



## WINTER 2024 NEWSLETTER

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## PENINSULA TOWNSHIP PARKS COMMITTEE

### Recapping a Busy and Rewarding Year at Our Township Parks

#### Coming Soon – a Boat Launch!

For those who despaired of ever again seeing a public boat launch on East Bay on the north end of the peninsula, we have terrific news: this past November, the Peninsula Township Board voted to sign the Waterways Grant Agreement with the DNR to construct the long-awaited launch at Kelley Park! The township also inked a contract with engineering firm Beckett & Raeder, which will work hand in hand with the township’s engineer, Gourdie-Fraser. If all goes well, the launch will be up and running by spring of 2025 if not sooner! If you’re interested in learning more, visit the township website at [www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com). In the blue bar, click on “Documents” and then “Township Board” to view the November 14, 2023, agenda, packet, and/or minutes.



How is the township paying for this new launch? With a combination of our remaining ARPA funds, private donations of \$25,000 and \$500, respectively, and the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners’ commitment to fund capital improvement projects in Peninsula Township at \$25,000 a year for five years. Peninsula Township Clerk and Parks Committee Member Becky Chown, with an assist from Supervisor Isaiah Wunsch, made the successful presentation to the county commissioners in September of 2023. The township continues to welcome financial gifts of any and all sizes to assist in paying for this significant improvement to our community.

#### Thanks for Leashing Your Four-Legged Babies!

Many thanks to those leashing up their dogs within township parks. We’re receiving positive feedback that our encouragement to follow the county leash law is yielding improvements. We ask everyone to follow the rules of leashing and picking up after your pets. We also ask that all park users please continue to stay on designated trails only. We’ve had issues with visitors trespassing across private property or entering the parks through non-sustainable/erosion-prone access points. Rogue trails invite more of the same, and it’s a detriment to public parkland when individuals create their own trails.



## Pelizzari Natural Area Update

At Pelizzari Natural Area (PNA), several exciting projects are in the works with fundraising continuing. The expansion effort via acquisition of a nearby parcel is largely being funded by the township's longtime partner at PNA, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. For project details or to donate, please see the conservancy's website at [www.gtrlc.org](http://www.gtrlc.org) and look under "land protection" and then "active projects" to find the PNA expansion effort. As of mid December, the project was 82 percent funded, and GTRLC is looking to close out the campaign by this coming summer!

Continuing at PNA, the effort to preserve the namesake species in the beloved hemlock wing of the park involves constructing a boardwalk to direct foot traffic away from specific trees. Hemlock root systems suffer under the compression of heavy foot traffic, and PNA receives such significant use that installing a boardwalk to keep people off the roots has been recommended by our conservancy allies.

To date, \$136,000 of the total \$320,719 needed to construct the boardwalk has been committed, with additional grant requests pending with multiple organizations. Anyone with available charitable dollars who appreciates our parks, cherishes trees, and would love to help save the keystone species in this hugely popular park is urged to reach out to Becky Chown to make a tax-deductible donation. She comments, "We continue to gratefully accept donations to save the old-growth hemlocks at PNA," adding, "Constructing this boardwalk will not further stress the trees."

Another potential project at PNA, pending funding, is a series of restoration zones to eliminate invasive species and reintroduce native wildflowers and grasses. Volunteers are welcome. Please contact Peninsula Township Parks Committee Member Dave Murphy to receive more information as the project unfolds. Other volunteer opportunities are available in several additional parks as well. Please contact the individual on the parks committee affiliated with that park (see below) if you are interested.

## Specific Park Assignments

Archie Park: Mary Beth Milliken at [mbmillikenonpeninsula@gmail.com](mailto:mbmillikenonpeninsula@gmail.com)

Bowers Harbor Park: Ronessa Butler at [ronessa+parks@gmail.com](mailto:ronessa+parks@gmail.com)

Bowers Harbor Park Expansion: Michele Zebell at [mzebell.parks@gmail.com](mailto:mzebell.parks@gmail.com)

Haserot Beach: Mike Skurski at [parksmike49686@gmail.com](mailto:parksmike49686@gmail.com)

Kelley Park: Mike Skurski at [parksmike49686@gmail.com](mailto:parksmike49686@gmail.com)

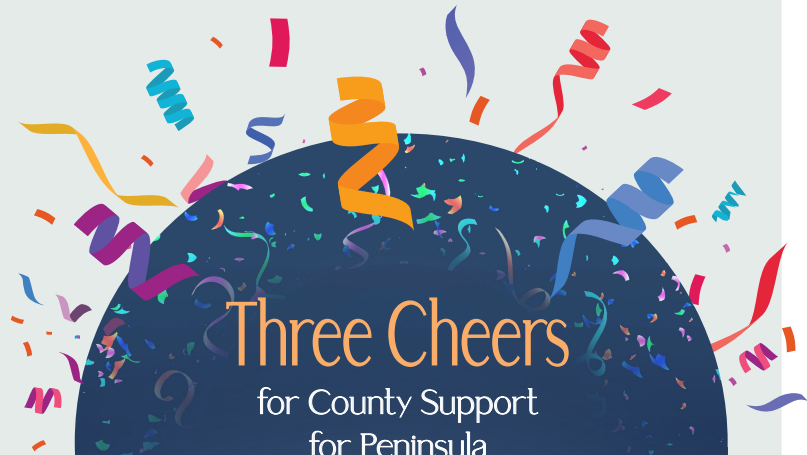
Pelizzari Natural Area: Dave Murphy at [davemurphy6943@gmail.com](mailto:davemurphy6943@gmail.com)

Old Mission State Park, including the Murray and Ridgewood trailheads: Pete Dahl at [peterleedahl@gmail.com](mailto:peterleedahl@gmail.com)

Parks at large and fundraising: Becky Chown at [clerk@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:clerk@peninsulatownship.com)

## Signage Update

Finally, as discussed in the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's land protection and stewardship update, new and improved signs will be posted at our parks beginning this spring, with the template for all parks first appearing at PNA.



## Three Cheers

for County Support  
for Peninsula  
Township Parks

This past fall, Grand Traverse County approved funding for capital investments in Peninsula Township parks with an annual \$25,000 contribution for the next five years. Peninsula Township oversees more than 800 acres of public recreation land and facilities across seven parks.



TJ Andrews, District 7  
County Commissioner

Those outstanding resources are popular among residents throughout the Grand Traverse County region. Plans are underway for a boat launch at Kelley Park to replace the Haserot Beach launch, which will provide access to the northern waters of Grand Traverse Bay for regional boaters. A universally accessible and sustainable elevated boardwalk through the Hemlock Wing at Pelizzari Natural Area, also underway, will be a regional asset. Peninsula Township maintains its exceptional community parks, trails, beaches, and playgrounds for residents and visitors without regard to where they live. The county contribution is a small appreciation for the immense value that Peninsula Township parks provide our region.

You can reach TJ at [tandrews@gtcountymi.gov](mailto:tandrews@gtcountymi.gov) or 231-714-9402.

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## WE CELEBRATED THE MAKEOVER AT BOWERS HARBOR PARK IN GRAND STYLE

2023 was a bountiful year for Bowers Harbor Park! Thanks to the efforts and generosity of many people, the park now has a native garden to enhance historical signage, 15 newly planted trees, a resurfaced tennis court, a brand new basketball court, and six beautifully constructed pickleball courts.

The community celebration on September 30 was icing on the cake! The parks committee has many people to thank for each of these wonderful amenities and enhancements, starting with the Bowers Harbor Pickleball Association below.

### 1-1-WON! Bowers Harbor Pickleball Association and Generous Donors Reach Their Goal!

This outstanding group of six pickleball courts is an amazing addition to the park, an amenity brought to fruition by a dedicated group of residents and pickleball enthusiasts. The Bowers Harbor Pickleball Association will soon place a large rock by the courts with a plaque recognizing the many people who contributed to the project that will read as follows:

#### In Gratitude to Those Who Made It Possible

We extend our deepest appreciation and heartfelt thanks to the individuals whose Unwavering support and contributions brought the Bowers Harbor pickleball project to life. Your dedication and generosity have transformed our vision into a vibrant reality, enhancing our community and the joy of pickleball for all.

The following generous individuals and organizations gave \$1,000 or more in cash or services to the project:

Jed and Dawn Hemming  
Kent and Peg Rabish  
Don and Jane Conway

Mike and Pam Miller/Miller Family  
Ken and Karen Schmidt  
Nic and Rhonda Ballintyn  
Michigan Economic Development Fund  
Rotary Charities of Traverse City

Teri List  
Kyle Hartley  
Dan Terpsma and Jessica Murphy  
The Guernseys  
Kent and Suzanne Mueller  
Steve and Sarah Trippe  
Rich and Linda Raetz

Traverse Area Pickleball Association  
Tom and Liz Vershure  
Tami Pronger  
Edward Ascione Family  
Lipford Harbold Family  
Adam Maas  
Kristi and Jeremy Blaha  
Autumn Gillow and Robert Benser

Heather Gillow and Jim Smolak  
Dutmers Family  
Jones Family  
Paul Weiland  
Corey Jeffries  
Eric and Sara Bergsma  
Brian and Carol Kaplan

*"Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much."  
~ Helen Keller*



Enormous thanks also go to Brian Peace and Mike Query, whose combined generosity, positive energy, and community spirit facilitated the construction of the new basketball court and the resurfacing of the tennis courts. The weather turned rainy before the courts could be striped, so that work will occur in the spring.

Deb and Russ Larimer, Katie Grier, and the Glen and Becky Chown family contributed to the creation and planting of the native garden. Every year, the blossoms will multiply as will our thanks for this lovely commemoration of OMP history that also supports our native pollinators.

A park just wouldn't be a park without trees, and the addition of 15 new trees at BHP has greatly enhanced the southern portion of the walking path. Our thanks to Eric Dreier, who encouraged us to pursue the DTE grant that helped fund the new plantings. Our dedicated crew of tree waterers were a lifeline for the trees, especially



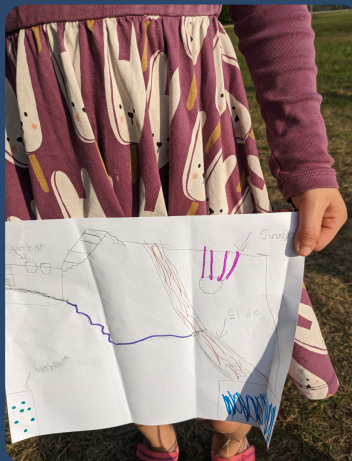
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with the many weeks of little to no rain experienced this summer. Three days each week without fail, Michel Bekkers, Ronessa Butler, Katie and Paul Greier, Al Jankowski, Deb and Russ Larimer, Dave Murphy, Sue Peters, and Lynn Stephenson watered the new additions. Thank you all for caring for these wonderful additions to our park and the OMP ecosystem.

**Thank you to all who joined us for the park celebration on September 30.** It was a beautiful day filled with fun activities that highlighted our wonderful new and renovated amenities. Our sincere thanks to the many organizations and volunteers who contributed: you helped to make the celebration a true community event.



