



# PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

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**Planning Commission**  
**November 4, 2025, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Township Hall**  
**Minutes - Corrected**

1. **Call to Order by Beard at 7:00 p.m.**
2. **Pledge**
2. **Roll Call – Present:** Alexander, Beard, Dloski, Hall, Hornberger, Shanafelt, Shipman; **Excused/Absent:** none
3. **Approve Agenda**

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

**Beard** references an MSU Extension article on avoiding ex parte communications, reminding members that discussions with interested parties outside public meetings compromise fairness and must be disclosed so all members receive the same information. Also stresses maintaining professionalism, noting that cameras and microphones capture side conversations and expressions, and urges members to model decorum for the public.

4. **Brief Citizen Comments:**

**Katharine Pike, 6095 Red Fox Run:** says the recent survey gave the impression that the township is running out of money and may need to raise property taxes, though she clarifies that may not have been stated directly. Asks where tax revenue from peninsula businesses goes and whether any stays within the township.

**Commission** responds that most tax revenue is distributed among various jurisdictions, with only a small portion remaining in the township, and advises her to speak with the township treasurer/consult the tax breakdown chart in the biannual newsletter for details.

5. **Communications:** **Beard** notes receipt of roughly two dozen communications regarding shoreline standards, many based on a circulating form letter. **Shipman** comments that the letters contain misinformation, incorrectly suggesting that the township is reducing shoreline rights. Clarifies that the current ordinance allows one hoist per 50 feet, not three, and says many letter writers appear unaware of this. Expresses concern that spreading false information harms the community, misleads residents, and undermines the township’s deliberate review process. Encourages citizens to verify facts directly with township staff or by consulting the ordinance.

6. **Conflict of Interest: none**

7. **Approve Meeting Minutes**

- a. **October 7, 2025 Planning Commission Regular Meeting**

**Motion by Hornberger to approve the minutes, seconded by Shipman.** **Motion Passes**

8. **Planner Report**

**Loud:** reports that a new full-time administrative assistant begins November 12 and that the township is posting for a full-time planning and zoning administrator to help reduce the six-week permit turnaround. The zoning rewrite continues to address signage, shoreline standards, short-term rentals, acreage minimums, and residential uses such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and backyard chickens. Attorney comments on signage and shoreline drafts are under review, with a shoreline public hearing expected in December/January. Attorney advises keeping the current short-term rental rules rather than adding advertising restrictions. Commissioners discuss improving efficiency in seeking legal review earlier in the process.

**9. Business**

**a. Seven Hills Special Use Permit 35, Amendment #4 Continued Discussion (Need Motion)**

**Motion to remove from the table the amendment to the above Special Use Permit that was tabled at the October 7 regular meeting of the Planning Commission for further discussion and consideration made by Dloski, seconded by Shipman. Motion Passes**

Loud clarifies that the packet includes the original staff report, a highlighted version of the conditions of approval, and a redlined version showing proposed changes. Members discuss the proposed inclusion of self-contained mobile kitchens and bars, which are not permitted uses in the township.

**Motion to recommend denial of Amendment #4 to SUP 35 as presented made by Shanafelt, seconded by Alexander.**

**Motion to amend the main motion by striking Condition 1, Subsections H and I, referencing the mobile kitchen and bar(s) from the language made by Beard, seconded by Shanafelt.** Beard comments that these are not currently permitted uses anywhere in the township and as Commissioner Dloski pointed out at the last meeting to grant this would amount to a use variance which is not legal.

**Roll Call Vote: Alexander: Yes; Beard: Yes; Dloski: Yes; Hall: Yes; Hornberger: Yes; Shanafelt: Yes; Shipman: Yes; Motion Passes Unanimously**

**Commission** discusses condition #4 regarding outdoor amplified sound ceasing at 10 p.m. Discussion centers on redundancy with the township's developing noise ordinance, consistency of enforcement, and whether the provision should remain. Consensus forms to retain condition 4 as written to provide a clear standard.

**Discussion ends.**

**Roll Call Vote on the Main Motion as amended: Alexander: No; Beard: No; Dloski: No; Hall: No; Hornberger: No; Shanafelt: No; Shipman: No. Motion Fails Unanimously**

**Motion to recommend approval of Amendment #4 to SUP 35 as amended to strike Condition 1, Subsections H and I, referencing the mobile kitchen and bar(s) from the language made by Dloski, seconded by Hall.**

**Roll Call Vote: Alexander: Yes; Beard: Yes; Dloski: Yes; Hall: Yes; Hornberger: Yes; Shanafelt: Yes; Shipman: Yes; Motion Passes Unanimously**

**b. Peninsula Township Fire Station – Fire Station #1 Special Use Permit #144 Introduction**

Loud frames the application as a public capital project under Section 61 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, noting a 35-day window for Planning Commission action and recommending scheduling a public hearing at the next meeting. Applicant – Township Fire Chief Fred Gilstorff; Engineer – Mark Maguire from Gourdie-Fraser: presents a new fire station on the township offices site, describing apparatus bays, main-floor offices and living quarters, and a lower level with training and fitness rooms; separate septic is planned. Chief explains that alternate sites proved unavailable or too costly, the current Station 1 site is too small and unsafe to retrofit, and the proposed design meets long-term operational needs. Maguire describes significant fill to address the existing ravine, grading to direct drainage to a rear retention area, and added/shared parking behind Township Hall; detailed topography, grading, storm water, and utility plans are provided in the full plan set with additional details forthcoming. Commissioners ask about parking conflicts and emergency egress; Chief says routine training and events will not impede operations and flashing warning signs will be installed.

