

KEWEENAW COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.
Keweenaw County Courthouse

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Steve Siira, Margaret Kirby, John Parsons, Harvey Desnick, Bob DeMarois, Don Simila, and Bob Pokorski.

A quorum was present. Planning Consultant Pat Coleman was also present.

The meeting was posted in accordance with applicable public meeting requirements.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion was made and supported to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

MASTER PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing on the proposed Keweenaw County Master Plan was opened at 4:02 p.m.

CONSULTANT PRESENTATION: Planning Consultant Pat Coleman provided an overview of the Master Plan and its development. He explained that the Plan is advisory and intended to guide future County planning and land-use decisions. The planning process included public workshops, a survey, stakeholder input, Planning Commission review, and the required public review period.

Coleman reviewed the major elements of the Plan, including housing, natural resources, recreation, infrastructure, transportation, economic development, future land use and zoning, and coastal management and sustainability.

WRITTEN COMMENTS: The Zoning Administrator summarized written comments received during the public review period. Comments were generally supportive of the planning effort and included corrections and recommendations concerning demographic and economic information, natural resources, Indigenous and historic resources, land ownership, housing, tourism, infrastructure, maps, and other factual or editorial matters. The most consistent area of opposition concerned the proposed form-based code/overlay concept for Eagle River.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Public comments were received from Jim Houvinen, Elizabeth Whalen, Mark McEvers, Lil Ryckman, Nancy Basto, Kathy McEvers, Deborah Shelonzek, Bonnie Haye, Gina Nicholas, Lynn Robertson, and Paul Campbell.

Comments generally addressed:

- Concern regarding the proposed Eagle River form-based code/overlay and its potential effect on the residential and historic character of Eagle River;
- Requests for clarification of the form-based code/overlay concept;
- The importance of preserving quiet residential areas and considering existing infrastructure;
- The need for clearer or more accessible Master Plan information;
- Recognition and protection of Indigenous history and cultural resources;
- Inclusion of seasonal property owners in the planning process;
- Support for sustainability and environmental provisions; and
- Corrections to maps identifying conservation lands and property ownership.

Hearing no further comments, the Chair closed the public hearing at 4:32 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Kirby and supported by DeMarois to approve the August 31, 2026 minutes. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE: The Commission acknowledged correspondence from Attorney Steven J. Tinti regarding short-term rental fees.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: The Zoning Administrator reported continued zoning and building permit activity and preparations for the Short-Term Rental Ordinance public hearing scheduled for October 5, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

COUNTY BOARD UPDATE: Updates were provided regarding County employee health insurance costs and the Highline broadband project.

NEW BUSINESS – KEWEENAW COUNTY MASTER PLAN

Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission considered adoption of the proposed Master Plan. Planning Consultant Pat Coleman clarified that the proposed Eagle River form-based code was intended primarily as a means of protecting the scale and historic character of the community and would not, by itself, change existing zoning or authorize commercial uses. Any future zoning changes would require a separate public process.

Considering the public comments received, Coleman recommended removing the form-based code recommendation from the Plan.

The Commission discussed the public comments, mapping corrections, and the need for additional recognition of Indigenous history.

Bob Pokorski moved to adopt the Keweenaw County Master Plan with the following amendments:

1. Remove the proposed form-based code/overlay language;
2. Add language recognizing Indigenous peoples and lands; and
3. Correct identified inaccuracies in the Master Plan maps.

Margaret Kirby supported the motion.

A roll-call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

The Keweenaw County Master Plan was adopted as amended.

The Commission discussed working with Gina Nicholas and Bonnie Haye to assist with map corrections. Consultant Pat Coleman anticipated completing the approved revisions by approximately the end of October. The adopted Master Plan will be forwarded to the Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners for review and consideration.

OLD BUSINESS – ARTICLE 17 SHORT-TERM RENTAL TEXT AMENDMENT

The Commission noted that the staff report had been published and that the public hearing on the proposed Article 17 Short-Term Rental text amendment was scheduled for October 5, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A member of the public requested confirmation that removal of the form-based code also included removal of the proposed overlay language. The Commission confirmed that it did.

A comment was also received regarding Starlink as an alternative broadband service.

NEXT MEETINGS

Short-Term Rental Public Hearing – October 5, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

Regular Planning Commission Meeting – October 26, 2026

It was noted that Margaret Kirby expected to be absent from regular meetings in October and November.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Pokorski and supported by DeMarois to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Recording Secretary: Susan Hockings _____

Planning Commission Secretary: Margaret Kirby _____