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PENINSULA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA

January 7, 2025

7:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Pledge**

3. **Roll Call**

Present: Shanafelt, Alexander, Shipman, Hall, Hornberger, Beard; **Excused:** Dloski

4. **Approve Agenda**

Hall proposes that any comment about shoreline be held until business item 8a: DRAFT Intent and Purpose Statement for Shoreline Regulations. Hall also amends agenda to include a statement by Township Supervisor, Maura Sanders, and by Julie Alexander, Town Board liaison.

Motion to approve agenda as amended by Beard, seconded by Alexander

Motion passed by consensus.

5. **Brief Citizen Comments (For Agenda Items Not Scheduled for Public Hearing)**

Marty Lagina, 232 McKinley Road: owns C-1 zoned property at Mapleton and is concerned about an outdated 28-foot height limit unique to this parcel, calling it inconsistent with the standard 38-foot limit elsewhere. They formally requested an amendment under Article Nine, which was technically approved in the consent agenda in the October PC meeting but didn't advance to the Township Board. Urging expedited action, they argue the limit deters development and results in unattractive architecture, emphasizing the need for formal approval without delays tied to broader zoning reviews.

6. **Conflict of Interest:** none

7. **Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of Meeting Minutes: Planning Commission Regular Meeting, November 6, 2024

Motion to approve consent agenda as-is by Hornberger, seconded by Shanafelt

Motion passed by consensus.

8. Business

a. DRAFT Intent and Purpose Statement for Shoreline Regulations

Hall: notes that local discussions on the social media platform Nextdoor suggest a lack of awareness about certain topics. Expresses concern that information isn't reaching the public effectively, despite efforts to post updates on the website. Emphasizes a desire for better communication to gather input from everyone, regardless of their specific interests, and stresses that the goal is transparency, not concealment.

Cram:

- The Township Board prioritized updating shoreline regulations due to conflicts, violations, and a lawsuit. A study group was formed in January 2024 to address the issue, meeting bi-weekly at the Township Hall with public participation and comments welcomed.
- The group initially focused on single and shared waterfront ownership, finding that the existing zoning ordinance, which allows one dock per parcel and one boat hoist per 50 feet, was inadequate for shared waterfront properties. Based on research and input, the group recommended increasing the limit to three boat hoists per 50 feet, although no final decision has been made.
- New supervisor Maura Sanders requested that future study groups follow the Open Meetings Act. As a result, the study group's work paused in late 2024, with plans to resume in spring or summer 2025 under a more transparent format, including posted agendas, minutes, and YouTube recordings.
- To ensure broader public engagement, a public education session is planned for March at a larger venue, such as St. Joseph Church, featuring guest speakers like Heather Smith (Baykeeper), Dick Norton (University of Michigan), and others. The event aims to educate the community on shoreline protection and clarify overlapping regulations, followed by a community survey to gather input for further amendments.
- As outgoing planner, Cram emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum and presented a revised intent and purpose statement to guide future work. This document reflects the "why" behind shoreline regulations, drawing from previous drafts and study group discussions. Tonight's meeting is intended for discussion and planning, ensuring the community understands next steps and that the project advances transparently.

Hall: Reiterates that there is no action taken at this stage. Public comment will be taken. Requests that Cram remind the Commission of the number of complaints fielded by the Planning office regarding shoreline.

Cram: Estimates the number of complaints to be around 47. Notes an increasing number of shoreline violations, describing them as egregious and impactful on the area's future. Emphasized the importance of preventing issues like the Bluff Road collapse into the bay. Urged the community, Planning Commission, and Board to collaborate on finding reasonable regulations that protect the natural resource while respecting private property rights.

Shanafelt: Asks for clarification regarding parking in the right-of-way *granted* by MDOT.

Cram: Confirms that this is correct. Explains that all public roads have a platted right-of-way, with Peninsula Drive's being approximately 66 feet. However, the travel portion is narrower, around 33-40 feet. They noted that the Grand Traverse County Road Commission and MDOT allow parking within the right-of-way, outside the fog line or white line.