## PARK CELEBRATION CONTRIBUTORS

### Organizations and Businesses

- Brian Peace, Elmers
- Mike Query, Spalding Sales Director
- Bowers Harbor Pickleball Association
- Rodney Caster, Grand Traverse Bay YMCA
- O'Leary Paint
- Johnson Farms
- Manigold Farm
- Wunsch Farms/Third
- Coast Fruit Co.
- Old Mission Peninsula United Methodist Church
- Jane Boursaw, Old Mission Gazette
- Jeff Dean
- M'Lynn Hartwell, Freshwater Events
- Peninsula Township Fire Department
- Peninsula Township

### Celebration Planning Committee and Volunteers

Jenn Cram, Pam Miller, Mary Beth Milliken, Monnie Peters, Kris Prescott, Mike Query, Susie Shipman, Christine Spencer, Michele Zebell, Becky Chown

### Additional Celebration Volunteers

TJ Andrews, Franklin Andrews, Dawn Asava, Linda Dahl, John Jacobs, Andrea Johnson, Marge Long, Mary Mazure, Robin Noval, Sue Peters, Anne Query, Armen Shanafelt, Ginger Schultz, Chief Gilstorff and the Peninsula Township Fire Department, and the Peninsula Township Parks Committee





## OLD MISSION WOMEN'S CLUB

### OMWC Overview and Recent Accomplishments

Perhaps you've seen a small sign at Peninsula Community Library, Bowers Harbor Park, Peninsula Township Hall, or elsewhere in our community noting a donation by the Old Mission Women's Club. You may have seen posts on social media about one or more projects the club has handled and wondered what this organization is all about.

The Old Mission Women's Club was established in 1931. Since then, the ladies of the club have been regularly gathering to educate themselves about the Grand Traverse region, engage in charitable projects, and provide financial and other gifts to local organizations.

As always, this past fall was exceptionally busy for the group. In addition to a field trip to the Botanic Garden at

The club's annual cookie sale was held in early December at Peninsula Township Hall. This is always a big event for the Old Mission Peninsula, with funds raised going toward club projects and the grants the club presents to local nonprofits in April. Club members are currently completing nomination forms to present to the entire membership. Subsequently, in a two-tier process that will occur this winter, club members will select this year's grant recipients.

Prospective members of the Old Mission Women's Club must reside on the Old Mission Peninsula, must hostess one meeting each year, and must pay dues and a small annual hostess fee to help with operations. Dues and the hostess fee total \$55 per year.



Some of the Christmas stockings OMWC members made, decorated, and filled to donate to the Women's Resource Center and Addiction Treatment Center

Historic Barns Park and presentations from Julie Clark of TART Trails and Tiffany McQueer from Project Feed the Kids, members organized and provided Thanksgiving dinners and coats, hats, gloves, and boots for families on the peninsula, something they have done for many years. They also constructed, decorated, filled, and delivered Christmas stockings to the Women's Resource Center and Addiction Treatment Services.

Currently, the club meets in the social hall at St. Joseph's Catholic Church one or two Thursdays a month beginning in September and running through early May. If you are interested in learning more, check out our website at [www.oldmissionwc.org](http://www.oldmissionwc.org) or send questions via email at [oldmissionwomensclub@gmail.com](mailto:oldmissionwomensclub@gmail.com).

**Nancy W. Davy**  
President, Old Mission Women's Club

## THANK YOU TO WARREN WAHL!

Thank you, Warren, for your service on the Peninsula Township Board! Warren was elected in 2016 and departed in 2023. We thank him for his years of service to the township. His steady leadership will be missed.



## PENINSULA TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

### 2024 Winter News

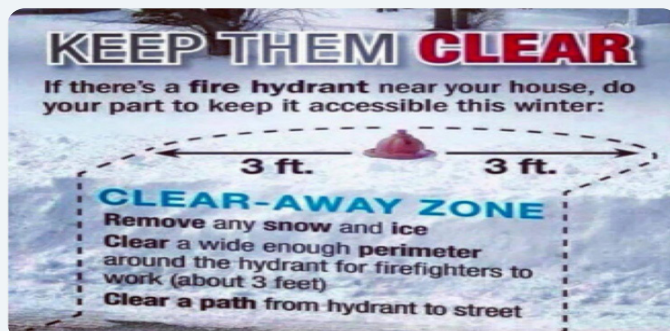
#### Happy New Year to all our residents.

With 2023 in the rearview mirror, we are extremely excited to continue to grow our department and provide a high level of service in 2024. We appreciate all the support from the community and the township board.

The fire department currently has a staff of 24 firefighters/emergency medical technicians/paramedics and is looking to hire two full-time firefighter/paramedics to replace several staff who left in 2023. We also continue to look for local residents to join the department as paid on-call members. If you're interested, give us a call at 231-223-4443.

The fire department continues to try to improve the safety of our residents by helping them replace smoke detectors and reminding them to change their batteries every six months, typically when they change their clocks. Michigan still has a high fatality rate due to fires, and a common culprit is the lack of working smoke alarms. We have partnered with the Michigan State Fire Marshal's Office to install smoke detectors for free. All residents have to do is let us know they need a smoke detector, and we will take care of the rest. We also recommend checking each smoke detector once a month to assure it is working. A simple push of the test button is all it takes.

With winter in full swing, the fire department is requesting help from residents who have fire hydrants on their property. When it snows, please shovel three feet around the hydrant so we can see it, as a lack of visibility can create delays when we are trying to fight a fire. We also ask you to keep your address number visible so we can find your home quickly in an emergency.



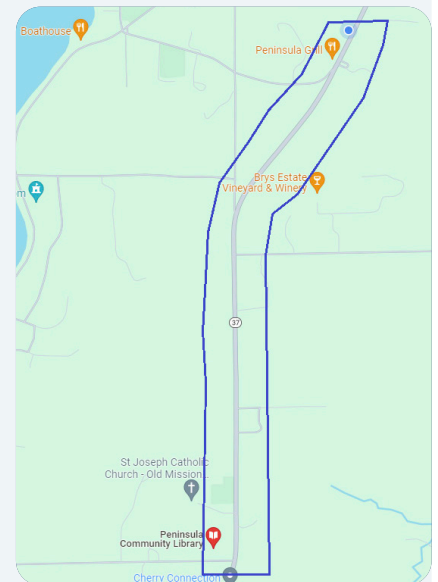
The fire department would like to commend all the businesses in Peninsula Township for being fire safe. We complete fire safety inspections annually and are proud that our business owners take our inspections seriously and correct violations quickly. Being proactive helps keep fire risk low, and if there is a fire, it keeps our ability to evacuate people high. We also perform home inspections upon request. We can help make your home fire safe, provide safety tips, and develop a plan to get you out if there is a fire. Please call if you're interested in this service.

Last year, the fire department worked to develop concept drawings to replace Station 1, which was built in 1946 and added onto in 1982. There are many issues with this station due to its age, inability to appropriately house our current equipment and staff, and inadequate space for firefighter



training as well as training for the public such as CPR, first aid, and fire safety classes. A lot of thought has gone into this new station to make sure it covers our needs for many years to come. A concept picture of the new station appears above.

While we have worked hard to design a new station to meet the department's and community's needs, our biggest issue is finding the necessary four acres of land to put it on. We have determined that an area on Center Road between Station 1 to the north and Island View Road to the south would be the ideal location. The department is asking if any residents with land in this area



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would consider donating or selling it to the township to house this new station. Anyone with ideas can call the fire department and speak with Chief Gilstorff. The illustration on the previous page shows the area we are looking at.

In 2023, we received many direct emergency calls. Please don't call the station in an emergency. If we're out on another call or practicing certain types of training, our ability to get to you quickly will be delayed. If you have an emergency, please call 911 to ensure a quick response. If it's a non-emergency, you can still call the fire station at 231-223-4443.

The fire department wishes everyone a safe and happy 2024, and please stop by any of our three stations to say hello. We would love to show you and your family around and help you create a safe environment in your homes. Please be safe out there.

Yours in Life Safety,  
**Fire Chief Fred Gilstorff**



**Peninsula Township Fire Chief  
Fred Gilstorff**

### Peninsula Township Fire Department Is Getting a New Fire Truck!

In November of 2023, the Peninsula Township Board approved the purchase of a new fire truck to replace the truck at Station 2. The new truck will be a 2025 Spartan Fire Engine and very similar to our 2020 Spartan. It will be 12 inches longer than the old truck, with more compartment space to store equipment. In addition, it will have a front-mounted suction port, allowing it to pull straight into a drafting site. The cab has specially designed EMS equipment storage that makes it easier to access. These changes will enhance the department's capabilities, and we look forward to using this truck to serve the community for at least 25 years. We will take delivery in May of 2025.

## A FOND FAREWELL FROM LONGTIME UPS DRIVER KENT ACKERMAN

**To the great people of the Old Mission Peninsula,**

It is with mixed emotions that I announce my retirement at the end of January. I worked for UPS for 38 years, the last 18 on the peninsula. In the beginning, I delivered to the entire peninsula, but lately, because of all the growth, I worked on the northern half. It has been an incredible journey filled with memories, some that I'll never forget and some that I'd like to forget!

As I reflect on my time delivering packages and being part of your lives, I am filled with gratitude for the trust and support you have shown me. Your smiles and waves have made every day brighter and more fulfilling. Working as a UPS driver has been more than just a job for me; it has been a privilege to serve you, ensuring that your packages arrived safely and on time. The friendships forged along my delivery route will always hold a special place in my heart. I even found a cousin I had never before met...Too bad he's a mail carrier.

Little by little, things add up. Over the past 18 years, I have climbed 4.2 million feet in elevation walking up and down your

driveways. ***That number equates to climbing Mt. Everest 140 times!*** No wonder my knees hurt a little! I've walked 58,680 miles, which is two times around the entire earth. I've driven pretty close to 600,000 miles on the peninsula alone! Most impressive, you have collectively ordered 1.3 million packages that I've had the privilege of delivering. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your community.



**UPS driver Kent Ackerman beside his truck**

**I do want to leave you with a challenge:** if you do not have an address post beside your drive that bears four-inch reflective numbers, a mail box with numbers on **both** sides, or a green reflective number plate, please acquire one. These numbers help all the delivery and service people find your address. More important, if you are ever in need of emergency services, having your address visible and reflective can literally save your life. Please take the time to make sure your address is large and visible.

People on the Old Mission Peninsula are the best! I wish each and every one of you continued happiness, prosperity, and success.

**Kent Ackerman**



## PETER DOUGHERTY SOCIETY

### 2023 Was a Banner Year!

#### Record Number of Guest Visitors

We had a banner year in 2023 with nearly 900 visitors, a 20 percent increase over our previous best year! These numbers were boosted by a successful partnership with international tour operator Road Scholar as well as several other large group visits. In 2023, guests from 38 states as well as three countries visited the Dougherty House.

#### New Summer Intern

Using a combination of donor-designated funds and general funds, we were able to hire a summer intern as lead docent supplemented by our volunteers. This allowed us to be open five days a week throughout the season.

#### Pavilion Dedication

This past year saw us dedicate the Cole Pavilion to honor our immediate past president, Bill Cole, and his family. Our volunteer work crew constructed the pavilion, which was paid for with donated funds.

#### Maria Dougherty's Spinning Wheel

This past season, we had a special homecoming: we received on loan from the Leelanau Historical Society Museum Maria Dougherty's original walking wheel printed with the Dougherty name. The wheel has finally returned home to the Dougherty House!

