

Packet
December 16, 2024,
Ag Advisory Committee Meeting

Correspondence

Becky Chown

To: Maura Sanders
Subject: RE: Agricultural Advisory Committee DRAFT Agenda

From: Llewellyn Seibold <lewseibold@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 11, 2024 12:21 PM
To: Maura Sanders <supervisor@peninsulatownship.com>
Cc: Jennifer Cram <planner@peninsulatownship.com>
Subject: Re: Agricultural Advisory Committee DRAFT Agenda

Maura,

Thank you for the notification and agenda. I had to make an unanticipated trip to FL this week. It looks like it will extend into next week as well so I will not be able to attend Monday's meeting. I sincerely wish for this committee to "flesh out" a future for AG land on Old Mission Peninsula and hope the committee will consider reaffirming the primary use of farming as being paramount, with incidental uses that are supportive of that primary purpose. Secondly I hope the committee will consider auxiliary uses that are compatible with a vibrant agriculture economy and also fit the goals of the broader community. A strong new vision is needed.

The Best,

Lew Seibold

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 10, 2024, at 12:30 PM, Maura Sanders <supervisor@peninsulatownship.com> wrote:

Good afternoon Committee Members,

Please DO NOT reply all to this email.

I am attaching the DRAFT agenda for your first meeting next week. I will chair the meeting to get it started and we will get right into selection/appointment of Chair and Vice Chair - *I will not be voting as I am just the TB rep.* I will then hand off the meeting to the new Chair. Let me know your thoughts on the agenda. I will be posting this to the website by close of business tomorrow, 12/11. I am available to answer any procedural questions or anything else you can think of, don't hesitate to reach out.

Please take some time to review the Open Meetings Act, links below.

<https://www.michigan.gov/ag/foia/open-meetings>

Becky Chown

From: Dennis Arouca <dennis.arouca@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2024 8:21 AM
To: Becky Chown; Robin Noval; Maura Sanders
Subject: Re: Agricultural Advisory Committee - Inaugural Meeting Dec. 17, 2024

Typo!!! Trailing email For MONDAY's Agriculture Advisory Committee meeting.

Not Tuesday

Apologies...

DENNIS AROUCA
M: 847.682.6835
dennis.arouca@gmail.com

On Sun, Dec 15, 2024 at 9:31 PM Dennis Arouca <dennis.arouca@gmail.com> wrote:
To: Peninsula Township

Becky Chown, Clerk

Robin Noval Deputy Clerk

Maura Sanders, Supervisor

I write to offer the following comments for the Tuesday session:

1. I fully and enthusiastically support the appointment of this Committee and look forward to its work.
2. I recommend the Committee focus initially on actions that will enable FARMERS to thrive in today's conditions. Three rounds of PDR have taught us that protecting land for agriculture is great, but does not guarantee that the people doing the farming--the farmers--will thrive.
3. In support of #2, the Committee should consider recommending to the Township Board that something like the attached Statement on FARMERS be adopted and published by the Board. Adoption and publication would educate today's citizens, tomorrow's citizens, and other stakeholders, about how we feel about Farmers succeeding, and put to rest any doubts that the people of OMP want farmers to thrive.

DENNIS AROUCA
850 Neahtawanta Road
Traverse City, MI 49686
dennis.arouca@gmail.com

SPECIAL STATEMENT ABOUT FARMERS ON OLD MISSION PENINSULA (OMP)* December 2024

Peninsula Township's population has grown 12% since the last Master Plan in 2011(from 5,478 to 6,114). The Township—like all of the Grand Traverse Region—is experiencing “growing pains”.

The Region has grown from a Micropolitan Area in 2003, to a Metropolitan Statistical Area in 2023. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro.html> For Peninsula Township, this has meant evolving from an agriculture-driven small town, with all that means for culture, tradition, and economy, to a combination of agriculture & bedroom community for people working in the Traverse City region.

At the same time, surveys inform us that the people of the Township want to preserve its agricultural character. The Township people have taken action to tax themselves at a higher rate to keep land in agriculture through a successful Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program—ratified & renewed 3 times by the voters over 30+ years. *One of our learnings through the years of PDR is that protecting land for agriculture does not automatically translate into an environment where **farmers** — the people in agriculture—can thrive economically.*

Publicly available data demonstrates that Small and Medium-sized farmers — the dominate feature of OMP farms and in Michigan generally—are struggling mightily to survive in an economy that favors large farms. Michigan State Univ. Extension, “Cultivating Local Farm Economies” a presentation to Peninsula Insights, June 19, 2024 Peninsula Twnshp. Community Library.

The Township will work to identify ways and means that the Township government —and all its citizens, businesses, and other organizations — can act to help farmers thrive economically. The creation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) in 2024 is one initial step in this direction. This Statement does not prejudge or preclude any specific way or means, but expects that consensus actions will emerge as the AAC's work evolves and as we citizens work toward identifying and maintaining the proper balance of land uses on OMP. We also expect this will include strengthening recognition and preservation of the Strategic Asset that is Michigan's Fruit Belt along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan.

By adopting this Statement, we learn from examples in Leelanau County and Gratiot County, which addressed similar agriculture challenges.

* Authority:

<https://michigantownships.org/about-townships/what-townships-do/> “[Townships] market the agricultural, commercial, and industrial opportunities that are available within the township...”

MCL Section 41.2

<https://fsbriaw.com/2015/04/30/i-often-am-confused-as-to-when-the-township-board-should-act-through-a-resolution-or-through-an-ordinance-specifically-can-a-township-board-change-an-ordinance-by-adopting-a-resolution/>

<https://michigantownships.org/wp-content/uploads//January-February-2009-Michigan-Township-News-Cover-Story.pdf>