Cram: Explains that the packet includes a draft intent and purpose statement and the policy statement presented to the Planning Commission on August 21st, with corrections made based on feedback. Key updates include removing a requirement for HOAs to provide a written disclaimer or acknowledgment of liability, as agreed upon after legal review. Additionally, a prior dock-length requirement tied to achieving a 4-foot depth was removed to accommodate larger boats. These changes reflect ongoing discussions and are part of a policy statement, not finalized regulations, with further vetting planned during public hearings.

Hall opens the meeting to public comment.

Tom Barnhart, 10895 Peninsula Drive: I appreciate the information that's been shared tonight. I'm not entirely sure if we're just discussing the two paragraphs displayed on the screen or if we're also considering the additional documents, but I'll share my thoughts. I want to start by saying that I'm supportive of the process, the statement, and most of what's in the attachment. However, I'd like to touch on a couple of points related to the hoist and associated documents, which I think may be a topic of interest for many tonight. Specifically, I want to address the proposed limit of three hoists per 50 feet of shoreline frontage. After running some numbers—and I'll try to keep this simple as a former attorney—I noticed some potential challenges. If you have a 12-foot hoist and a 4-foot dock extension, that totals 16 feet per boat. For three boats, that's 48 feet, leaving just 2 feet to spare within 50 feet of frontage. On a larger scale, for example, 100 feet of frontage with six boats, it would likely be impossible to meet the distance requirements and remain within the setbacks. To make it work, you'd need a significant amount of shoreline frontage—possibly 700 to 750 feet, depending on the configuration. From my perspective, this three-hoist limit might not serve as much of a restriction. I believe the real limitations will come from setbacks.

Hall: Let's make sure that we're considering all the potential geometry here. They don't have to be side by side, taking up 40-48 feet. They could run parallel with the dock. They could (come to a) T.

Barnhart: I'm talking about a T or an L. They can go straight out. But if you have - choose a number: 300 ft of frontage - that would six times (the number of 50 foot increments) three

(hoists) that would be 18 boats. That's a long dock going out if it's just one line.

Hall: I'm not sure what the issue is. Seems pretty simple to comply.

Shanafelt: It's really a geometry issue, and I agree—your point is well taken if that were the only way to position hoists. However, there are multiple ways to arrange hoists, and there are parameters in place for how it needs to be done. If you follow those parameters, it works.

Barnhart: I guess what I'm saying is that, from my perspective, on larger properties—especially those with only one dock—you're going to need a T or L-shaped configuration. That's the basis for the measurements I'm considering when factoring in the T or L setup.

Shanafelt: Yeah, but keep in mind that if you have to follow the 15-foot setback guidelines, that limits how many hoists you can place along one side of the T. You might need to position two hoists on the other side of the T for it to work. It's just one possible solution, and the setup you're describing may not work in all contexts—it isn't a required solution.

Barnhart: I get it. I just think that's because most of the ones I see - and I don't go around the whole Peninsula - are just a simple T and don't have the double sides.

Shanafelt: Most of them don't have three per 50 feet either.

Barnhart: Well, that's kind of my point—by allowing for three hoists per 50 feet, you're not just accommodating what's already there. While I haven't gone out and counted what most properties currently have, if three per 50 feet exceeds what's typical, then you're allowing for future growth. That includes not only existing setups but also any new developments with shared properties.

Shanafelt: So, your argument is that this would allow too many hoists?

Barnhart: That's the sum of it. I don't want to take up too much time since I'm sure others want to speak but my view would be to either limit it to two hoists per 50 feet of frontage or adjust the setback requirements. For a typical homeowner with 100 feet of frontage, 15-foot setbacks on each side mean 30% of the frontage is taken up by setbacks. If you apply that or a similar percentage to every 100 feet of frontage, it could help address the issue. Those are my two thoughts on the matter.

