

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS  
VILLAGE OF PENINSULA PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Held: Monday, April 27, 2026**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Walters called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Chairperson Karen Walters	Present	Greg Canda	Present
Council Rep. Amy Frank-Hensley	Present	Mayor Daniel Schneider, Jr.	Absent
Kevin Royer	Present		

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Village Planner Rita McMahon, Solicitor Brad Bryan, and Administrative Assistant Faith Dorton

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:**

**March 16, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting**

Mr. Canda made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Royer to approve the minutes. Mr. Canda requested that paragraphs in the minutes be shortened in the future. Roll call vote: Ms. Walters, yes; Mr. Royer, abstain; Mr. Canda, yes; Ms. Frank-Hensley, yes. The minutes were approved.

**CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:**

Moe Riggins requested time to speak when the topic of short-term rentals comes up on the agenda.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** The Mayor was not present.

**COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT:**

Ms. Frank-Hensley reported that Council approved an agreement with OHM Advisors to manage the State Rt. 303 improvement project. She noted the Village was awarded \$3.5 million in grants for the project. Some design elements, like the left-turn lane at Riverview Road, still require further discussion. Ms. Frank-Hensley and the Mayor attended a Chamber-hosted event at Happy Days Lodge put on by Discover Cleveland that focused on aligning Peninsula and other towpath communities with trail-town development strategies, including improving cyclist experiences through wayfinding, destination amenities, and understanding both overnight and daytime visitors.

A presentation from FirstEnergy and the National Park on tree maintenance and power outages will take place at tomorrow's Council Meeting. Construction on the sewer project is not expected to start for two years due to a funding gap. The proposed amendments to the Village parking ordinance did not pass and may be revisited by Council.

Ms. Frank-Hensley noted that several residents expressed support for non-owner-occupied short-term rentals, stating they benefit the community. Mr. Canda requested more transparency on the Rt. 303 project design details and asked if they could be posted on the website. Ms. Dorton reported that a notice has been posted on the website about upcoming drilling and core sampling work along Main Street to take place in early May. The work is expected to last up to two weeks and will involve temporary no-parking zones.

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**BUSINESS:**

**Site Plan Approval Request:**

MBA Building Renovation, 1601 W. Mill Street, Erik Eckert, Greenhaven Builders, Inc.

Erik Eckert introduced himself and outlined his long personal history with Peninsula, beginning with his family's involvement in converting Village properties into retail and commercial spaces. He described Peninsula as his home and stated his motivation for the project is rooted in a desire to preserve the community character and continue the vision of earlier stewards like Robert Hunker. Mr. Eckert reviewed his construction background, his education in construction management, his work as a carpenter, and his experience with industrial, commercial, and historic building projects. He listed several Peninsula projects that he has constructed or renovated, including businesses and homes. Historic renovations, historic carpentry work, and adaptive reuses of old buildings are his personal passions.

The proposed renovation of the MBA building is an effort to create something that adds value to Peninsula, while respecting its character. He described the existing building as not historically significant but stated the Foundation's ownership helped prevent the property from becoming something inconsistent with the Village character. Mr. Eckert presented his design concept inspired by historic storefronts, Peninsula's older commercial canal era buildings, and a mercantile store his family has visited in Montana. The plan includes a bakery, an outdoor gear store, and another retail space that could possibly be a bike shop, with the goal of creating a family-friendly community gathering place rather than a business focused on alcohol or nightlife.

The building design intentionally reduces impacts on neighboring residential properties by stepping back portions of the building, preserving green space, lowering rooflines, and avoiding the full height and footprint that the Village Zoning Code allows. The materials, including standing seam metal and wood siding, were selected to reflect the Village's historic character, while maintaining durability and energy efficiency.

Mr. Canda asked whether Mr. Eckert planned to operate the businesses himself or lease the spaces. Mr. Eckert stated he intends to own and operate the bakery/mercantile store. He also confirmed the two upstairs two-bedroom apartments will be leased to long-term renters.

Mr. Eckert reviewed property details for utilities, code compliance, fire separation, and building flexibility. The interior is designed with clear-span spaces and non-load-bearing walls so it can adapt over time. The project is not dependent on the installation of the public sewer system. The building is presently tied into the package plant behind the Winking Lizard. Mr. Eckert reviewed the parking plan, explaining that resident, owner, and employee parking would be located behind the building, with the customer parking space being on the Purplebrown Farm Store parcel. He intentionally preserved green space rather than maximizing parking. The fencing and landscaping features are intended to screen the property and reduce the impact on the neighbors. Dumpster placement, loading zones, alley width, and traffic flow were also discussed.

Ms. Frank-Hensley raised concerns about vehicles using the site as a turnaround or cut-through. Mr. Eckert stated signage, landscaping features, and layout choices could discourage that behavior and help direct traffic appropriately. Mr. Bryan suggested a gate could be considered at a later date if that issue becomes a problem.

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Mr. Eckert described stormwater plans, including the use of permeable crushed gravel, grading, swales, catch basins, and dry wells to manage runoff and prevent water from flowing onto neighboring properties. He also reviewed the proposed lighting for the property, noting fixtures would be downward facing, shielded, limited in height, and designed to minimize light trespass onto nearby properties.