#### Chestnut Trees

We have discovered several "extinct" American chestnut trees in our woods. This is remarkable, as most American chestnut trees in America were killed by a blight more than a century ago. We have started a volunteer project to propagate more American chestnuts using pollen from our tree stock. To accomplish this goal, we have enlisted the help of Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society members as well as OMP School students as part of their science and Michigan curricula. Next spring, plans include planting the students' seedlings in a newly created tree nursery on the north side of the property. We are looking for people who are specifically interested in volunteering in the chestnut preservation program. If this appeals to you, please contact Tom Dalluge at 678-516-6514.

#### Second Year for Plein Air Painting

In June, we again hosted the Crooked Tree Arts Center-sponsored event called Paint Grand Traverse, an annual plein air (outdoor) painting festival and competition. Artists nationwide came to paint prize-winning works of the Dougherty House, grounds, and outbuildings.



Painted by OMP resident Joan Bonney, a scene reminiscent of winters past at the Dougherty House

#### Holiday Decorations

Those who could not drive by the Dougherty House this past holiday season missed the splendid candlelit windows and tree display! We always appreciate the decorating efforts of Anita and Marty Klein to brighten the Dougherty House in the spirit of the season reminiscent of the time when Reverend Peter and Maria Dougherty and their children lived there.

#### 2024 Summer Exhibit

We are currently working on an exhibit focused on the history of farming on Old Mission Peninsula. We will highlight the resilience and innovation of the farming community that has brought superior fruit and farming methods to the world for nearly 200 years. We will also look at the Anishinaabe Native Americans who successfully farmed the area for thousands of years before the arrival of European settlers.

#### Docent or Greeter Training

We are looking for individuals who share a love for the Dougherty Mission House and would like to help guide visitors around the museum, outbuildings, and grounds. We are willing to train you for this fun job and work around your busy schedule! Please contact us at 269-330-0026 to speak with Chris Rieser, president of the Peter Dougherty Society.

#### Volunteers

We are always looking for individuals who would like to help with various committees (museum, finance, technology, facilities, and marketing), our work crew, and gardening group. If any of these options sound interesting, please send an email to [doughertyoldmission@yahoo.com](mailto:doughertyoldmission@yahoo.com) or call Chris at the above number.





Peninsula Township  
Trustee Maura Sanders

## WELCOME BACK, MAURA SANDERS!

Township Trustee Maura Sanders was first elected to the Peninsula Township Board in 2016 but resigned in April 2018 when her family moved out of state. Prior to her election, she served as chairwoman of the Peninsula Township Park Commission (now the Peninsula Township Parks Committee). She recently returned to the Old Mission Peninsula and quickly stepped up to fill the seat made empty by Warren Wahl's resignation. **Thank you, Maura, and welcome back!**

### 12/28/23 ARPA GOVERNMENT GRANT REPORT

#### Funds Received and Utilized to Date in Peninsula Township

		ARPA GRANT	INTEREST	FEES	BALANCE
10/19/21	GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED	\$305,632.00			
1/31/22	GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED	\$1,230.55			
1/31/22	WIRE TRANSFER FEE			\$(15.00)	
3/31/22	INTEREST TO 3/31/22		\$343.11		
5/21/22	GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED	\$306,855.57			
3/31/23	INTEREST TO 3/31/23		\$6453.68		
	<b>BALANCE 3/31/2023</b>	<b>\$613,718.12</b>	<b>\$6,796.79</b>	<b>\$(15.00)</b>	<b>\$620,499.91</b>
4/12/23	BHP SMALL PLAYGROUND	(\$30,000)			
	EQUIPMENT-GAME TIME		\$1,383.44		
4/30/23	INTEREST		\$1,409.10		
5/31/23	INTEREST				
6/20/23	CHERRY CAPITAL BIKE REPAIR				
	GRANT MATCH-ARCHIE PARK	(\$519.00)			
6/30/23	INTEREST		\$1,366.87		
7/6/23	BHP BASKETBALL BACKSTOPS,				
	HOOPS, ETC. - MIKE QUERY	(\$2,915.98)			
7/31/23	INTEREST		\$1,415.73		
8/14/23	KELLEY PK-GRANT REQUEST COST				
	BECKETT & RAEDER	(\$9,990.00)			
8/31/23	INTEREST		\$2,017.40		
9/30/23	INTEREST		\$1,985.01		
10/31/23	INTEREST		\$2,189.60		
11/30/23	INTEREST		\$2,145.62		
11/20/23	BHP BASKETBALL/TENNIS COURTS				
	PREP & PAVING - ELMERS	(\$45,000.00)			
12/31/23	INTEREST				
	<b>BALANCE 12/31/2023</b>	<b>\$525,293.14</b>	<b>\$20,709.56</b>	<b>\$(15.00)</b>	<b>\$545,987.70</b>
	<b>COMMITTED:</b>				
	PARKS UNIFORM SIGNAGE	(\$18,000.00)			
	PNA-HEMLOCK WING RAISED WALK	(\$50,000.00)			
	<b>AVAILABLE BALANCE</b>	<b>\$457,293.14</b>			



## TREASURER'S OFFICE

### SUMMER MILLAGES

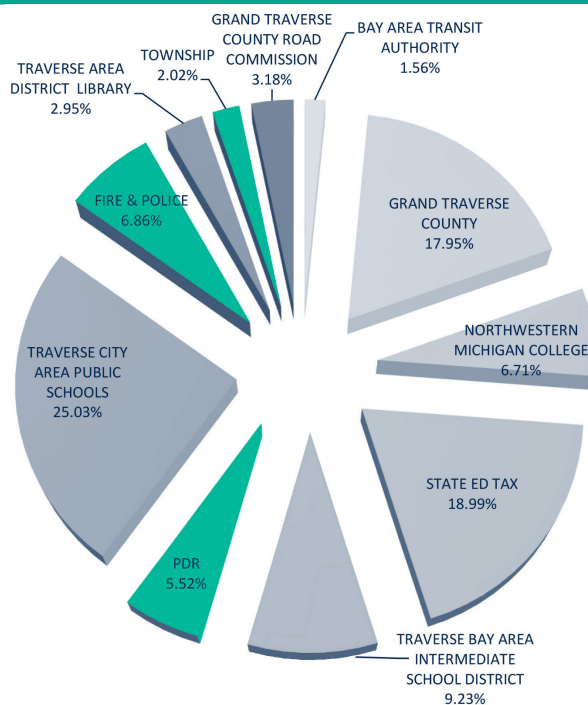
Millage name as it appears on your summer tax bill	Rate	Description
<b>COUNTY</b>	4.7268	Establishes a budget for all general governmental operations including Grand Traverse County Commissioners, facilities, and emergency services.
<b>STATE ED</b>	6.0000	The SET is deposited to the School Aid Fund for distribution to Michigan public K-12 schools. This tax is separate from any local school bond, community college, or voted mill issue. The state levies the SET statewide on all real and tangible personal property.
<b>NMC-OPERATING</b>	1.0288	Allows for local college operations, salaries, and maintenance.
<b>TCAPS-OPERATING</b>	18.0000*	General operation of all Traverse City Area Public Schools. Monies generated from this collection are used to supply nearly half of the district's per-pupil funding.
<b>TCAPS-DEBT</b>	3.1000	A millage used to generate funding for capital projects within all district schools. These projects include (but are not limited to) building renovations, technology upgrades, athletic facility overhauls, and security.
<b>NORTH ED.</b>	2.8871	Special education programs are mandated by state and federal governments, but aren't paid for by state or federal dollars. Northwest Education Services provides this programming to children and adults (up to age 26) in 16 public school districts, 4 public school academies and 12 non-public schools, within the region from the monies collected through this millage.
<b>BATA</b>	0.4788	Provides the public transportation authority the ability to provide safe and reliable transportation within the region; connecting people to jobs that support and grow our local economy.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36.2215</b>	*Non-primary residence millage rate
	<b>18.2215</b>	Primary residence millage rate

\*This millage only applies to non-primary residences  
(vacation homes, second homes, commercial properties, etc...)

### ONLINE TAX PAYMENTS

During the 2023 calendar year, taxpayers utilized the township's convenient online portal to pay taxes on 639 parcels totaling \$2,373,085.

### Where Do My Tax Dollars Go?



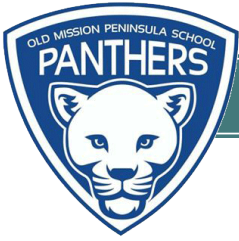
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## WINTER MILLAGES

Millage name as it appears on your winter tax bill	Rate	Description
<b>ANIMAL CONTROL</b>	0.037	Collected for the purpose of funding animal control programs, facilities, personnel, and necessary expenses.
<b>COA</b>	0.4739	Allows for the Grand Traverse County Commission on Aging to provide services to citizens 60 years and older. These services include home health care, outdoor services, medication management, and many more.
<b>COA-SENIOR CENTER</b>	0.0945	Provides funding for the operation of Grand Traverse County Senior Centers. This includes programming in Interlochen, Kingsley, and Fife Lake to meet the social, recreational, and educational needs of its members.
<b>CONSERVATION</b>	0.0958	Provides programs to assist landowners in the protection, enhancement, and restoration of natural resources and also assists with implementation of best management practices of farmland and protection of soil and water.
<b>ROAD COM</b>	0.9734	For the preservation and maintenance of roads and bridges.
<b>VETERANS</b>	0.1135	A county-wide millage for the purpose of operating and maintaining the Grand Traverse County Veterans Affairs Office, an organization that provides programs, services, and resources for veterans and their families.
<b>NMC-OPERATING</b>	1.0286	Allows for local college operations, salaries, and maintenance.
<b>LIBRARY- OPER</b>	0.9044	The Traverse Area District Library network encompasses six community libraries serving Grand Traverse County. The money raised from this millage is distributed between the six libraries for general operation and an array of services. These services include a broad collection of book titles, free programming for all ages, publicly accessible computers, and free Wi-Fi.
<b>PENINSULA-OPER</b>	0.6151	Establishes a budget for all governmental operations within Peninsula Township that aren't covered by a separate millage. In 1974, voters passed a 1.0000 millage rate to provide services and resources for residents. Over the past 49 years, this millage has been "rolled back" to its current rate of .6151, but what hasn't been reduced is the amount and level of services the township provides. These have increased. Collections from this millage help fund township costs for parks maintenance and upgrades, roads, the historical Hessler Log Cabin and Dougherty House, township-owned buildings and grounds, the compactor station, and all salaries and related expenses for staff and officials.
<b>FIRE S/A</b>	2.6000	Funds all equipment purchases and operating expenses for the Peninsula Township Fire Department, including salaries, trucks, tools, buildings, community events, and more.
<b>POLICE</b>	0.2300	Raises funds to hire two community police officers, who are contracted through the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office. In addition to regular road patrols, these officers work with township officials and residents to provide community programs and projects. They work closely with schools and attend meetings of various business associations.
<b>DEVELOPMENT PUR</b>	2.0000	Reflecting the residents' preference to maintain open space, agriculture, and panoramic views within the peninsula, this millage creates a fund to purchase development rights from voluntary landowners.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.1662</b>	Total Millage
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.4451</b>	Township Total



## OMPS AND OMPEF



Old Mission Peninsula  
Education Foundation

# The Season of Gratitude Radiates in Our School Community and Beyond

### Holiday Concert

The OMPS PTO sponsored the holiday concert at the TC Central High School Auditorium this year in an effort to give students the chance to perform on a real stage under the big lights! This venue also made it possible to accommodate the large number of family and community supporters who have consistently overfilled previous venues. A big Panther thank you to OMPS Music Director Hannah O'Brien, who helped students grow their musicality and shine onstage!