**Motion to schedule a public hearing at the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission on December 2, 2025, for Special Use Permit #144 made by Dloski, seconded by Hall. Motion Passes**

**c. Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Discussion**

**i. 40 acre minimum for all processing facilities (AAC recommendation)**

**Commission** opens ordinance rewrite discussion with a "temperature check" on standardizing farm processing facility acreage to a 40-acre minimum. Loud says there is no redline yet and seeks direction; members express support and request a draft redline for December, while asking for background on why the current 40/50/60-acre tiers were adopted. Beard notes that the AAC has formed a subcommittee to consider operations on 5–39 acres.

ii. Special Use Permit definitions and approval process

**Commission** reviews McKenna’s draft on special use permit definitions and process. Members agree to drop the “substantial improvement to the community” test and to remove the criterion stating an SUP must not “materially diminish economic value,” as too subjective. They discuss McKenna’s “minor vs. major amendment” criteria, generally supporting them, but debate whether small accessory structures should ever be treated as minor; no change is made. Members ask to adjust language so protection applies to existing natural areas as well as landscaped plantings and flag multiple errors in the included use table (e.g., boat hoists/docks) and direct that the table be removed from this section until corrected and integrated later in the district-specific tables. Loud confirms an ADU draft will come Monday, after which ADU permissions and procedures can be slotted into the use tables and SUP framework.

**Other Discussion:** **Hall** raises a concern for inclusion in the zoning rewrite, noting that the ordinance should consistently reference “accessory uses” at the end of each list of permitted uses within zoning districts. Explains that a well-drafted permissive zoning ordinance typically includes this clause, defining accessory uses as those incidental to and customarily found in connection with a permitted use, which helps avoid confusion such as that seen during prior public debate. Loud agrees this is an important point to address in the rewrite, and members suggest it would also make a good topic for a township newsletter, with Beard and Hall volunteering to help draft it.

**10. Reports and Updates – Verbal**

a. **Agricultural Advisory Committee**

Beard states that the AAC did not meet in October and will meet next on November 18. One member, Erin Hafeli, has resigned, and a replacement will be appointed to maintain the committee’s size.

b. **Non-Motorized Plan**

**Shipman:** reports that review of a draft document is underway, with no new actions since the last meeting other than preparation of a grant report due November 7.

c. **Township Board**

**Alexander:** reports that discussions continue regarding the township’s noise ordinance. The Board has also received correspondence from winery representatives regarding settlement discussions; the township attorney has issued a response. The Board will meet in closed session to address these matters, followed by its regular meeting the following week.

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

**Kip Nickel, 1015 Quaker Valley Drive:** responds to earlier remarks about misinformation surrounding shoreline standards. Thanks residents who submitted letters and urges the commission to do the same. Says the letters came from six shared waterfront neighborhoods on West Bay that have long operated with three hoists per 50 feet without township objection. Asserts that their statements regarding potential loss of access, decreased property values, and longer waiting lists for dock use are factual for those neighborhoods, not misinformation. Adds that he and other shoreline representatives remain willing to collaborate with the township on the issue.

**Sally Erickson, 2228 Kaukauna Court:** wishes to clarify the intent of her association’s earlier complaint referenced by the previous speaker. She says the letter was not meant to target other neighborhoods but to address a specific conflict between her association, East Beach Association, and the neighboring Hidden Ridge development. Explains that both associations were subject to the township’s one-hoist-per-50-feet standard in their special use permits but Hidden Ridge later amended its master deed to convert limited common elements to common elements, allowing all owners beach access, which greatly increased boat use in a cove area not

suit for heavy activity. Says her association only seeks enforcement of the township's existing ordinance and notes that property line setbacks for shoreline equipment continue to be violated by the neighboring development. Suggests the township prepare a summary clarifying which neighborhoods are governed by which shoreline approvals to reduce confusion and ensure compliance.

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

Commission members discuss the issue of ex parte communication after reviewing an MSU Extension article. They note that while the Michigan Open Meetings Act does not prohibit such contact, best practice is to avoid private discussions with interested parties on pending matters to maintain fairness and transparency. Members agree that general informational conversations with residents are acceptable, but opinions or lobbying related to active cases should be disclosed so all commissioners have equal access to information. Discussion concludes that the concern is primarily about ethics and public perception rather than legal restriction, and staff will seek clearer written guidance for future reference.

Shipman clarifies earlier remarks about shoreline and noise concerns, emphasizing appreciation for public input but correcting misunderstandings. Explains that the township is not reducing waterfront rights; the shoreline discussions involve potentially expanding allowances from one to three hoists per 50 feet, not restricting access. Notes confusion surrounding special use permits and compliance issues but stress that balancing all waterfront uses remains the goal. Addresses misinformation about the noise ordinance, explaining that the update simply refines enforcement and is not intended to regulate ordinary activities like children laughing or playing. The purpose is to manage excessive or unreasonable disturbances between neighboring properties. Alexander adds that some residents misunderstand the ordinance(s) as something new, when it already exists and is simply being clarified to function effectively.

**13. Adjournment**

**Motion by Dloski to adjourn, seconded by Shipman.**

**Motion Passes**

**Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 p.m.**