Randy McClure, 1297 Londolyn Terrace: Suggests including an expert on property rights to address how the proposed rules might affect property owners and allow for questions. Questions the assumption that implementing an ordinance would significantly reduce violations, asking for clarity on the impact based on the 47 complaints received this year. Recommends ensuring that any community survey achieves statistical significance, cautioning against relying on non-random responses that may not represent the broader population's views. Proposes considering guidelines instead of strict ordinances. These guidelines would outline community values and encourage residents to manage their shoreline responsibly, fostering a neighbor-to-neighbor approach without involving the Township in micromanagement or enforcement. Expresses concerns about the Township's potential overreach and suggested a less regulatory, more collaborative approach to addressing shoreline

issues.

Ben Florence, 9033 Center Road: Addresses the idea of neighbors resolving disputes amicably, sharing their personal experience of receiving both indirect and direct threats of violence from neighbors. Expressed doubt that they were the only individual to encounter such issues, noting that tempers often escalate in property-related disputes. Asked how state-owned property above the high-water line is being addressed, particularly in relation to permits for structures or fill beyond that area. Also inquired whether the Township obtains approval from the state for wetland fill in such cases.

Cram: You're speaking about the land that is above the ordinary high water mark?

Florence: Into the ordinary high water mark.

Cram: Explains that setbacks for structures are measured from the ordinary high water mark, which is at an elevation of 58.5 feet, with a 60-foot setback required for new structures. Additionally, Section 7.4.2(B) of the zoning ordinance regulates the floodplain, prohibiting fill, habitable structures, or most improvements within it. Limited exceptions, such as 3-foot-wide stairways or paths to the beach, are allowed for access. With FEMA's updated floodplain maps, flood elevations have risen by 3 to 6 feet in some areas, creating challenges as neighbors compare older shoreline improvements to current restrictions. The commenter noted that the zoning ordinance must follow current regulations, which prohibit these improvements in the floodplain. This has led to violations and disputes, as the Township must assess both the ordinary high water mark and floodplain elevation to determine where structures and improvements can be located.

Florence: Asks if township has accounted for setbacks in situations where there is no provision for the road right-of-way or water frontage in front of private properties, particularly in cases involving the road right-of-way or areas below the ordinary high-water mark?

Cram: Explains that areas below the ordinary high water mark are generally under the jurisdiction of EGLE or the Army Corps, and the Township does not regulate structures there. However, the Township believes it has an interest in regulating docks and hoists in these areas due to their relationship to land use. Legal opinions support this position, but the Township is cautious about overstepping jurisdictional boundaries. Currently, the focus is on understanding the community's preferences, as opinions vary, with some believing there should be no regulation at all.

Florence: The question is, if my neighbor places their dock and boats in front of my property but on state land—beyond the ordinary high water mark and on public ground—how is this situation addressed?

Cram: Acknowledges the concern about neighbors placing docks and hoists in front of others' properties and offers to review the specific situation. Notes that this issue is common and has been raised by many waterfront property owners, especially those worried about increased hoist limits turning residential areas into marina-like spaces. Emphasizes the need for

reasonable regulations and proposes a solution involving setbacks. These setbacks would extend property lines perpendicularly from the ordinary high-water mark into the water, ensuring docks are positioned within each owner's property boundaries while allowing flexibility. The goal is to balance private property rights and minimize conflicts, enabling everyone to enjoy their waterfront.

Hall: Addresses ongoing objections regarding the Township's jurisdiction over shoreline regulations, noting that since the study group's formation, some have questioned the Township's authority. Emphasizes that no case law exists in Michigan or the U.S. addressing the jurisdiction of municipal ordinances on navigable waters, such as the local bays, which are comparable to the Atlantic Ocean or Gulf of Mexico in this context. The Township is relying on its legal counsel's opinion. Invites anyone interested in reviewing a redacted legal brief on the matter to email them, offering further discussion if needed. Concludes by stating that jurisdiction would not be a topic of discussion during the meeting.