### Family Fun Night: Student Council Toy Drive, Family Activities, and a visit from Santa!

OMPS hosted a community Family Fun Night for the holiday season complete with gingerbread cookie decorating, a Scholastic book fair, caroling by the TC Central High School Vocal Majority Choir, and a toy and book drive.

The OMPS Student Council participated in the Child Life Program at Munson Medical Center by organizing a toy drive this year. The program provides one-on-one attention to hospitalized children to see them, and their families, through difficult medical issues and hospital stays. The toys collected were made available in the Pediatric Activity Room at MMC, a 360-square foot play area with something for children of every age and interest.



OMPS Student Council-organized toy drive for children hospitalized at Munson Medical Center

### Touch-a-Truck Event

The Peninsula Township Fire Department hosted its First Annual Touch-a-Truck event at OMPS this October, creating lots of excitement for Panthers and the community beyond! Children and adults alike delighted in learning more about the everyday workings of some of the area's most frequently spotted vehicles and the people who operate them. Beyond fire trucks and other emergency vehicles, the school was visited by the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office and the Grand Traverse County Road Commission, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, TC Light & Power, Molon Excavating, Brickyard Towing, BATA, Old Mission Associates, Between the Bays/Warren Orchards, and the Bay Area Transit Authority. In addition to being a great learning experience, the event was a wonderful way to highlight all the behind-the-scenes work that goes into keeping our community's roads, resources, and citizens safe and sound!



Touch-a-Truck Day at OMPS

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## School Lunch Program: Building Better Meals and a Better World

When Chef Korrie Garcia took the position as OMPS head chef in September, she had two main missions. Her first goal was to feed students well, with mostly made-from-scratch food using high quality, often local and/or organic, ingredients, and to push the envelope of what most consider kid-friendly foods. She hopes, in this way, to expand their culinary horizons and make them more conscientious eaters. Her second goal was a bit more far reaching. By instituting better purchasing, preparation, and serving protocols, she wanted to improve the school's environmental impact. Her waste management strategies include making food from whole, bulk ingredients to eliminate packaging waste; composting kitchen scraps, leftover food, and paper products; saving vegetable scraps to make stock; turning extra fruit into fresh smoothies and baked goods; working hard to strike a balance between making enough for students to have their fill while also avoiding leftovers; offering extra meals to staff; and recycling everything possible. Over the course of a year, these efforts will save nearly 1,400 gallons of waste from ending up in landfills! Thank you, Chef Korrie!

## OMPEF Update

After a four-year hiatus, the Old Mission Peninsula Education Foundation (OMPEF) held its first in-person fundraiser, and

**Community is at the center of everything we do at OMPS. We are grateful for the support of our community as we continue to provide excellence in education on OMP!**

### Old Mission Peninsula School (OMPS)

2699 Island View Road, Traverse City, 49686

231-252-0225

[www.ompschool.org](http://www.ompschool.org)

### Old Mission Peninsula Education Foundation (OMPEF)

An IRS Designated 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

[www.ompef.org](http://www.ompef.org) or email [info@ompef.org](mailto:info@ompef.org)

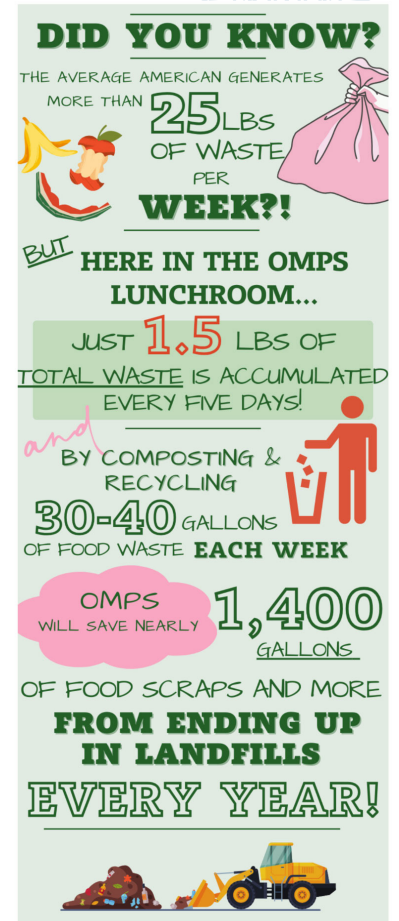
### Old Mission Peninsula School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

An IRS Designated 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

email: [oldmissionschoolpto@gmail.com](mailto:oldmissionschoolpto@gmail.com)

it was a blowout. We raised more than \$30,000, all of which is needed after investments in a new roof, new gym floor, and new carpet. Thanks to the generosity of our community, the \$10,000 raised from the event was immediately earmarked to purchase the furnishings, equipment, and educational materials needed for the OMPS pre-k expansion (see below!). We couldn't have done it without the generous support of:

- The Boathouse
- Old Mission Associates
- Brew Bus
- Chateau Chantal Winery and Inn
- Bonobo Winery
- Brys Estate Vineyard and Winery
- Bowers Harbor Vineyards
- Grand Traverse Resort
- Isenhardt Electric
- Serra Automotive
- Ted Schweitzer – Real Estate One
- Pro-Tech HVAC
- Tennis Pro Rodney Caster
- PGA Pro Tom Johnson
- Maxbauer Meats
- Folgarelli's Market
- Amical
- Green Mitt
- Dharamshala TC on Front



**Please support these local businesses that support our school!**

OMPEF will hold another event this coming spring/summer to raise funds for additional infrastructure needs.

## 2024–2025 Enrollment News: OMPS Expands Pre-K!

Enrollment is open for the 2024–2025 school year, and our pre-k program is so popular that we're expanding into a second classroom! Please contact OMPS if your family would like to schedule a one-on-one tour of the Island View Road school campus, learn more about our preschool or junior kindergarten to grade 5 classes, and have an introduction to our school culture and community.



## PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

### Updates from Planning and Zoning

2024 will be an exciting year for the Peninsula Township Planning and Zoning Department. We are confident we will find the perfect candidate for the vacant planning and zoning administrator position. Until then, Sara Kopriva, AICP, with Beckett and Raeder, Inc. will continue to assist on a contractual basis.

The planning and zoning department provides professional support to the board, planning commission, zoning board of appeals, parks committee, and other ad hoc committees appointed by the board or planning commission. The department reviews and approves all land use permit applications for compliance with the zoning ordinance. The department also accepts, reviews, and drafts the findings of fact for all special use permit applications before the planning commission as well as variance and appeal requests before the zoning board of appeals. The department is also on the front line to answer all questions from the public related to land use matters. We strive to return all phone calls and emails within 48 hours of receipt.

In addition to supporting the planning commission in getting the draft master plan across the finish line to adoption, staff will be assisting with several amendments to the zoning ordinance and police power ordinances in the coming months.

#### Winter 2024 priorities for zoning ordinance amendments are as follows:

- Clarifying how building height is measured (anticipated adoption February 2024)

- Updating shoreline regulations including shared waterfront standards to minimize conflicts on the land associated with water usage (anticipated adoption May 2024)
- Crafting agricultural signage for u-picks, farm stands, and the like (anticipated adoption June 2024)

#### Our winter 2024 priority for police power ordinance amendments consists of the following:

- Updating our storm water control ordinance to protect water quality and private property appropriate for the varied terrain and 42 miles of shoreline within Peninsula Township (anticipated adoption March 2024)

In 2024, the community will also see improved applications that better organize and explain the land use permit, land division, special use, and variance/appeal processes, including clear and concise submittal requirements, the chronological steps required to complete each process, and the anticipated time needed to complete each process.

To be efficient with limited staff resources, we will continue to require appointments for submitting land use permit, land division, special use, and variance/appeal applications. Appointments are available daily and may be scheduled via phone or email with a recommended 48 hours' advanced notice. Same-day appointments may be scheduled when available.

The planning and zoning department is here to serve the community and invites you to schedule an appointment to ask questions, share concerns about land use, and discuss your plans for your property to ensure compliance with ordinances.

## ZONING ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

### Township Ordinances and Enforcement

Peninsula Township has a comprehensive zoning ordinance as well as other police power ordinances regarding noise, stormwater control, parks, large events, and fireworks. A complete list of all the township's ordinances is available on the township website at [www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com) under Documents/Ordinances. Violations of these ordinances are municipal civil infractions that could result in the issuance of a citation and notice to appear in the 86th District Court of Grand Traverse County.

What should concerned residents do if they observe a violation of a township ordinance? Sometimes it is most effective to talk with the violator and mention that you are concerned about what you observe. Another option is to file a complaint by contacting the township ordinance enforcement officer by phone or email. If the violation is serious, requires immediate action, or occurs after township office business hours, you may request a sheriff's deputy to respond by calling Grand Traverse County's Central Dispatch non-emergency line at 231-922-4550. This action is a "last resort" and is usually reserved for non-emergency matters such as noise complaints.

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## LEDs and Bright Lights

LED light bulbs are “in” and incandescent bulbs are “out.” That is good news from an energy-saving standpoint, but often the new technology results in brighter bulbs and more light pollution both upwards to the sky and outwards to the neighbors. This is especially true if the LED bulb is one of the “daylight” or “bright white” bulbs rather than a “warm white” bulb. Be sure to look carefully at the label and select “warm white” (2700 or 3000K) bulbs rather than “daylight” (5000 to 5500 K) bulbs next time you replace a light bulb in an outside fixture.

Please remember that the zoning ordinance requires outdoor lighting fixtures to be fully shielded to prevent light from shining onto a neighbor’s property or into the night sky per Section 7.14 of the zoning ordinance.

## Land Use Permits

A land use permit, issued by the township’s planning and zoning department, is required for most outdoor projects

involving a structure more than 25 square feet and for any change in use of the land including changes within 200 feet of the shoreline (above the ordinary high-water mark). If in doubt, or to schedule an appointment to submit a land use permit application, please call 231-223-7318 or email [zoning@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:zoning@peninsulatownship.com). Failure to apply for a permit may result in enforcement action as well as a penalty fee. An application is available on the township website.

## Information Requests and Complaints

Please contact Director of Planning and Zoning Jenn Cram or Ordinance Enforcement Officer Dave Sanger with any questions or concerns about Peninsula Township’s ordinances. Both are available to work with you and welcome your calls or emails. For contact information, please check the staff directory on the back of this newsletter or visit the township’s website. Again, for after-hours concerns regarding noise issues or non-emergency police matters, please call Grand Traverse County’s Central Dispatch line at 231-922-4550. Please do not call 911.

# UPDATE FROM THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP STUDY GROUP

On September 7, 2023, Peninsula Township held an informational session for residents regarding the differentiation between general law and charter townships. A direct result of this meeting was the formation of the Charter Township Study Group (CTSG), which was established to evaluate the current functions and resources of the township and consider what changes might be required for the township to be effective and efficient given current and future needs of the Peninsula Township community.

Peninsula Township is a general law township, the simplest form of government defined in Michigan. This type of government is effective in small, usually agrarian, communities that aren’t being pressured by rapid growth or heavy demands for change. Accordingly, the driving factors behind the informational meeting were the increasing challenges faced by this rapidly growing and complex community positioned on a unique and narrow peninsula. Furthermore, the draft master plan for the township, still in the approval stage after years of work, explicitly calls for a review of government structure.

