

**Pentwater Township Planning Commission
500 N. Hancock St, Pentwater, Michigan 49449**

August 11, 2026

Chairperson Tony Monton called the in-person meeting to order at 6:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

Tony Monton	Present
Terry Cluchey	Absent
Heather Douglas	Present
Buz Graettinger	Present
Patrick Hooyman	Present
Mark Sturr	Present
Peter Zangara	Present

Keith Edwards, the Zoning Administrator, was present at the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, MINUTES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Heather Douglas moved to approve the agenda as presented, supported by Buz Graettinger. All ayes and the agenda was approved.

Buz Graettinger made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2026, Regular Meeting, as presented and supported by Pat Hooyman. All ayes and the minutes of the June 9, 2026, Regular Meeting were approved.

Chair, Tony Monton asked if anyone had any conflict of interest with items on the agenda; hearing none, he proceeded to the first of two public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

PUBLIC HEARING - None.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Housing – Continued Discussion – Master Plan supported Zoning Ordinance Amendments.

Monton gave a background statement regarding the previous discussion and a memo on Housing-Strategy for Zoning Ordinance Amendments prepared by Zoning Administrator Keith Edwards regarding future Zoning Ordinance Amendments for single family residential districts based on recommendations from the Township's Master Plan.

Chairperson Monton, referring to a memorandum dated August 7, 2026, authored by Zoning Administrator Keith Edwards facilitated the Planning Commission's discussion as follows:

1. The R-2 Low Density Residential District

a. Lot Sizes in the R-2 District

The minimum lot size required by the R-2, Single Family Zoning District is 8,000 sq. ft. However, the minimum size lot currently allowed by the State's Land Division Act is 12,000 sq. ft. Additionally, the majority of unimproved lots within the R-2 Zoning District do not have sanitary sewer available to them and are not well proportioned for modern septic systems which require a secondary septic tank and reserve drain field in addition to the main drainfield. Therefore, it is recommended that the Planning Commission consider a Zoning Ordinance amendment which would put the required lot area at 12,000 sq. ft. for properties without access to sanitary sewer and those with Sanitary sewer availability and capacity could remain at 8,000 sq. ft.

After a brief discussion, the consensus was to proceed with drafting of the Zoning Ordinance amendment to be drafted by the Township attorney.

b. Prohibiting Short-term Rentals in the R-2 District.

The Planning Commission had a lengthy discussion about the concern for properties being used for short-term rentals, especially during the summer months, and the potential nuisances sometimes associated with them. The small lots located within the R-2 Zoning District boundaries experience seasonal problems such as increased vehicular traffic, speeding, parking space availability, noise and more than expected numbers of guests staying at any given location which may adversely impact septic systems and the limited sanitary sewer capacity.

Keith said we may have a significant number of rentals, but we haven't received very many complaints, except from the Sheriff's Department, along Monroe Road, due to parking issues. We do not have any idea of how many rentals that currently exist in the Township. Keith said that Laketon Township has had nuisance complaints reported to

their Township Board that led them to ask their Planning Commission to consider regulations.

Keith spoke about the possibility of prohibiting short-term rentals or considering whether short-term rentals should be considered as a Special Land Use (SLU) in the R-2 District where certain conditions are relative to concerns such as parking, noise and septic capacity. He said when you get into building issues such as egress windows in sleeping areas, fire or smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and those things within the building, we don't have the in-house expertise for monitoring that. He said the inspections of rental buildings should be done by a certified building inspector.

Buz Graettinger commented on the process being proposed, suggesting a mechanism to get a handle on who is renting their property on a short-term basis and the problems that usually flow with such rentals:

- The Township would have to define "short-term rental (STR). He prefers a duration of rental of 7 days or less rather than 28 days or less.
- Buz also believes that the zoning ordinance currently would define renting housing as a commercial use in a residential zoning district.
- Then we should propose that a property owner must register their business if one is going to engage in this business. The registration be nominal in cost, requiring everyone who rents to do it and would have to disclose:
 - Identify the contact person responsible for the property;
 - the max number of people allowed;
 - the number of parking places;
 - available arrangements for trash and garbage pickup;
 - and anything else that makes sense that is not overbearing to ask including a form showing the Michigan building occupancy code reminding people that these things exist.
- He said then when there's a problem brought to your attention that it gets addressed and the rules revisited in two years to fine tune. He said to consider that this is a business as justification to make it clear.

Keith suggested ways to find the number of existing short-term rentals such as a campaign over two years perhaps by placing ads in the newspaper; put information on the Township website with a registration form, or put a note in all the tax bills, to find not only the number of rentals, but also the location of the rentals.

Hooyman suggested asking the Township Board to initiate a survey to determine the number of residential rentals there are in the Township and then be able to separately address the issue of parking if rentals need 10 spaces for a weekly rental and talk about enforcement.

Chairperson Monton suggested asking the Township Board to commit to the resources to do this.

Buzz said if the focus of rentals is treated as a business, it should be regulated by the zoning ordinance and if a violation is a civil violation infraction, the township attorney should be paid from a fine aimed at a few egregious violators of the requirement to register and shut down the rental; that may cause some people to actually comply with the law.

Keith concluded that the consensus appears to be to visit the Township Board about how we might get information about these rentals and what it might cost to get that information.

Monton said that we need those recommendations from the Board of Trustees to discuss the matter further.

c. Removing Duplexes from the R-2 District and allowing them as a Special Land Use in the R-1 District.