Shipman: Highlights concerns about proposed shoreline regulations, particularly regarding setbacks for hoists being measured from property lines projected into the lake. Notes issues for properties with irregular or narrow shoreline configurations, which could create challenges for compliance. Emphasized the need for clear sketches to help property owners understand how the rules would apply to specific situations. While some considerations for odd-shaped parcels are included, such as centering structures within the parcel for properties less than 50 feet wide, the speaker stressed that additional unforeseen scenarios might still arise. Encouraged continued public feedback to refine the regulations.

Andy Smits, 8458 Peninsula Drive: Good evening and thank you for your commitment to our community. I am honored to serve as the County Drain Commissioner. I attended several of the study sessions this summer when my schedule allowed. I wish I had been able to participate more. For future outreach efforts aimed at maximizing public participation, I suggest randomizing the schedule to include opportunities during both daytime and evening hours. This approach could potentially gather more diverse input. I would like to recognize the excellent comments made earlier, particularly regarding property rights. On the agenda item concerning shoreline regulations and the preamble language, I noticed that the statement does not explicitly mention protecting property rights. I encourage you to expand the language to include a statement about preserving and protecting property rights as a service to the community. Ensuring comfortable enjoyment of property is a fundamental purpose of zoning. Without such protections, there is an imbalance between public trust lands and private property rights. Additionally, I offer my 38 years of engineering experience with floodplains, shoreline development, marina construction, and public and private works. These are complex topics, often complicated by varying jurisdictional boundaries and definitions—such as the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) determined by vegetation, shoreline expression, Corps of Engineers' elevation data, or floodplain elevations. Recent FEMA updates to floodplain maps

have caused public confusion. Unlike earlier maps based on documented flooding events, current maps extend floodplain boundaries to much higher elevations without historical flooding evidence. For example, the new OHWM in some cases encroaches on roads like Peninsula Drive and Center Road. If we do not address the floodplain, we risk losing critical infrastructure like roads, which impacts commerce, property enjoyment, and community well-being. I propose revisiting floodplain provisions in the ordinance and enhancing public education, potentially by inviting FEMA representatives to explain the changes. I aimed to address this in my previous term but ran out of time. With four more years ahead, I hope to organize this effort by spring. Finally, I want to clarify some misconceptions about the Bluff Road failure. Its cause is not the Great Lakes' elevation or shoreline protection issues. Bluff Road has withstood higher lake levels in the past. The failure resulted from poor drainage on the uphill side, where stormwater concentrated in ponds, compromising the road base. When I examined the site during the failure, it was clear the road was failing four feet below the surface, not at the slope's toe. A visible waterfall from saturated conditions uphill was undermining the road base. It is vital to protect our roads, address these complex issues, and ensure that regulations do not impose unnecessarily on property rights but instead serve the broader community's interests. As we face challenges like the 42 miles of bank deficient shoreline, I am committed to contributing my expertise to find balanced and effective solutions.

Kip Nickel, 1015 Quaker Valley Drive: I came prepared with additional comments, but after listening to the discussion about the process moving forward, I will set those aside for now. However, I want to address a point Tom mentioned about getting three hoists per 50 feet. The example he provided assumes nearly the maximum size for a hoist—12 feet, plus a 4-foot finger for each hoist. That's not typical. Normally, we use one finger per hoist, and the average hoist size is closer to 10 feet. I also want to comment on the shoreline committee group. While I was not a member of the committee, I attended the majority of their meetings. For those unfamiliar, there were many knowledgeable individuals—representing both private and shared waterfronts—who made valuable public comments and contributions to the shoreline discussions. I want to impress upon the Planning Commission that this group conducted a thorough and well-considered study. Their recommendations were developed after a wide range of discussions on these issues. These weren't arbitrary decisions made in a few meetings. If you didn't hear about this process, that's unfortunate. As a resident at large, I managed to stay informed and participate, and I encourage others to do the same. I want the Planning Commission to know that I found the process thoughtful and inclusive. Everyone brought different ideas about what they felt was best, but the resulting recommendations represent a good effort to address current practices in a balanced way. For instance, in Quaker Valley, we've followed a dock policy aligned with these recommendations for about 40 years. It's been self-managed within our community, and we've had no conflicts with neighbors during that time. Our board has reviewed the recommendations, and I know several other associations