The CTSG is chaired by Trustee Armen Shanafelt. Additional members Wes Cowen, Ron Strachan, Fred Woodruff, and

Dave Murphy, all of whom spontaneously volunteered to participate, are residents of Peninsula Township and are not board members. The group embarked on a “bottoms-up” analysis of the activities and resource needs of the township based on the assumption that the community expects effective, high-quality service from planning/zoning, parks, tax assessment/collection, elections, etc. One of the group’s assumptions was that a reduction of services was not an option.

By the November 2023 township board meeting, CTSG had obtained a high-level understanding of the overall functions and interactions within the township. Follow-up meetings with township leadership confirmed the overall picture: Peninsula Township’s continuing growth (property asset valuation is now near one billion dollars) and increasingly complex needs beg the expertise of a municipal government consultant to best define structure, processes, and needs.

As a result, in December 2023, CTSG recommended issuing a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) to engage a consultant. CTSG will work in conjunction with township officials to facilitate this study. As of this writing, output from this work is expected before the middle of 2024.



## Q & A ON TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

### How old is Peninsula Township?

Peninsula Township, one of Michigan's 1,240 townships, was incorporated as a general law township in Grand Traverse County 171 years ago, on February 3, 1853.

### Is Peninsula Township growing?

Yes. In the 2010 Census, the population was 5,433. As of the 2020 Census, Peninsula Township has 6,068 residents. That's an increase of 635 people, or 11.68 percent, in that 10-year period. Grand Traverse County grew by 9.5 percent in this same timeframe. By all accounts, including that of the peninsula's longtime UPS driver (see corresponding article in this issue of the newsletter), that growth trajectory is continuing.

### What do townships do?

State laws authorize Michigan townships to perform a wide variety of functions related to the public health, safety, and welfare of the community in two important categories: mandated and permissive. Mandated functions are activities that townships are required to perform. The three broadest mandated responsibilities are tax assessment administration, elections administration, and tax collection. These are legally assigned functions of the supervisor, clerk, and treasurer, respectively, and state laws specify how to perform them.

Michigan townships are also authorized to provide a wide variety of additional services. Virtually all townships provide fire protection, and many offer law enforcement. Planning and zoning, parks and recreation, public water and sewer, and cemetery administration are a few other common township functions.

### How are townships organized?

In general law townships such as Peninsula Township, the elected township board is comprised of individual officials who form the legislative body. This body oversees the township's policies and legislative decision making.

The planning commission, an appointed body, provides leadership and guidance on local planning and development policy and advises the township board on zoning and planning matters. See below for a closer look at its responsibilities.

The zoning board of appeals, also an appointed body, hears appeals from residents who disagree with specific decisions that impact their use of land and also provides relief to those

residents in unique circumstances by granting variances from the township zoning ordinance.

The parks committee, likewise an appointed body, oversees daily and long-term needs at the township's parks, advocates for their best and highest use, and works to fundraise for needs that the annual budget doesn't cover.

Finally, ad hoc committees are formed from time to time, often to take a deeper dive into complex and significant issues, gather background information, and make recommendations.

### What is the role of the planning commission?

The planning commission is responsible for reviewing and updating the township's master plan, which influences the regulations and standards in the zoning ordinance and any changes to it. The master planning process itself includes the input of township residents. See the 2019 Master Plan Resident Survey on the township website at [www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com). In the blue bar, click on "Documents," then "Planning," then scroll down to see the "Master Plan 12-08-21 Draft" on the right side of the page.

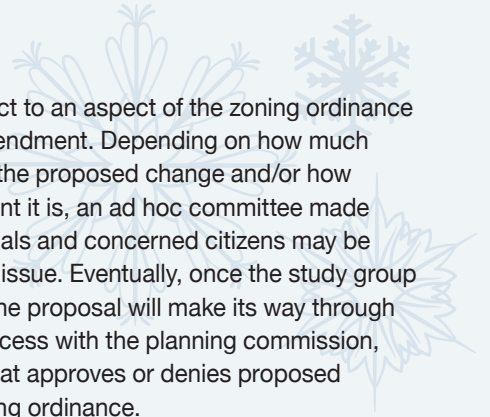
The planning commission is also the primary body responsible for ensuring that new development fits the community's vision for a given site. Planning commissions also have responsibility for special use approvals. In some communities, they have the sole power to approve or deny special use applications, but that's not the case in Peninsula Township. Here, they recommend approval or denial to the township board, which has final authority to approve or deny these applications.

Finally, the planning commission is the main forum for discussion of changes to the zoning ordinance, which can be proposed by property owners, the general public, township board members, staff, or members of the planning commission themselves.

Regardless of origin, all proposed zoning changes must go through a public hearing process before the planning commission can recommend any such changes to the township board. In turn, the board can consider the planning commission's recommendations, facts, and comments received through the public hearing process and decide whether to approve the change, amend the proposed change, or deny the change. On occasion, the planning commission and township board hold joint meetings as part of this process.

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## What is the township's plan for updating the master plan and zoning ordinance?

The current draft of the master plan dated December 8, 2021, will be reviewed, revised as needed for accuracy, and adopted in the first quarter of 2024. The director of planning and zoning will be assisted by two outside contractors, Randy Mielnik, the township's previous director of planning, and Beckett and Raeder, Inc. In addition, Randy Hall, chair of the planning commission, and Maura Sanders, township board member, will assist staff and contractors. The accuracy of the zoning district map and future land use map as well as adding information related to coastal resiliency will be the primary focus during this process. Please stay tuned for upcoming planning commission meetings and postings to the website to stay informed and be a part of the adoption process.

The township's next goal will be to update the zoning ordinance, written in 1972, to balance the interests of constituents while protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Residents cherish Peninsula Township's unique geography, agricultural soils, climate, and farming tradition, and they have demonstrated again and again that they want to preserve its rural character. The 2019 township-wide survey referenced above offers a strong indication of community attitudes. Specifically:

- Almost 70 percent of respondents identify the quiet rural atmosphere or scenic views as features they like most about living here.
- More than 80 percent of residents agree that local policies should stay focused on maintaining the rural, recreational, and undeveloped character of Peninsula Township, even if that means continuing to limit economic growth opportunities and discouraging housing options.
- 71 percent of respondents want to keep as much of the rural character and historic landscape as possible.

Recall too the overwhelming support of residents in August 2022 to tax themselves for a third time for an additional 20 years in order to purchase the development rights of willing farmers.

The vast majority of township residents do not support intense commercial uses impacting neighborhoods and residential housing and bringing vast numbers of additional vehicles to our roads. On the other hand, they do want to support "accessory" or value-added agricultural uses such as farm markets, processing kitchens, tours, and workshops without them morphing into commercial bars, restaurants, and event centers on land that is zoned agricultural.

## What can citizens do if they disagree with an aspect of the zoning ordinance?

Residents who object to an aspect of the zoning ordinance can propose an amendment. Depending on how much support there is for the proposed change and/or how complex or significant it is, an ad hoc committee made up of township officials and concerned citizens may be formed to study the issue. Eventually, once the study group has done its work, the proposal will make its way through a public hearing process with the planning commission, which is the body that approves or denies proposed changes to the zoning ordinance.

The planning commission and eventually the township board will evaluate the proposed ordinance changes based on the township's master plan and data compiled through that process. These bodies are responsive to community feedback and use it in working through the zoning ordinance amendment process to maintain consistency with the township's master plan. This zoning process allows residents to participate and provide their varied perspectives on appropriate governance in the community.

As time consuming as this democratic process can be, the decisions that are made at the township level usually reflect the will of the vast majority of residents, and when they don't, there are steps citizens can take to remedy that situation. Nonetheless, the outcome of contentious issues inevitably leaves some residents unhappy.

## How can citizens stay informed?

All township residents can stay informed about what's going on in the township by attending meetings and/or reading the agendas, packets, and minutes. If you'd like to be on the list to receive this information via email, please reach out to [clerk@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:clerk@peninsulatownship.com). By the same token, all of this information is available on the township website at [www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com). In the blue bar, click on "Documents," then click on the committee or board whose meeting materials you'd like to see.

Residents may also watch most meetings on YouTube. Visit the township's website at [www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com), scroll to the bottom of the home page, and click on the YouTube link. Meetings are available to watch for one month after the date of the meeting.

Finally, every township official is available to talk to any resident who has a question or concern, so please take the time to reach out. Township officials are neighbors and residents, which means the issues gripping the township matter to them every bit as much as they do you. Virtually every issue is far more nuanced and complicated than it first appears, and township officials welcome your interest and input.

#### Hours

Mon/Thurs..... 10:00 a.m.– 7:00 p.m.  
Tues/Wed/Fri ... 10:00 a.m.– 5:00 p.m.  
Sat.....10:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m.

## UPDATE FROM THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

### Beyond Words – From Your Director

What's new at PCL? There's always something new. That's what keeps libraries the dynamic gathering places of information they are today. Thanks to the Friends of PCL, we now offer Stay Sharp Kits designed for adult patrons who are in memory care. Each bag contains books and activities based around a theme that will stimulate brain activity. And while we're at it, don't forget our Library of Things! We offer folding tables, chairs, a projector, a screen, snowshoes, a karaoke machine, speakers, thermal detectors, and more. A full list is on our website!

### Parcheesi Anyone?

Join us for a few hours of family games and snacks February 10 from 10:00–1:00! Play one of ours or bring your own to share. Feeling really creative? We will have kits so families can design their own games! RSVP!

### For My Valentine!

Patrons of all ages can join us February 12 from 3:30–6:30 for DIY cupcake decorating. Bring 12 **unfrosted** cupcakes. We will provide frosting, toppings, and ideas! RSVP!

### The Gift of Life

PCL partners with VERSITI for a blood drive February 14 from 12:00–5:00. All blood collected stays in Michigan.

Register at <https://donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/schedules/zip>.

*“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”*

–Author and Poet Edith Wharton

### Chili and the Blues

Cabin fever got you down? Join us for a cup of chili and the music of Hugh Pool, tentatively scheduled for February 19 at 7:00 p.m. Check our website close to the date for confirmation. Pool is a songwriter and producer who plays guitar in a unique style that melds traditional Delta blues with country and classic rock and roll.

### Michigan Mysteries

Ross Richardson shares fascinating stories of missing persons, aircraft, and ships February 22 at 6:30 p.m. This



To the delight of young patrons, Santa arrived safely at PCL, courtesy of the Peninsula Township Fire Department!

hour-long program explores some lesser known mysteries and offers updates on efforts to solve them.

### Quilts for Kids

Join Kellie Chase to transform fabrics into patchwork quilts for kids facing serious trauma. Meetings will be held May 14, July 9, and October 8 from 10:00–12:00. Quilts for Kids is a non-profit organization. Materials are provided. RSVP!

### Our Friends Are Your Friends!

We LOVE the **Friends of PCL!** Their Adult Coloring Party is March 11 from 6:00–7:00 p.m. Admission will be one of the wish list items on the Budding Artists' Tree in the lobby starting February 1. Many thanks to Friends for all they have purchased for the library. Recent gifts include patio seating for the garden, Stay Sharp kits, new shelf markers, Library of Things items, and so much more. They sponsor **all** of our newspaper subscriptions and a good part of our programming! What would we do without Friends?

### The Regulars

**Peninsula Insights** meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. with a speaker of interest. The February meeting

Check out our website at [peninsulacommunitylibrary.org](http://peninsulacommunitylibrary.org) and “Like” us on Facebook!

