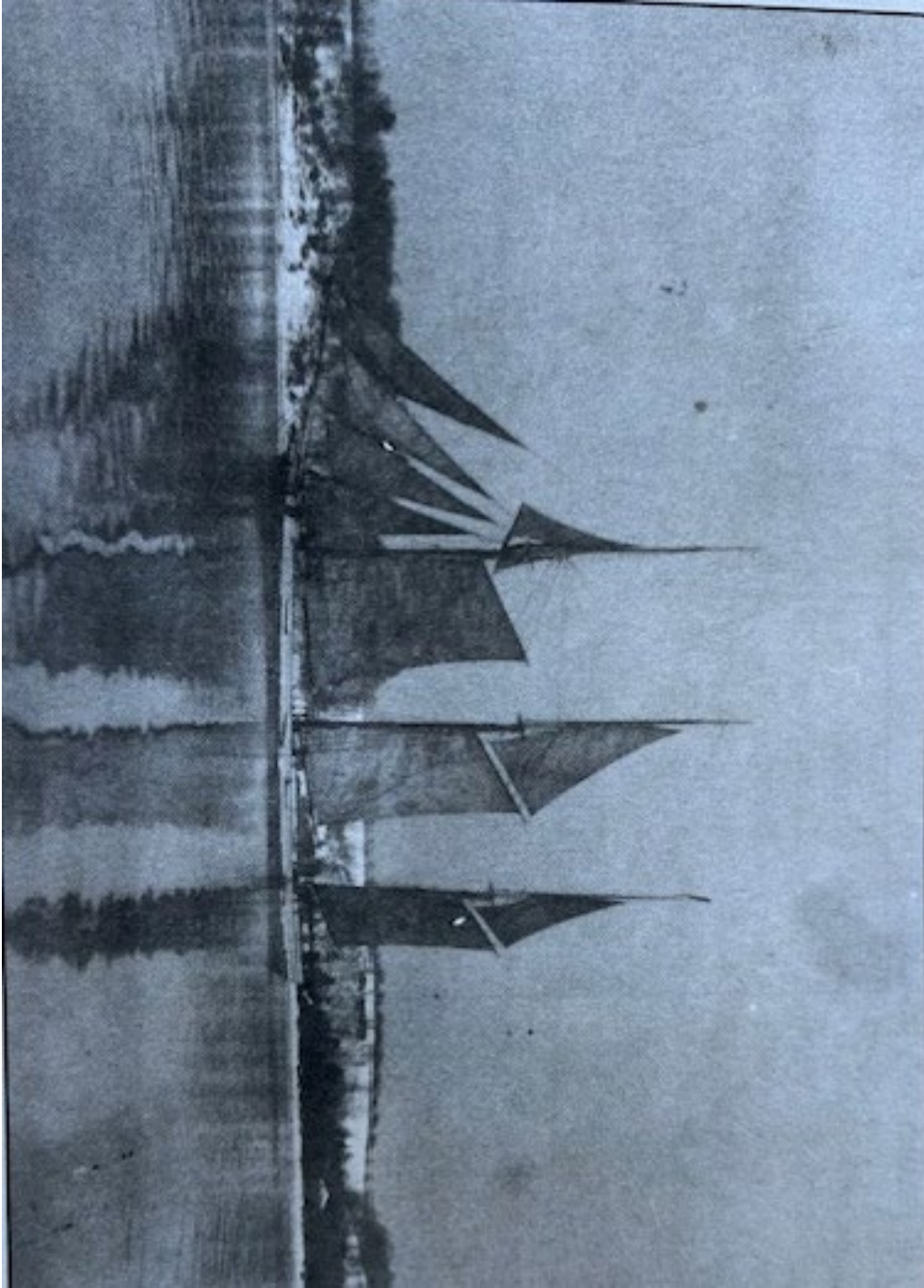
Today, baseball is still played in Bowers Harbor Park along with basketball, pickleball, soccer, tennis, and volleyball. Celebrations can be held in the pavilion that replaced the concession stand, a magnificent playground awaits children, and the adjacent Bowers Harbor Natural Area to the south, crisscrossed by trails, is ready to be explored.

Enjoy your time in the park!