have as well. Overall, we feel confident about what's been proposed. For those who didn't have a chance to participate, I want to emphasize that for regular residents like me who did, this was a positive process, and I believe the conclusions going forward are sound. Thank you.

Monnie Peters, 1425 Nehtawanta: A few years ago, I did a session in this hall in November, and we packed the place. Fred Gilstorff even got frustrated with the crowd, and I had to tell him he'd need to decide how to manage it. The turnout was incredible, with people standing at the doors and overflowing into the hallway. It shows how important and interesting this project is, and I firmly believe there should be more education on it. I think we should consider moving to a larger space, like St. Joe's, for future sessions. It's a much bigger venue, and given how packed this room was last time, it would better accommodate everyone. Also, I want to mention the booklet Jen has—there are a couple of boxes here, and I have more in the basement. Everyone in the audience should grab one. It's full of excellent information and beautiful illustrations by Glenn Wolf. It's definitely worth reading through and sharing with others to spread awareness. I didn't do much on it myself, but I helped the Watershed Center with the rewrite about six years ago. The original was created around 15 years ago. I just want people to know this resource exists, and I encourage everyone to take advantage of it. Regarding the next session, I think it would be great to hold it at St. Joe's, ideally in September, before we lose many of our summer residents.

Cram: Monnie, we were thinking about March to keep the momentum going. We initially planned for winter, but Maura suggested March, when more people are back.

Peters: March could work, but I'd even consider pushing it to April to ensure we get as many people as possible. We've packed this room twice before, and I'm confident we can do it.

McClure: (Referring to booklet passed out) This is exactly what we need—a clear and concise guide for shoreline property owners. It should specifically reference Peninsula Township, and it already includes a section on dock, hoists, and related regulations. Something like this would be incredibly helpful.

Hall: I'd like to address some of the issues I'm aware of involving conflicts between shoreline property owners. These disputes often arise when an adjacent property owner places their dock in a way that is, frankly, inconsiderate and selfish. The resulting conflicts can escalate significantly. In some cases, I'm aware of threats of physical violence being made. For example, one family I know was unable to resolve a dispute, even after involving the township. The township ultimately backed off due to threats from the offending shoreline owner. Unable to find a resolution, the family ended up selling their home and purchasing another property—almost sight unseen—just to escape the situation. It's a very unfortunate reality. Ideally, we'd like to think everyone could act with consideration and follow the golden rule: treat others as you'd want to be treated. But that's not the reality we live in. The question then becomes: is it the government's job to intervene? In my opinion, it is. As an attorney, I don't believe there's a private legal solution to these issues. Sure, if someone threatens violence, you can involve law

enforcement and the criminal justice system. But that's not what we're talking about here. This is a real and recurring problem, and it represents a failure of government if we don't enact ordinance changes to address it. Ordinances provide clear guidelines for property owners, and if someone fails to comply, there's a formal process for complaints. If the township has a zoning enforcement officer with the capacity to handle such cases, the matter can proceed through the appropriate channels, potentially resulting in court action. That's how these issues should be addressed. While I can't give you an exact percentage, these types of problems occur frequently enough to warrant action. We've dealt with around 40 cases, and while not all are the same, they highlight the need for a solution. To Susie's point, when dealing with curved or irregular shorelines, extending property lines straight out doesn't always work. As mathematicians would say, you end up with a null set—no viable solution. In such cases, we'll likely need to incorporate some administrative discretion into the ordinances to address these unique situations. Ultimately, our goal is to create a system that works. We value your input and want to know if we've overlooked something or gotten something wrong. If we don't hear about the problems, we can't fix them. Thank you for being here and contributing to the discussion. Encourages the public to send written comments if they are unable to participate in person.