Keth said the R-2 District allows duplexes or a two-family home, as a Special Land Use. He said that these provisions have been within the Zoning Ordinance since at least 1999. Today the idea of building a duplex on a small property like the R-2 District is popular in many municipalities because it is presumed to increase housing choice and affordability for families. Our community is a little bit different, most of our R-2 Zoning District properties are located around Pentwater Lake and on the shore of Lake Michigan. Around Pentwater Lake, those properties are required to be a minimum of 8000 sq. ft., and two of these properties are required to meet the minimum land area of 15,000 sq. ft. for a duplex. Approval of a duplex within the R-2 District also required Planning Commission approval of a Special Land Use. Since 1999, the majority of lots around Pentwater Lake have been improved or redeveloped with large lake front homes, none of which have been approved as a duplex.

Sanitary Sewer availability and capacity is very limited within the R-2 Zoning District, and 15,000 sq. ft. is not big enough for a duplex without sewer. The next largest zoning district, the R-1 District, requires a minimum of 2 acres for a dwelling unit and thus may be a better option to consider for a duplex, for a two-family unit, than the R-2 District.

Keith concluded that he will return to the Planning Commission with a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to consider.

d. Continuing to Prohibit Dwelling Units in Accessory Buildings in R-2 While Allowing Them in R-1 and RR

The Zoning Ordinance prohibits dwelling in an accessory building according to Section 3.08 Paragraph D.

The Zoning Ordinance defines an accessory building as a structure that is detached from the main or principal use building such as a garage, studio, pole barn, etc. One popular way of increasing housing options today is to consider allowing an accessory building to be utilized for dwelling purposes, or residential living quarters. Currently, such a use is prohibited in every Zoning District in the Township. The question arose: Does it now make sense to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and if so, where?

Keith reviewed the minimum lot sizes of each single-family residential Zoning District and some of the provisions of Section 3.08 with the Planning Commission. Typically, the Zoning Ordinance does not allow accessory buildings in the front yards for waterfront parcels, the front yard is located between the water and the home rather than the reverse for non-waterfront parcels. With the majority of R-2 District parcels located around Pentwater Lake and along the shore of Lake Michigan, it may make sense to consider, at least for the time being, to allowing ADUs to be constructed on larger parcels, typically non-waterfront parcels, where space for additional parking is more likely to be available such as properties within the R-R Rural Residential and R-1, Single Family Residential Zoning Districts. The consensus among Planning Commissioners was to consider allowing ADUs, in accordance with the other provisions of Section 3.08 of the Zoning Ordinance to be allowed within the R-R and R-1 Zoning Districts but probably not within the R-2 District (8,000 sq. ft minimum lot size) unless there is a Special Land Use provision.

For those parcels located within the Sanitary Sewer Districts, an additional connection fee would be required, and parcels not located within the Sanitary Sewer Districts would require approval from the Health Department to make sure the property has acceptable septic capability.

The attorney said that we could make a provision that the property owner must live in one of the two dwellings.

Chairperson Monton said that it likely makes sense if the property owner was required to reside in one of the dwelling units on each property so that there would be responsible management of the property should one of the dwellings become a rental.

Keith will bring back a Zoning Ordinance amendment for consideration.

3. Creating prohibited uses sections within each Chapter

The next discussion was whether or not to consider creating prohibiting uses within each chapter. Keith said that the zoning ordinance is considered a permissive zoning ordinance. By that, we mean, the permitted and special land uses described therein are the only land uses allowed and others are prohibited. In some circumstances the permissive use of a property can be somewhat vague and left up to the Zoning Administrator to decide.

Should there be certain land uses that the Planning Commission and Township Board strictly object to, having a "Prohibited Uses section as part of each of the Zoning District chapters within the Zoning Ordinance would seek to clarify what uses are clearly inappropriate for the respective zoning district.

Keith will return to the Planning Commission for language to consider as a Zoning Ordinance amendment.

B. Continued Discussion of possible Single Family Residential Zoning District with five (5) – acre minimum lot size.

Keith said previously they had talked about consideration for a Zoning District with a minimum land area between the 2-acre district (R-1) and 10-acre (R-R) Zoning Districts that we don't have. The suggestion was for a 5-acre district.

He said that he had recently received a written request for the Planning Commission to consider looking at an area of the Township along 48th Avenue, north of Jackson Road, East of Ridge Road and south of Longbridge Road to review the potential to create 5-acre minimum lot size parcels. Keith included in the packet the memo outlining the property in orange and a letter on backside of the memo showing the location on the west side of the Township, along the recently improved gravel road known as 48th Avenue.

These properties are currently located within the R-r, Rural Residential Zoning District, but are designated as Low Density Residential (1 dwelling unit per 2 acres) on the Future Land Use map in the Pentwater Community Master Plan.

Because of the relatively recent improvements by the Road Commission to 48th Avenue, the modest increase in expected traffic would not dramatically impact 48th Avenue and the area was not likely to be improved with Sanitary Sewer infrastructure within the foreseeable future, making large lots justifiable.

The Consensus of the Planning Commission was to have staff, and the Township Attorney prepare a Zoning Ordinance amendment for future consideration.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Capital Improvement Plan – Review of Outline.

Keith said a public hearing will be held at the Planning Commission level and recommendations might be requested by certain members for their expertise.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Zoning Administrator and ZBA Report– See attached report.

OTHER ITEMS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS

Public Comment - None.

ADJOURNMENT

Heather Douglas moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 PM. Mark Sturr supported the motion. All ayes and the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Keith Edwards, Zoning Administrator

August 14, 2026

Approved by the Planning Commission

October 13, 2026