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features Alison Metiva, chief operating officer of the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. All are welcome.

**Gentle Yoga** happens Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. for a small fee. **Story Stew** for preschoolers is offered the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 11:00 a.m. **Reading Dogs** are in Tuesdays from 3:30–5:00 p.m. **Threads** meets Mondays 10:00–12:00. Bring a project; work among friends! **PageTurners** meets the third Thursday at 6:30 p.m. Books are available on a first come, first served basis. Practice Spanish at our **Spanish Meetup** on the third Saturday at 10:30 a.m. **Takeout craft bags** are available for kids the first full week of the month, adult craft bags seasonally, while supplies last!

## At Your Service

PCL offers a Library of Things, a seasonal Seed Library, books, movies, puzzles, games, explorer bags, large print books, a Children's Garden with a play village, and more. Little Free Libraries have books for the taking. Printing, faxing, copying, iPads, and laptops are available on site. Check out STEM kits for kids thanks to a grant from Newton's Road. Wireless service is accessible in the parking lot 24/7. Notary service is available by appointment. Please note that when TCAPS is closed for weather, PCL is also closed.

**Vicki Shurly**, Director  
Peninsula Community Library

## KEEPING THINGS HUMMING BEHIND THE SCENES:

### Peninsula Township's Two Extraordinary Deputies

Robin Noval first joined the clerk's office in late 2018, just weeks before the former clerk left office. Since that time, she has capably and compassionately handled the endless details and demands that come her way as the front-facing individual in the clerk's office. Among other tasks, Robin handles all the invoices, accounts payable, and payroll needs for township staff and the fire department. She also handles the bulk of HR and insurance needs and routinely assists individuals with the purchase of cemetery burial rights as well as cemetery-related questions. The work never ends, and she keeps at it with a smile.

Robin lives on Old Mission Peninsula with her husband, Michael, and their German shepherd, Ellie. She is a Traverse City native, attending local schools through TC Senior High and graduating from MSU while working summers in her father's restaurant, the Pinestead Reef. She lived in Los Angeles, California, for more than 30 years, working in television development and production for Paramount Pictures and Warner Bros. She came home to Traverse City as often as possible during that period, and after experiencing too many stressful road rage incidents, decided to move back home permanently in 2017. Her two brothers and sister live here now too, and she keeps busy with family fun and reliving her youth. She says she never realized how lucky she is to have grown up in northern Michigan until she lived in an urban environment. "There's no place like home," she affirms. "There's no place like Traverse City!"



**Robin Noval enjoying time off in Tuscon, Arizona**

Katie Clark came on board in the Peninsula Township Treasurer's Office in November of 2021 when Treasurer Marge Achorn was the deputy. With a background in local government, specifically treasurer's duties, Katie quickly learned the ropes and now serves as the township's extremely capable



**Katie Clark hiking at Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre in Morrison, CO**

deputy treasurer. Some of her duties include tax collections, processing township revenues for all funds and departments, recording property tax adjustments, assisting with budget creation, and routinely monitoring all township accounts. She cares deeply about the use and investment of the township's tax dollars.

Katie grew up in the Traverse City area, graduating from TC West High School. In 2011 she married her husband, Matt, and had two children shortly thereafter. Over the next eight years, she worked in municipal government, first at Green Lake Township and then Leelanau County, both in the treasurer's office. She has rounded out her career sitting on different boards and committees, including Peninsula Township's Board of Review, working elections, organizing community events, engaging in countless hours of volunteer work, and even earning a Michigan Certified Assessing Officer license in 2019.

When the pandemic hit and schools closed, she and her family hit the road and traveled the country, homeschooling along the way. They eventually made their way back home to Traverse City and started their next chapter on Old Mission Peninsula.



## GRAND TRAVERSE REGIONAL LAND CONSERVANCY

### Land Protection and Stewardship Updates

#### Coming Soon! New Signage at Pelizzari Natural Area

As part of an effort to create consistent signage across its parks system, Peninsula Township is working with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) to update signage at Pelizzari Natural Area.

GTRLC is helping to design the signage, which includes a new kiosk at the trailhead, a mini kiosk at the informal entrance near the hemlock forest, new wayfinding, and some interpretive signage throughout the trail system. The signs will inform trail users about the property's protection history, natural features, and hemlock forest. Additionally, visitors will be reminded of the importance of keeping dogs on leashes while visiting the natural area. The trail signage will be installed in the spring after the ground has thawed.

#### Fundraising Continues for Future Addition to Pelizzari

GTRLC continues to fundraise for a future 15-acre addition to Pelizzari Natural Area that will permanently preserve a beautiful northern hardwood forest with rolling topography and mature trees.

The property provides high-quality wildlife habitat, particularly for species that require extensive, contiguous forests with open understories like the state-threatened red-shouldered hawk and Northern goshawk, a species of special concern. Located just under a quarter of a mile from the existing natural area, the property's protection could also serve as a critical catalyst for future land protection efforts and enhanced recreational opportunities in an area facing immense development pressure.

Thanks to the support of numerous generous donors, including an anonymous family who made a \$50,000

matching donation, more than \$600,000 has been raised for the project to date. At the time of this writing, GTRLC is working to raise the last \$133,206 needed to protect the property. If you'd like to make a gift, please contact GTRLC's director of development, Marissa Duque, at 231-929-7911 or [mduque@gtrlc.org](mailto:mduque@gtrlc.org). To make a gift online or for more information, visit [www.gtrlc.org/activeprojects/](http://www.gtrlc.org/activeprojects/).

#### Winter Snowplowing Update

To provide trail users safe access to outdoor recreation throughout the winter season, Peninsula Township will provide snowplowing services at Pelizzari Natural Area's parking area.

Please note that neither entrance at Pyatt Lake: The Bill Carls Nature Preserve will be plowed this winter. If you make a trip there this season, please plan accordingly and be prepared for variable conditions.



Pelizzari Natural Area in winter

#### Farmland Protection

The first application period in the fifth round of Peninsula Township's Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program ran from May 3 to June 7, 2023. During this time, the Peninsula Township PDR Selection Committee approved 10 applications totaling 678 acres using ranking criteria outlined in Section 5 of the Peninsula Township Purchase of Development Rights Ordinance #23, Amendment #3.

The committee also authorized contracting with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy Farmland

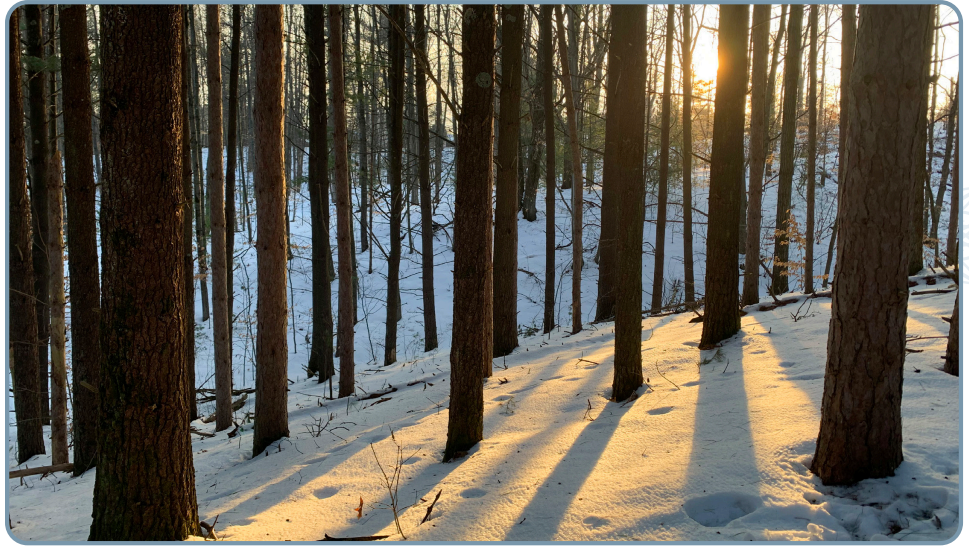
Protection Program Director Laura Rigan to assist staff with the program's administration. Rigan is working alongside local appraiser Steve Nichols to appraise the top four applications that received the most cumulative points. Negotiations and appraisals are currently ongoing with these applicants, namely Kelly Orchards, VM3 LLC, Nicholas Farm





and Vineyards, and L. Keith and JeanEva Warren Trusts.

The program is also actively pursuing grant funding from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Michigan Department of Agriculture to help leverage millage dollars and to further advance efforts to preserve Old Mission Peninsula's valuable farmland. Stay tuned for more information!



A different slant on Pelizzari Natural Area in winter



## ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

### A Brief Tutorial on the Equalization Process

There are six classifications of real property for equalization purposes: Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, Residential, Developmental, and Timber Cut-over. Property is classified according to its current use. If there are multiple uses upon a parcel, the use contributing the highest value shall be that parcel's classification. The equalization process assures that properties within each of the classifications are assessed at 50 percent of market value as is required by Article IX, Section 3 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963. The equalization process involves the local unit, the county, and the state.

The equalization process does not support assigning a parcel's assessment at 50 percent of that parcel's sales price. This is a very common misconception. The State Tax Commission considers the practice of "following sales" to be illegal and has issued multiple bulletins on the topic, most notably STC Bulletin 19 of 1997.

Zoning has no influence on a property's classification. For the sake of simplicity, zoning defines what you can do on your property. This is an important distinction to understand, as the issue can become confused by the similar terminology used for both zoning and classification purposes.

Toward calendar year end, assessors across the state work on classifying and valuing all properties within their jurisdictions for the upcoming assessment year. The 2024 assessments will utilize sales within the following statutory time frame: 4/1/21 through 3/31/23. Property owners are

provided a "Notice of Assessment, Taxable Valuation and Property Classification" annually. This document is typically delivered in February. While the header may read "THIS IS NOT A TAX BILL," the information on the notice will impact your upcoming taxes.

Pay particular attention to the taxable value (TV), as this is what the millage is levied against. Typically, the TV will increase/decrease by the Inflation Rate Multiplier (IRM). The IRM for 2024 has been computed to be 5.1 percent (last year, it was 7.9 percent). Because Proposal A limits the capped value calculation to the IRM or 5 percent, whichever is less, taxable values will increase by 5 percent in 2024. Note that transfers of ownership, new construction, and demolition are computed differently and are not limited to the 5 percent increase.

Please review the Notice of Assessment carefully. It contains the new (and prior) assessed, capped, and taxable values. It also includes the exemption status, if any; the legal description; the prior and current classifications; the owner of record; the property address; the mailing address; and an indication of whether there was a transfer of ownership.

If you have any questions about your Notice of Assessment, contact your assessor immediately. Assessors have "possession" of the assessment roll until the first Monday in March. If a correction is warranted, it can be made before that first Monday in March. Any appeals for change after that date must go before the March Board of Review hearing.





## OLD MISSION PENINSULA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### From Postcards to Chestnuts, OMPHS Has a Lot to Offer

The Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society (OMPHS) kicked off its 2023–2024 season with a joint meeting in collaboration with Peninsula Community Library on September 12. Don Harrison, the “Postcard Guy,” provided an informative and colorful program on northern Michigan postcards from the early twentieth century. The cards, which ran the gamut from the hilarious to the mundane to the poignant, sparked interest from attendees, some of whom brought cards of their own to have examined.