Alexander: I'd like to follow up on that. When I was reviewing this and looking through our minutes, I noticed that one of the reasons we initiated this process in the first place was to address conflict resolution. However, that isn't explicitly stated in the "Intent and Purpose" section, and I wonder if it should be added. It's important to make clear that one of the reasons we're doing this is to resolve conflicts and provide clarity. I also recall someone mentioning in a previous session that the ordinance doesn't explicitly reference health, safety, and welfare. To me, that's the core purpose of ordinances. It's the township's responsibility to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of everyone who lives here. We can't expect peace officers to resolve disputes if they don't have clear guidelines to follow. That's why we need to provide a framework within which they can operate. The current ordinance clearly wasn't effective, as people weren't complying with it. As Susie mentioned, our community has grown, and the ordinance needs to grow and evolve as well. For instance, it's no longer realistic to assume that most property owners have just one boat on a hoist—I regularly see two or three. We need to make accommodations for this reality and recognize that these changes are necessary.

Beard: A few things come to mind as we move forward. What we're striving for here is peaceful coexistence—not mutually assured destruction. We all want to work together and get along with our neighbors. Establishing clear parameters can help guide decision-making and, hopefully, improve behavior. Susie mentioned illustrations, and I wonder if Ellis, the young gentleman who helped us with the building height illustrations, might be available to draft illustrations for this purpose as well. Also, I read about a new piece of legislation that was signed and enacted this week regarding shoreline grooming and landscaping. It seems property

owners now have more flexibility than before, as the rules have been loosened. It would be helpful to gather more information about these changes since the regulations were quite rigid in the past. One other thing I've noticed—and I'm guilty of this myself—is how difficult it can be to locate existing regulations in the code and compare them with the recommendations from the study committee. I've seen this addressed before by setting up a matrix or a column-based format. This would show the current code alongside the corresponding recommendations, making it much easier for everyone to compare. Right now, trying to read through the code and match everything up is a daunting task, even for trained professionals. Expecting others to do the same isn't realistic. I'm happy to help craft this kind of tool if needed, as I think it would help everyone get on the same page more quickly.

Cram: To reiterate, the goal is to organize a robust public education session with multiple guest speakers. We initially considered scheduling this for March, but Mora mentioned that it might be better to hold it later, when more residents are back in town. We'll look into adjusting the timing accordingly. I also emailed Heather Smith today and cc'd Mora, Randy, and Monty Peters to keep everyone in the loop. I made sure Heather is aware that I'll be stepping away and emphasized the importance of continuing to move this initiative forward.

- b. Discussion on Recommended Next Steps for Public Education for Shoreline Regulations

Concluded: Included in previous section, Business item 8a.

- c. Discussion on Proposed Amendments to Section 8.1.3(1)(b) – Substantial Improvement

Hall: The section referenced here, 8C on the agenda, pertains to our zoning ordinance dealing with special use permits. Specifically, it outlines the determinations required when a special use permit is requested. One of those determinations is that the proposed project must constitute a "substantial improvement" to the community and local property—though the exact language may vary. This standard is atypical when compared to other zoning ordinances. While my review of other ordinances is a small sample, I have not found another with this particular requirement. More importantly, this standard has created significant challenges for the Planning Commission when applying it to projects over the past several years. It has often led to frustration and substantial differences of opinion among members. While differing opinions aren't inherently problematic, we want our ordinances to be clear and straightforward—understandable even to those who aren't attorneys or planners. There is a view among some of us that this section should be amended, potentially removing the "substantial improvement" standard to align more closely with typical zoning ordinance determinations. Additionally, there is a related issue: the current section on special use permits addresses determinations for initial requests but does not outline how to amend a special use permit. Not all zoning ordinances include provisions for amendments, but in my opinion, the better-drafted ones do. Our

subgroup will be considering two key points: whether to eliminate or modify the "substantial improvement" standard; whether to add a section to the zoning ordinance addressing the process for amending special use permits. That subgroup will consist of Kevin Beard, Susie Shipman, and myself.

