

Keweenaw County Planning Commission
Minutes Regular Meeting (Amended)
September 29, 2025

Roll Call:

John Parsons, Chair/ Present	Steven Siira/ Present
Bob Pokorski, Vice Chair/ Present	Harvey Desnick, ZBA Liaison/ Present
Don Simila, Secretary/ Absent	Bob DeMarois, ex officio BOC/ Absent
Margaret Kirby/ Present	Susan Hockings, ZA/ Present

Called to order by Chair at 4:00

Quorum Present: Yes, 5 members Meeting Posted: Yes

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited

Approve Agenda

M/ Pokorski S/Kirby Motion carried

Approval of August 25, 2025 minutes and Public Hearing minutes with recommendation to the BOC

M/ Kirby S/ Siira Motion carried

Guests: None

Public Comments: Shelonzek stated her comments at the last meeting were misquoted.

ZA Report: Hockings

Rezoning Request for Tamarack Waterworks

- * The rezoning request scheduled for October 14 has been delayed due to the applicant not completing requirements. Specifically, road abandonment permissions and a site plan are needed.
- * Road abandonment requires consent from Michigan America Waterworks
- * The rezoning request is to change the property from rural residential to resort service for the development of wedding venues.
- * The Planning Commission should consider zoning ordinance rules for wedding venues, addressing differences from restaurant/event venues. This includes consideration for outdoor facilities (parking, restrooms, deck/gazebo construction). Changes will require public hearings.

Zoning Attorney: Steve Tinti was approved and hired on a limited basis by the BOC as the county zoning attorney for all zoning matters.

A request by Pokorski was made to include a count of new applications received since the previous meeting, as well as a year-to-date total, at each meeting.

BOC Report: DeMarois absent, no report

ZBA Report: Desnick

- * The ZBA held a court-ordered rehearing for the Fitzgerald right-of-way encroachment case.
- * The Road Commission approved abandonment; the issue is pending Houghton Township's sign-off.
- * A 90-day extension was granted by the court for involved parties to settle. If resolved legally, Planning Commission/ZBA involvement is unlikely.
- * The next ZBA meeting is scheduled for October 14 at 1 p.m. (Curry setback variance).

Master Plan Updates: Pokorski

- * The master plan community survey is closed, with 414 responses received (222 from property owners).
- * Stakeholder meetings were held. Rescheduling is pending for Sheriff Pennella.
- * Consultant Pat Coleman will provide analysis at the October 27 meeting.

Bylaws Review: Simila & DeMarois absent

- * Bylaws packets were distributed, including the original 1961, 2009 revised, and the latest Board of Commissioners' 2025 modification.

Short-Term Rental Subcommittee: Parsons & Kirby

- * Kirby and Parsons met with Laura Bondi, Planning Commission Chair for Eagle Harbor Township, to review the township STR ordinance as a possible template.
- * Identified sections adaptable for the county and sections unsuited for county-level enforcement.
- * Discussion included township vs. county powers, enforcement challenges, and tailoring ordinances to county authority.
- * Discussion of grandfathering of existing STR holders and permit limits
- * Discussion on legal defensibility and compliance with state/county law, especially regarding property rights and discrimination concerns.
- * The need for a clear notification process for neighbors and how to handle complaints was emphasized.
- * Members agreed to review and markup the draft STR ordinance for detailed evaluation at the next meeting.

Final Comments

- * A special meeting for a work session on STRs was scheduled for October 14, 2025, at 4:00pm.
- * The regular meeting October 29, 2025 will include master plan analysis presented by Pat Coleman.
- * All members were asked to review the STR draft and note sections that do or do not work with county wide zoning.
- * Margaret Kirby stated she will be out of town and not available for the October 27th and November 10th meetings.

Next meetings: October 14, 2025 at 4:00pm and October 27, 2025 at 4:00pm

Motion to Adjourn at 5:11pm

- M/ Pokorski S/Kirby Motion carried