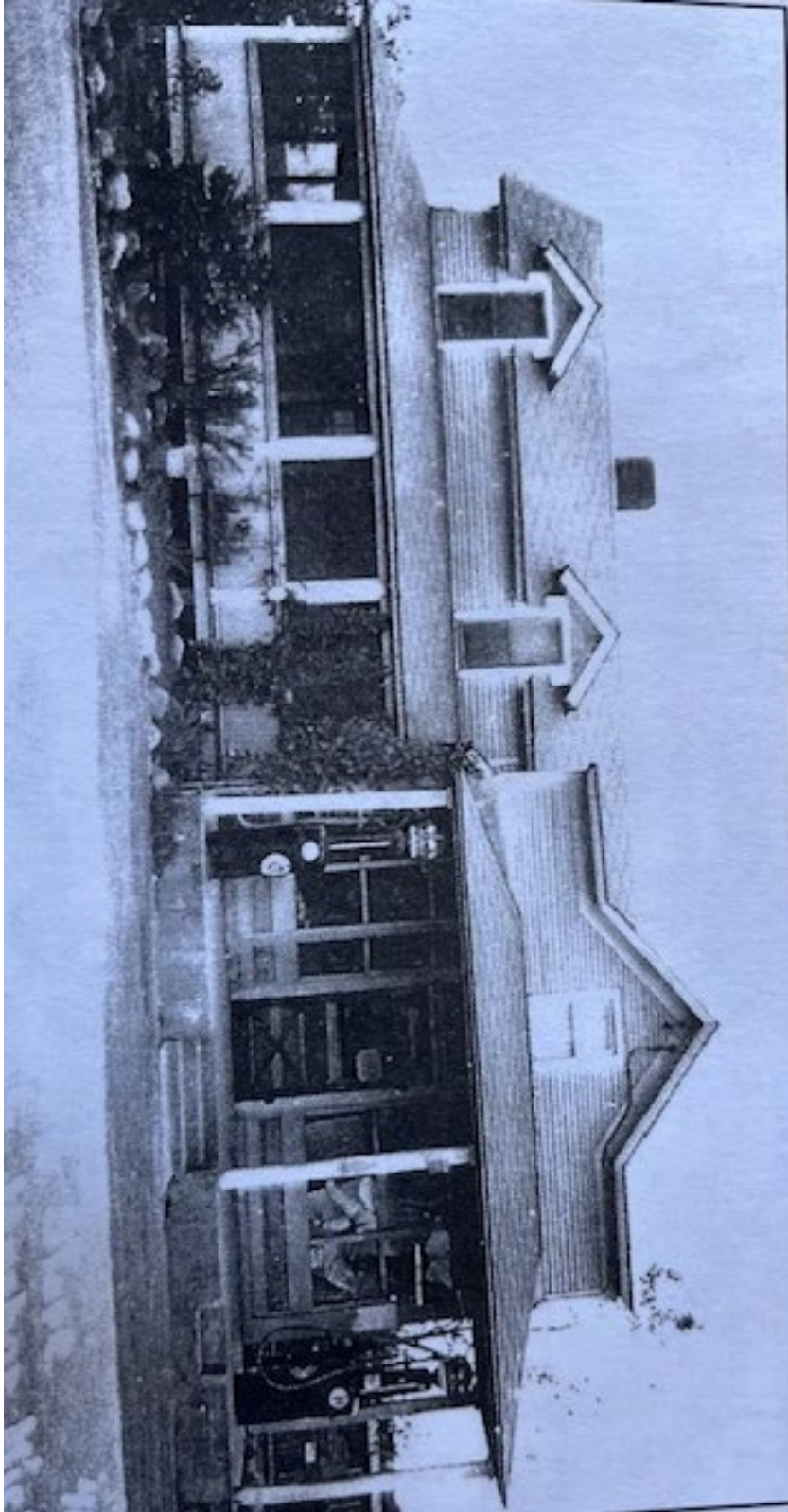
The following photos are courtesy of *A Century of Service* by Jack Solomonson and Mary Jo Lance.



The former concession stand at Bowers Harbor Park



The *Boyce* under full sail in Bowers Harbor in 1909



The Bowers Harbor Store, cite of today's Boathouse restaurant, circa 1946

The Madeline:
The Schooner That Became a School

In the winter of 1851, the *Madeline*, one of two thousand Great Lakes schooners, became the first non-Indian school on Old Mission Peninsula.