Shanafelt: I think it's a great idea to establish a clear process for addressing amendments, as it provides continuity moving forward. That said, as you're working on recommendations regarding the "substantial improvement" standard, it's worth noting the balance between ambiguity and specificity. The benefit of a term like "substantial improvement" is its ambiguity—it allows for a holistic evaluation without requiring overly specific criteria. However, ambiguity can also lead to questions and challenges when applying the standard. On the other hand, being too specific can create opportunities for individuals to work around the intent of the ordinance, potentially leading to unintended consequences. While I agree that "substantial improvement" is currently too vague to be applied efficiently, keep in mind that increasing specificity comes with its own risks, which could result in worse outcomes for the township overall. This is just something to consider as you think through these changes. Everyone on the commission, including myself, will have the opportunity to review and weigh in once the study group completes its work, which I hope won't take too long.

9. Reports and Updates - Verbal

a. Agricultural Advisory Committee First Meeting Recap (Beard)

Beard: Provides an update on the Agricultural Advisory Commission, established by the Board of Trustees late last year. The commission held its first meeting on December 16th, where they elected leadership: John Kroupa as Chair, Jed Hemmings as Vice Chair, and Erin Hafeli as Secretary. They then brainstormed a list of topics and concerns to address, which were sent to Cram for the creation of a survey to help prioritize issues based on interest. The next meeting is being scheduled, with proposed dates between January 21st and 28th, aiming to finalize prioritization and begin discussions on key topics.

b. Report by Town Board Liaison to Planning Commission, Julie Alexander

Alexander: Shares happiness at being elected to the board. Expresses gratitude for the opportunity to serve as liaison between Board and PC and looks forward to positive developments ahead. Conveys sadness about Jenn's departure, wishing her the best of luck in the future.

10. Public Comments

a. Comments by Township Supervisor, Maura Sanders

Sanders: Thank you for having me. I would like to read a letter drafted today. This is for Jenn Cram. The township extends its sincere gratitude to planner, Jenn Cram, as she embarks on her next professional chapter. We appreciate her contributions and the significant progress made

during her tenure during fair winds and foul seas. Jenn signed her contract with Peninsula Township on November 9th, 2021. In her role as planner Jenn has done the following: assisted the Planning Commission and Township Board on Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance and general ordinance issues; supported the Parks Committee and the Non-Motorized Committee; reviewed Special Land Use Permits; issued land use and zoning permits, as needed; implemented the continuation of the Purchase of Development Rights Program, advised the Land Development community, assisted the public on a day-to-day basis; and – I think this is probably the most important – recited *from memory* specific ordinance language at any given moment. Jenn also picked up the Master Plan from draft and brought it before the Town Board for adoption; she commenced the Building Height Study Group and carried it all the way through ordinance amendment at the Town board. Jenn commenced the Shoreline Regulation Study Group which is obviously a highly visible and impactful concern for all residents in our Township. Her dedication to fostering consistent and transparent practices has been invaluable. We are building a foundation for a more efficient and Equitable planning process and remain committed to moving away from past inconsistencies. The township is exploring several options to ensure continued progress. These include engaging a third-party zoning administrator consultant and expanding our scope with Gordie Frasier and Associates – who are our longtime Township engineering firm of record – to support us in our planning efforts. They have always provided excellence in engineering, surveying, testing, and operations. These immediate sourcing abilities will allow us to maintain a high level of Professional Service while we uphold the principles of transparency and consistency that are crucial for our community's growth. We are confident these steps will position the township for continued success in planning and development. Jenn, thank you very much.