The October meeting featured a presentation by Tom Dalluge titled “Saving and Preserving the American Chestnut Trees of the Old Mission Peninsula.” While the chestnut blight has wiped out all but a handful of these trees, through isolation and a favorable climate, a number have survived and thrived on the peninsula. In November, OMPHS members developed plans to plant several small chestnut nurseries with hopes of increasing the number of existing trees and improving cross pollination of old-growth trees. Long term, the group hopes to offer chestnuts in its long-running Memorial Tree Program and to help replant disrupted forests.

OMPHS’s November meeting featured a highly informative history and civics lesson by Ann Swaney and Patty O’Donnell called “The Story of Center Road: From Two Track to M37 Scenic Highway and Beyond.” Ann’s presentation combined a photographic journey looking back at Center Road from its inception with a history of the changes to the key peninsula artery over time. Patty then provided an overview of her work with various peninsula residents to obtain the Scenic Byway designation.

In December, we held our annual holiday party at the Old Mission American Legion Hall with lots of tasty food served up.

Our stewardship of local historical sites continued with additional improvements to the Replica Log Church completed by volunteer members in October and closing the Hessler Log Cabin for the season in November.

In October, OMPHS worked with Liz Hague and Katie Kellogg at Old Mission Peninsula School to bring the story of the American chestnut to the fifth grade class. The following week, working with volunteers from the Dougherty Mission House, the same students opened chestnut burrs at our first

“Crackin’ Day.” In addition, they received a Dougherty House tour, walked the 16-acre grounds, saw the numerous native chestnut trees, met with local resident Jerry Ostlund to hear about harvesting chestnuts in the 1950s, and left with nuts to plant and chocolate chip cookies to eat. We look forward to working with the school on other programs where OMPHS can serve.

Last, our American chestnut preservation and restoration program will begin planting nuts indoors in March and expects to have a small nursery of chestnut seedlings in the ground by late spring. Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved in the nursery or in the preservation effort aimed at protecting existing trees.

Winter is a great time to join a new organization, meet new people, and learn something new, in our case, perhaps how to help

resurrect a functionally extinct species! Our meetings are held at Peninsula Community Library on the first Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. Individual memberships are \$20.00 a year and families may join for \$30.00.

To sign up, visit our website at [www.oldmissionpeninsulahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.oldmissionpeninsulahistoricalsociety.org) or contact Tom Dalluge at [twdalluge@gmail.com](mailto:twdalluge@gmail.com).



One of OMP’s glorious American chestnut trees

continued on next page...



## ALMOST TO THE FINISH LINE

### Improvements nearly complete at Mission Log Church in Old Mission

Although it is closed for the season, the Mission Log Church continues to promote the history of Old Mission Peninsula. Since our summer open house, additional improvements have been made to this revered structure. A team led by Marty Klein has added a pedestrian platform and railing to the entrance and adjusted the screen door, allowing for a gentle entrance and exit.

A second group of volunteers led by Anita Klein has begun landscaping the area around the church. Over the next several years, some existing plants will be removed and new plants introduced. Additional hands will be needed on work days, so stay tuned.

New lighting has also been installed. All exhibit panels are now illuminated with a bright, gentle light that draws attention to each individual panel but does not impact the area surrounding it. In addition, the BX cable and breaker box have been painted brown and are now barely noticeable. Finally, the lights are now on a motion sensor, saving electricity and money.

The lighting work took Dean Francis, Chris Rieser, Brad Lyman, and Marty Klein a long full day and a half. Dean in particular dove into the research, worked out the details, and organized the installation.



The new platform and railing at Mission Log Church



Memorial bench for John Scarbrough

A great many visitors left positive comments in the guestbook in 2023. Some were very moved by the exhibit, while others were simply pleased to read and learn more about the history of our peninsula. No doubt others who did not sign the guestbook felt similarly.

We hope to see you when the historic replica Mission Log Church opens for the 2024 season. Check our website at [www.oldmissionpeninsulahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.oldmissionpeninsulahistoricalsociety.org) for details.

## HASEROT BEACH E. COLI OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

Out of an abundance of caution, the Peninsula Township Parks Committee joined a beach monitoring network in 2022 run by the Grand Traverse County Health Department. All of Traverse City's public beaches and numerous county beaches are in the program.

Every week from June through early September, water samples are taken and tested by an independent company for contaminants, especially E. coli. If the E. coli levels are above the approved safe level, the implicated beach is issued a warning, anything from an advisory to enter the water only below the waist to instructions to stay out of the water altogether. Warnings typically come after a heavy local rain or other event that allows E. coli bacteria to drain into the water. The water is sampled again a few days later to make sure it's safe to enter.

Haserot Beach water samples are taken from two locations, one near the old launch to the north and the other from the area near the new playground. Unexpectedly, this exceptionally popular beach suffered a brief shutdown last summer due to high levels of E. coli, a big surprise since prior samples had shown no contamination. As a result, the beach was posted with "No swimming" signs.

Ultimately, the sample taken from the obsolete boat launch was identified as the source of contamination, with the culprit being a flock of Canada geese, which are notorious for spreading e-coli. Ultimately, the health department determined that a significant rain event had washed the bacteria into the water.

It is illegal to harm Canada geese, but few people want them hanging around. Our township's solution will be to install a series of solar-powered "goose lights." Geese can't stand flashing or bright lights in their line of vision, so these lights will chase them away without harming them. The lights are about three feet high, right at a goose's eye level, and they flash every minute or so. The lights will begin to flash each evening right after dusk, just the time geese like to gather on the beach. Once they learn that Haserot Beach is no longer a pleasant place to congregate, they will stay away, with no harm caused to humans or our (dirty) feathered friends.

We will continue to monitor Haserot Beach during swim season to ensure everyone's safety, but we are hopeful that closures and warnings will now be a thing of the past.

**Mike Skurski**, Chair  
Peninsula Township Parks





## MISSION POINT LIGHTHOUSE AND PARK

### Mission Point Lighthouse 2023 Report

The lighthouse closed for the 2023 season on Sunday, November 12. We had record-breaking sales this year mostly due to the fee increase to \$8 per adult to take the tour to the top of the lighthouse.

As is usually the case, we had visitors from every state and many foreign countries. We welcomed ten Road Scholar tour groups and many additional bus tour groups. Some had reservations and some did not. Meetings with many travel journalists resulted in the lighthouse being featured in at least five UK magazines and/or online magazines. The lighthouse will reopen May 1, 2024, from 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. each Wednesday through Monday (the lighthouse is closed on Tuesdays). Google maps recently alerted me that our lighthouse listing has received seven million views since 2019!

I've begun scheduling the 2024 Keeper Calendar. We had three cancelations in 2023, and twice we scrambled to have enough local volunteers to cover the shop's open hours. I hope things go more smoothly this year. If you are making New Year's resolutions, consider volunteering at Mission Point Lighthouse. Our local volunteers don't need to run the register; they assist the keeper in the shop and greet visitors at the door. Amazingly, ninety-eight percent of the visitors using credit cards in the shop have never toured the lighthouse! When they approach the door, they simply need to be informed that there is a free first-floor museum room to view and an \$8 fee for adults, \$2 for kids ages 6–12, free for 5 and under, to tour upstairs. Payments are made in the gift shop, and the tours are free to active military members, veterans, and Peninsula Township residents and their guests. Just let the shopkeeper know if you fit into one or more of these categories.

Serving as a greeter at the door or in the park with a dog (leashed only, please!) is a great help to the keepers. Many friendly visitors have questions about the area and the peninsula in general. Quite often, volunteers run into folks they know or visitors from their hometowns. These interactions make for fun conversations. Greeters at the lighthouse can also be the "eyes" in the park that help encourage good behavior. For example, they can stop folks



Oh, the first snowfall of the winter

from moving the lawn chairs and picnic tables out of the common area. I am grateful to the residents who frequent our park trails and let me know about downed trees along the paths, broken park features, or missing signage. It always helps to have locals utilizing our park.

Planned projects for the upcoming season include replacing the old boardwalk and stairs to the beach, installing better signage in the parking lot, adding more irrigation to the lighthouse grounds, and more. Our supportive non-profit organization, Mission Point Lighthouse Keepers Association (MPLKA), will host an event in the spring to help pay for the installation of the new lake binocular viewer. This will be a fun addition to the grounds. I am grateful to MPLKA for providing local volunteer help and fundraising for our special projects. The MPLKA contact and donation information can be found at [www.MPLKA.com](http://www.MPLKA.com).

Reminder: Peninsula Township residents and their guests can tour the lighthouse for free! Check in with the keepers in the shop for this benefit. We have new museum displays and items in the shop every year, so your experience will always be new. Feel free to email me with questions and comments at [missionpointlight@gmail.com](mailto:missionpointlight@gmail.com).

**Ginger Schultz,**  
Mission Point Lighthouse Manager





## CEMETERY UPDATE: WE HAVE AN ORDINANCE!

Peninsula Township owns and manages three cemeteries, Bohemian Cemetery, Ogdensburg Cemetery, and Peninsula Township Cemetery, and has waiting lists to purchase burial rights permits at Bohemian and Ogdensburg, our two historic cemeteries. In November, the township board passed Peninsula Township Cemetery Ordinance No. 58 of 2023. An excerpt from the new ordinance reads as follows:

The township board recognizes that the proper and reasonable maintenance, appearance, and use of the cemetery or cemeteries owned or controlled by the township is an important governmental function. It is also important that burials, disinterments, and other matters associated with a municipal cemetery are handled in a respectful and proper way in order to promote the safety, public health, and general welfare of the community. The township board finds that the adoption and enforcements of this ordinance are in the best interests of the property owners and residents of the township.

Section 4 of the ordinance, Sale of Cemetery Permits and Transfer of Permit Ownership, will be of special interest to everyone who owns burial rights permits, formerly called “deeds,” in any of these cemeteries. Part (f) of this section reads as follows:

Unused burial rights permits shall become an asset of the owner’s estate, and their respective burial right permits must be deeded and/or purchased to a family member or the township upon the passing of such owner. Permits that are not deeded and/or sold to a family member must be sold back to the township. All burial right permits deeded and/or sold must be transferred through the township clerk’s office so that township records remain accurate.

Additionally, the ordinance notes that burial rights permits sold after the effective date of the new ordinance that remain vacant for 30 years or more from the date of sale shall automatically revert to the township once the clerk has sent a notice by first-class mail to the last known address of the last owner informing them of the expiration of the 30-year period *and* letting them know that all rights to the burial space(s) will be forfeited if they do not indicate in writing within 60 days that they desire to retain the rights.

Please note that if a family places a memorial marker or headstone on a lot or plot, even if that lot or plot is not otherwise occupied, it is no longer considered to be vacant. This means the family will not need to contact the township, regardless of how many years go by, unless they wish to exercise their right to bury someone in that location.

A significant change documented in the ordinance is that permanent grave markers are now permitted for green burials and associated plots. These markers must not exceed 10 x 20 inches for a single marker or 12 x 30 inches for two people. In addition, they must lie flush with the ground and be constructed of granite. They may be engraved but must remain simple in appearance. The final location and appearance of a marker is subject to the sexton’s approval.