Her crew, William, Michael, and John Fitzgerald, relatives of Edmund Fitzgerald for whom the ore carrier was named, along with William Bryce and cook Edward Chambers, decided to anchor in the quiet, ice-covered waters of Bowers Harbor for the winter. Their purpose: to acquire an education. Turning the *Madeline's* cabin into a classroom, they hired seventeen-year-old S. E. Wait as their instructor, paying him twenty dollars in gold a month.

Throughout the winter, mornings were spent in the classroom while afternoons were reserved for chores, wood cutting, and snowball fights. With the arrival of spring, the crew emerged with enhanced skills. Each man went on to create a successful career sailing the Great Lakes.

As for S. E. Wait, he became a prominent photographer, author, builder, sailor, and respected proprietor of the local pharmacy.

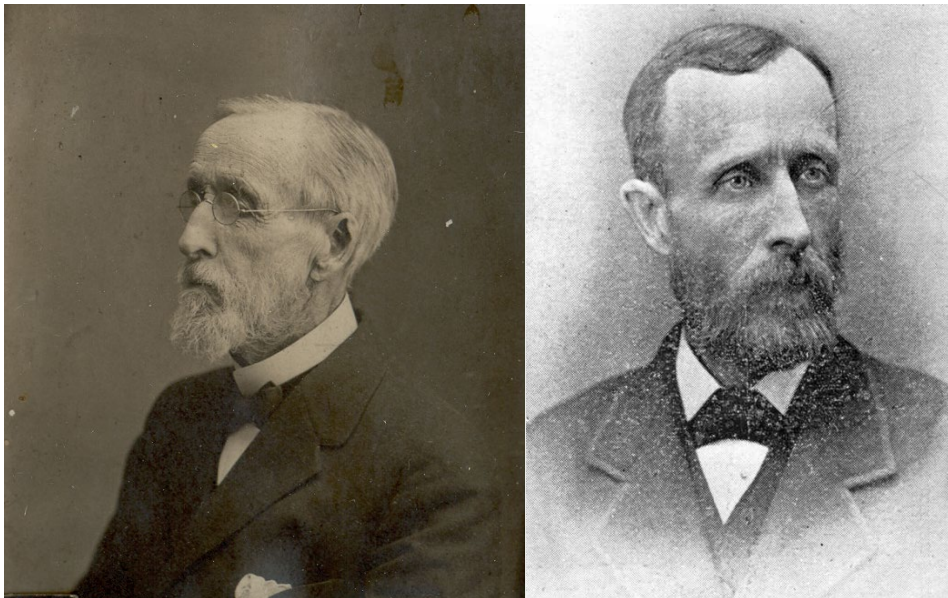
Eventually, the *Madeline*, like so many schooners of the day, was scuttled (deliberately sunk). Her story, however, does not end there.

Traverse City area volunteers from the Maritime Heritage Alliance (MHA), valuing the schooner's service and history, constructed a replica. MHA shipwrights, loyal to the original design, used traditional building methods and materials. In 1990, after five years' labor, the *Madeline* was launched in West Grand Traverse Bay. Since

then, she has sailed all five Great Lakes and visited more than sixty ports.

Today, as the State of Michigan's official tall ship and Traverse City's goodwill ambassador, the *Madeline* can be found docked in Traverse City when she's not sailing. Still a teacher, she offers dockside tours and historical information pertaining to her namesake.

Thanks to the Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society, Elmer's Excavating, Michigan DNR, and community volunteers for making this project possible.



S. E. Wait



The *Madeline*, courtesy of the Maritime Heritage Society

Budget Requests

On Sep 4, 2025, at 3:10 PM, Robin Noval <deputy.clerk@peninsulatownship.com> wrote:

Hello Christine,

We have received a merchandise rebate in the amount of \$345.58 for Parks materials/supplies that were purchased in July 2025. I have the certificate, and I do not see an expiration date. Becky asked that I pass this information on to you for use on future Parks needs. I will hold onto the rebate check until a purchase has been approved. It is only valid on purchases IN-STORE, not for use online.

Let us know if you have any questions.

Regards,

Robin Noval

Peninsula Township Deputy Clerk

13235 Center Road

Traverse City MI 49686

phone - 231-223-7321

deputy.clerk@peninsulatownship.com

Office Hours: Mondays 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Tuesdays–Thursdays 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and closed Fridays–Sundays and holidays