Hall: Addresses the Planning Commission, acknowledging the challenges ahead in maintaining business continuity following Jenn's departure. Echoes Maura's remarks and praises Jenn for her exceptional work, highlighting her thorough due diligence, well-written reports, and professionalism. Expresses gratitude for her efforts, noting how she made the Commission's complex tasks as manageable as possible, and concludes by stating it had been a pleasure working with her.

Beard: Expresses support for the supervisor's initiative to engage experienced, credentialed planning professionals, emphasizing the Planning Commission's need for expertise to support its work. They highlighted the importance of skilled planners in navigating the complexities of the code, much of which is outdated and challenging to work with. Reflecting on their 16 months working with Jenn, the speaker commended her for being thorough, professional, and objective in evaluating applications against the code. Drawing on 25 years of experience with various planning professionals, they noted that much of the critical work planners do happens behind the scenes, such as helping applicants adjust their projects to comply with the code before reaching the Commission. They emphasized the difficulty of this work, requiring both

technical knowledge and diplomacy, and praised Jenn's exceptional ability to manage these challenges. The speaker concluded by acknowledging Jenn's significant contributions, wishing her success in her future endeavors, and thanking her for her service.

Shipman: Reflects on their experience in township roles since 2011, noting that Jenn is the sixth planner they've worked with and describing her as the most professional and capable of them all. Acknowledges the many things she has learned from Cram and echoed the positive sentiments already shared. Emphasizes the uniquely challenging environment during Jenn's tenure, describing it as the most litigious, contentious, and aggressive period they've witnessed. Highlights Jenn's remarkable ability to navigate these difficulties with professionalism, a positive attitude, and a commitment to keeping the Commission productive. Praises her for not only managing standard tasks but also successfully tackling complex, challenging projects, attributing many significant accomplishments to her efforts. Concludes with heartfelt gratitude, thanking Jenn for her contributions.

Hornberger: As the longest-serving member of the board, reflects on their experience with six different planners and emphasizes how much more the board is accomplishing under Jenn's leadership. Commends her for her competence and ability to achieve impressive results despite challenging circumstances. Highlights the extensive work Jenn does behind the scenes, both before and after meetings, to ensure the board operates effectively and meets the community's needs. Notes her ability to listen to public input, consider community priorities, and guide the board in making decisions that benefit the township. Concludes by expressing gratitude for Jenn's dedication and contributions.

Alexander: Builds on Susie's remarks, reflecting on her own lifelong connection to the community and noting that, despite living here for decades, they have never seen the community as litigious and divided as it is now. Expresses admiration for Jenn's professionalism, highlighting her ability to handle challenging situations with grace while ensuring the board has the best information to make ordinance-based, informed decisions rather than emotional ones. Acknowledges the personal attacks Jenn has endured, emphasizing her dedication to simply doing her job despite criticism. Points out significant accomplishments under her leadership, such as the long-awaited codification of the zoning ordinance. Concludes by expressing deep gratitude for Jenn's professionalism and contributions, recognizing the enormous debt the community owes her.

Shanafelt: What everyone else said. I can't say it any better. Thank you.

11. Other Matters or Comments by Planning Commission Members

Shipman: Announced that the Township Board awarded a planning contract to the McKenna Group for the non-motorized transportation working group during their December meeting. Details will be shared in the township newsletter, and the project will begin taking shape soon. The public is encouraged to stay tuned for updates.

Cram: Expresses gratitude for the honor and privilege of serving the Planning Commission, the Board, and the community, sharing how the experience has contributed to her personal and professional growth. After 30 years in public sector planning, she announced her decision to transition to private sector planning but assured them she is not going far. She hopes to continue serving the community in the future as a consultant and remain available as a resource. Concluded with heartfelt thanks for the kind words and shared that it has been a pleasure to serve.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:33pm by Beard, seconded by Shipman.

Motion passed by consensus.

DRAFT