A mock-up of the new signs marking the memorial path at Peninsula Township Cemetery

In other cemetery news, while the five new landscape pods at Peninsula Township Cemetery have not yet been planted, the new memorial path through the woods on the east side of the cemetery is complete. Come on out and take a walk—it’s truly lovely. Two new “Memorial Path” signs donated by generous township residents will be installed as the weather allows, with other improvements slated to occur in the spring. In addition, the township is working with Eickhof Columbaria to design a columbarium for this special rural cemetery.

To read the new cemetery ordinance in its entirety, please visit the website and select “Documents” in the blue bar, then “Ordinances,” then “Police Power Ordinances.” Scroll down to the bottom to read the new ordinance.

For more information on our cemeteries, please visit the township website at [www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com) and click on “Cemeteries” under “Departments” in the blue bar.





## CLERK'S OFFICE

### LET'S TALK 2024 ELECTIONS!

The Presidential Primary will be held February 27.  
The State Primary is slated for August 6, and the  
General Election for November 5.



Michigan voters have three options for casting their ballots in 2024 and beyond:

#### 1. Absentee Ballot and Permanent Absentee Ballot List

All registered voters have the right to vote by mail. In 2022, Michigan voters approved the option to receive an absentee ballot for all elections moving forward by completing an application once and joining the new Permanent Absentee Ballot List. Clerks' offices around the state recently sent this application to registered voters who in the past asked to be placed on the absentee voter list. If you didn't receive an application but would like to join this new list, please reach out to the clerk's office. Please also reach out if you don't want to join this list but would like to receive an application to vote absentee for the Presidential Primary, the State Primary, or the General Election. Note: because the February 27 Presidential Primary is a partisan primary, voters must select which ballot they wish to vote, Democratic or Republican.

#### 2. Early Voting

Voters have the right to vote and place their completed ballots into a secure tabulator during the nine days of Early Voting beginning the second Saturday before each state and/or federal election. The East Bay Township Hall at 1965 N. Three Mile Road is the host site for Early Voting for all registered voters in Peninsula Township as well as East Bay, Acme, Whitewater, and Union townships. Early Voting will take place in the East Bay Township Hall North Conference Room from 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. each of these nine days. If you are not currently registered to vote, stop by the Peninsula Township Clerk's Office during regular office hours or from 8:00–4:00 on Saturday, February 24, before going to the Early Voting site.

#### 3. In-person Voting

In-person voting continues to be an option for voters who prefer to vote in person on Election Day in their assigned precinct. Residents who live in Precinct 1 vote at Peninsula Township Hall at 13235 Center Road. Residents who live in Precinct 2 vote at First Congregational Church at 6105 Center Road. Precincts open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m., but any voter who is in line to vote at 8:00 p.m. will be allowed to vote.

### Dates of interest for the February 27, 2024, Presidential Primary Election:

- Late December 2023: applications to vote absentee as described above were mailed to those who are on the current absentee ballot list. If you would like to receive an application to join the Permanent Absentee Ballot List or to vote absentee for any of the three scheduled elections in 2024, please email the clerk's office.
- Thursday, January 18, 2024: absentee voter ballots were mailed to voters who returned their completed applications. Absentee ballots will also be available during regular office hours for voters who wish to apply for an absentee ballot. Make sure to bring your photo ID.
- Saturday, February 17, 2024: Early Voting begins at 8:00 a.m.
- Sunday, February 25, 2024: Early Voting ends at 4:00 p.m.
- Monday, February 26, 2024: registered voters may apply for an absentee voter ballot in person at the clerk's office with the requirement that it must be marked in the building and left in the clerk's office. This option ends at 4:00 p.m. The clerk's office will close at 4:00 p.m. on February 26 to prepare for Election Day.
- The clerk's office will be open from 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. on February 24, the Saturday preceding the election. If you need to register, would like to apply for an absentee ballot, or have a question, please stop by then or at any time during regular office hours.
- **Tuesday, February 27, 2024:** in-person voting on Election Day from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

### Q & A: Michigan's Presidential Primary

#### Do I have to be a registered Republican or Democrat to participate in Michigan's Presidential Primary?

No. Michigan's Presidential Primary has been designated a closed primary. There is no political party registration requirement in Michigan Election Law. Any Michigan registered voter can participate in the primary. By law, you must make your ballot selection in writing by completing the Application to Vote/Ballot Selection Form on Election Day or on the Absent Voter Ballot Application form if voting absentee.

continued on next page...



## Why do I have to select a party ballot?

Michigan Election Law (MCL 168.615c) guides the conduct of the Presidential Primary. The law requires that voters indicate in **writing** which political party ballot they wish to vote.

This requirement only applies to Presidential Primary elections. Voters will **not** be required to select a political party ballot type at other types of elections.

## Didn't the legislature just eliminate straight-ticket voting?

Yes, the legislature did eliminate straight-ticket voting, but straight-ticket voting was only an option in the November General Election. A closed Presidential Primary is a very different process. Voters are required by law to select a Republican or Democratic party ballot to participate in the Presidential Primary.

## What is the difference between an open primary and a closed primary?

Voters in an open primary are given a ballot with a column listing each qualified party's candidates. Voters then decide which party primary they wish to participate in by voting only in the column of their party choice while in the privacy of the voting station. Voting for candidates in more than a single party's column voids the entire partisan ballot.

Voters in closed primaries must state the party primary they wish to participate in before being issued a ballot. The ballot given to voters only has candidates of the party that correspond to the voter's choice.

## Will Michigan's closed Presidential Primary procedures affect the August State Primary in any way?

No. The August primary is an open primary. Voters will **not** be asked to select a party before voting in the August primary. Each voter will be issued a ballot containing all political parties and their candidates and will select one of the parties in the privacy of the voting station.

## When I select a party ballot for the Presidential Primary, does that mean I have to vote in the same party primary in August?

No. The written selection made by a voter at the Presidential Primary has no bearing on how a person votes in the State Primary election.

**Recently passed House Bill 4702 raised the number of registered voters allowed in a precinct from 2,999 to 5,000. This means Peninsula Township won't need to split its two precincts into additional precincts for a long time. As of December 2023, we had 2,814 registered voters in Precinct 1 and 2,886 registered voters in Precinct 2.**

## Will my ballot selection be made public?

Yes. By law, a public list must be made available that includes the Presidential Primary ballot type chosen by each voter in the Presidential Primary. This list must be made available within 71 days after the Presidential Primary election. This ballot selection information is subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. The public list of voters' Presidential Primary ballot selections must be destroyed after the 22-month retention period expires.

To be clear, only the **political party ballot selection** will be made public, **not the candidate one votes for**. Ballots are secret; individual votes are not and cannot be disclosed.

## Helpful Reminders

If you join the Permanent Absentee Ballot List but need your ballot sent to a different address than your regular mailing address because you are temporarily going to be away (this is often the case for snowbirds),

notify the clerk's office. **Absentee ballot applications can be forwarded through the mail, but ballots themselves are non-forwardable.**

If you move within the State of Michigan and update your voter registration address, your status on the Permanent Absentee Ballot List will move with you.

Voters who register to vote on Election Day must do so in the township clerk's office.

Visit the elections page at [www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com) for links to check your voter registration status and determine your polling location, update your voter registration information, view a sample ballot, or register online to vote.

If you would like to volunteer to work as an election inspector in 2024, please contact the clerk to fill out an election inspector application. Note: even if you've filled out an application in the past, you will need to do so again, as state law requires a new application every two years.

Please reach out to the clerk's office if we can answer any questions. The many recent changes in election law can be confusing. You can reach Becky Chown at [clerk@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:clerk@peninsulatownship.com) or Robin Noval at [deputy.clerk@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:deputy.clerk@peninsulatownship.com).

## SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!

Currently, we mail the newsletter to residents two times a year, but costs keep rising. If you would be content to receive the newsletter via email and forego a hard copy in the mail, please let Becky know at [clerk@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:clerk@peninsulatownship.com).





## WINTER 2024

PRSRT MKT  
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TRAVERSE CITY, MI  
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### Peninsula Township Newsletter

13235 Center Road  
Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Newsletter Editor: Becky Chown

### Township Hours:

Monday 7:30am–6:30pm  
Tuesday–Thursday 7:30am–5:00pm  
Closed Fridays

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

### STAFF

**Assessor** ..... Sally Murray ..... 231.223.7313 .... [assessor@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:assessor@peninsulatownship.com)  
**Comm. Police Officers** .. Virnell France ..... 231.223.4525 ... [vfrance@gtsheriff.org](mailto:vfrance@gtsheriff.org)  
..... Tony Martinez ..... 231-223-4525 ... [fmartinez@gtsheriff.org](mailto:fmartinez@gtsheriff.org)  
**Deputy Clerk** ..... Robin Noval ..... 231.223.7321 .... [deputy.clerk@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:deputy.clerk@peninsulatownship.com)  
**Deputy Treasurer** ..... Katie Clark ..... 231.223.4484 .... [deputytreasurer@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:deputytreasurer@peninsulatownship.com)  
**Director of Planning and Zoning** ..... Jenn Cram ..... 231.223.7314 ... [planner@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:planner@peninsulatownship.com)  
**Fire Chief** ..... Fred Gilstorff ..... 231.223.4443 ... [fire@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:fire@peninsulatownship.com)  
**FOIA Coordinator** ..... Beth Chan ..... 231.223.7322 ... [clerkpa@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:clerkpa@peninsulatownship.com)  
**Lighthouse Manager** ..... Ginger Schultz ..... 231.645.0759 .... [missionpointlight@gmail.com](mailto:missionpointlight@gmail.com)  
**Office Manager** ..... Susan Piehl ..... 231.223.7322 .... [officemanager@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:officemanager@peninsulatownship.com)  
**Ordinance Enforcement Officer** ..... Dave Sanger ..... 231.216.1212 .... [enforcement.peninsulazoning@gmail.com](mailto:enforcement.peninsulazoning@gmail.com)

### BOARD

**Clerk** ..... Becky Chown ..... 231.223.7321 .... [clerk@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:clerk@peninsulatownship.com)  
**Supervisor** ..... Isaiah Wunsch ..... 231. 223.7323 ... [supervisor@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:supervisor@peninsulatownship.com)  
**Treasurer** ..... Margaret Achorn ..... 231.223.4484 .... [treasurer@peninsulatownship.com](mailto:treasurer@peninsulatownship.com)  
**Trustee** ..... David K. Sanger ..... 231.216.1212 ..... [dave.peninsulatrustee@gmail.com](mailto:dave.peninsulatrustee@gmail.com)  
**Trustee** ..... Armen Shanafelt ..... 231.714.4102 ..... [marge.peninsulatrustee@gmail.com](mailto:marge.peninsulatrustee@gmail.com)  
**Trustee** ..... W. William Rudolph ..... 231.223.4177 .... [rudy.peninsulatrustee@gmail.com](mailto:rudy.peninsulatrustee@gmail.com)  
**Trustee** ..... Maura A. Sanders ..... 231.313.5921 .... [maura.peninsulatwptrustee@gmail.com](mailto:maura.peninsulatwptrustee@gmail.com)

### Historic structures owned by Peninsula Township:

Peter Dougherty House  
Hessler Log Cabin  
Mission Log Church  
Mission Point Lighthouse  
Peninsula Township Hall

### Parks the township owns or manages:

Archie Park  
Bowers Harbor Park and Expansion  
Haserot Beach  
Kelley Park  
Mission Point Lighthouse Park  
Old Mission State Park  
Pelizzari Natural Area

Power Island is owned and managed by Grand Traverse County but lies within Peninsula Township's jurisdiction.