

Keweenaw County Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes  
December 15, 2025 at 4:00

Roll call:

John Parsons, Chair/present  
Bob Pokorski, Vice Chair/present  
Don Simila, Secretary/present  
Margaret Kirby/present

Steven Siira/present  
Harvey Desnick, ZBA Liaison/present  
Bob DeMarois, ex officio BOC/present  
Susan Hockings, ZA/present

Called to order by Chair at 4:00PM

Quorum Present: Yes, 7 members

Meeting Posted: Yes

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited

Approve Agenda

- M/ Simila                      S/ Desnick                      Motion carried

Approve November 10, 2025 minutes (name correction made from Don Yoder to Daniel Yoder)

- M/ Pokorski                      S/ Parsons                      Motion carried

Guests: Brad Neuman and Will Cronin from MSU Extension office were introduced by Harvey Desnick who invited them to speak about STR rules and regulations for counties v township/cities.

Public Comment: Aliena Kern (summary of comments) about Lonie Gleiberman's permit for a driveway with turnaround, stating it constitutes commercial use on a residential parcel and the zoning administrator does not have the ability to waiver for any use other than residential. Noted that only ZBA has authority for variances, not zoning administrator, and ZA was circumventing the will of the BOC.

ZA Report: Hockings

81 zoning permits issued this year, with an additional 357 Building Department permits. The numbers are similar to previous year.

A zoning text amendment application was received today, to be forwarded to the Secretary for disbursement to the commission for review.

BOC Report: DeMarois

Preliminary work for courthouse security renovations will begin soon.

New generator to service both sheriff's office and the courthouse will also be installed.

ZBA Report: Desnick

Recent variance approved for Gratiot Road property due to improper ROW determination.

ZBA meeting scheduled for February 2, 2026 at 1:00 to complete response to circuit court on findings of fact concerning Eagle Inns, Inc.

#### Short-Term Rental (STR) Subcommittee:

Presentation by Brad Newman (MSU Extension)

- \* Explained legal framework differences between zoning ordinances (land use) and police power/regulatory ordinances (behavioral controls).
- \* Counties have less authority for police power ordinances compared to cities/townships; enforcement typically more robust at the township level.
- \* Unique qualities of zoning ordinance: non-conformities and variances exist for zoning but not for police power ordinances.
- \* STRs as a conditional use may transfer with land, depending on ordinance specifics; annual permit/renewal processes discussed referencing Eagle Harbor Township.
- \* Importance of clear standards, documentation, and possibly a registry for enforcement and administration.
- \* Enforcement: civil infraction ordinances allow zoning admins to issue tickets for violations.
- \* Licensing/registration of STRs: permitting focused on standards (health, nuisance, etc.), generally not licensing.
- \* Discussion of distinctions between short-term and long-term rentals, including regulatory rationale and case law referencing STRs as commercial use.

#### PC Discussion Highlights:

- \* STR regulation should balance zoning standards and police power ordinances, possibly in tandem with townships for effective enforcement.
- \* Annual permit renewal processes, non-conforming use grandfathering, and the handling of property transfers clarified, including practical enforcement challenges.
- \* Considerations for applying consistent renter protections and standards for both short-term and long-term rentals.
- \* Acknowledgment of ongoing violations by non-compliant STR operators and need for clearer enforcement tools (civil infractions, cooperation with Sheriff's department).
- \* Suggestions to look at other jurisdictions' ordinances, especially Eagle Harbor Township's thoughtful approach.

#### Bylaws Subcommittee: Simila

Revised bylaws distributed with highlighted changes; members to review and provide feedback by next meeting prior to attorney review.

#### Master Plan: Pokorski

Year-end recap and review schedule for master plan chapters sent out (January, February, March). Proposal to meet twice monthly for thorough review—one meeting for master plan, one for regular business. Next master plan meeting set for January 12, at 4 PM.

Public Comments:

Mary Long asked for clarification on ZBA/Fitz matter; answer: ZBA reconvenes Feb 2.

Eric Campbell suggested considering a tourism tax for STR's based on his Florida experience.

Jason Meneguzzo confirmed with Brad that countywide STR zoning is rare in Michigan.

Final Comments:

Next regular meeting set for January 26, 2026 at 4:00PM

Motion to adjourn at 5:25PM

M/ Pokorski

S/ Kirby

Motion carried

Recording Secretary: Susan M Hockings

Planning Commission Secretary: Don Simila