Ms. McMahon stated the project complies with current zoning standards, including setbacks and footprint limits, but identified several items needed before final approval. Those items include documentation of the parking/easement agreement, a detailed landscape plan, final building plans, a lighting plan, and any required sign permits. The Commission also discussed whether the sidewalk along W. Mill Street should be extended to N. Locust to improve future pedestrian connectivity.

The Commission discussed whether to approve the project conditionally or require Mr. Eckert to return with revised materials before approval. Mr. Eckert requested conditional approval so he could move forward with his engineering work and permitting without losing the construction season. The Commission indicated support for that approach, provided the required plans and agreements are submitted and reviewed before the building permits are issued.

Mr. Royer made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Walters to approve revised site plan presented on April 27, 2026, on the condition that the applicant provide a copy of the parking agreement and deed, compliant lighting and landscape plans be submitted, and the sidewalk be extended to N. Locust Street. Roll call vote: Ms. Walters, yes; Mr. Royer, yes; Mr. Canda, yes; Ms. Frank-Hensley, abstain (being an adjacent property owner). The motion was approved.

Mr. Eckert thanked the Commission and stated he is open to incorporating ideas that would make the project better for the community. He wants the project to be something his children and the town can be proud of.

**Proposed Amendments to Zoning Code and Business Regulation Code and Additional Potential Zoning Code Matters to be Discussed**

Mr. Canda suggested the Commission review the remaining agenda items to ensure nothing is overlooked, rather than delay discussion on those issues. Ms. Walters noted the late time and proposed continuing certain topics like the Mixed-Use zoning district and short-term rental ordinance amendments at the next meeting. Ms. Walters asked Ms. Riggins if she wanted a few minutes to present her short-term rental ordinance information. She stated she would prefer to wait to present it at the next meeting, explaining it relates to alternative approaches to the proposed short-term rental regulations. She stated the Commission would benefit from a more thorough, dedicated discussion. Ms. Walters asked Ms. Riggins if she could submit her information to the Commission in advance of the next meeting so it could be reviewed by the Commission Members prior to the meeting. Ms. Riggins stated she would not be able to do that.

Mr. Bryan asked the Commission to clarify what order it wanted the pending items to appear on the agenda for the next meeting. The Commission advised him to keep them in same order in which they appear on this evening's agenda, especially due to the letter of intent to purchase that is in place for the property in the Mixed-Use district. The Commission discussed whether, due to the number of pending items, it should meet twice per month. Ms. Walters argued against that proposal and noted that a Special Meeting could be scheduled if necessary. Mr. Canda noted that additional topics like map updates and parking should also be revisited.

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Ms. Frank-Hensley raised the issue of instituting a moratorium on development in the Mixed-Use district and asked Mr. Bryan how that could be accomplished. He stated that action would need to be taken by Council, but the Commission could make that recommendation to Council. A six-month moratorium was suggested as the appropriate timeframe for putting the new zoning amendments affecting the Mixed-Use district into effect. Ms. Frank-Hensley then made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Canda to recommend that Council enact a six-month moratorium on new development within the Mixed-Use district. Roll call vote: Ms. Walters, yes; Mr. Royer, yes; Mr. Canda, yes; Ms. Frank-Hensley, yes. The motion was approved.

**Parking**

Ms. Frank-Hensley asked to discuss the proposed parking ordinance amendments that were not adopted by Council. She noted three key areas of concern on the part of Councilmembers that declined to vote for the Ordinance. Those matters include reduced parking requirements for accessory apartments, the structure and use of remote/shared parking agreements, and whether parking decisions should be handled by the Planning Commission rather than the BZA. Further discussion clarified that shared and remote parking concepts already exist in the code. Mr. Bryan and Ms. McMahon emphasized the proposed changes would shift more responsibility to the Planning Commission to evaluate parking plans on a case-by-case basis, rather than relying strictly on fixed formulas based upon building size and use and requiring variances through the BZA. The amended ordinance would allow more flexibility but also require more judgment.

Mr. Canda raised the issue that the proposed rules might become overly burdensome compared to the current requirements, noting that tonight's approval was reviewed under the current requirements, and if the proposed regulations were in place for Mr. Ekert's application, a greater number of parking spaces may have been required. Ms. McMahon countered that the updated approach would provide better structure and prevent situations where projects meet minimum code requirements but result in poor outcomes, emphasizing that current reliance on the BZA can limit the Planning Commission's ability to influence design decisions after variances are granted. The Commission Members expressed support for the version of the ordinance it previously recommended earlier this year. Mr. Canda emphasized the importance of progress and avoiding stagnation. The Commission acknowledged that while the proposed parking evaluation method may require more effort and coordination, it could lead to better long-term planning outcomes if thoughtfully implemented.

It was noted that the next Planning Commission Meeting date falls on Memorial Day. It was determined that May 11 would work best for the Commission Members, Mr. Bryan, and Ms. McMahon. Ms. Walters made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Royer to reschedule the May Planning Commission Meeting to Monday May 11, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. Roll call vote: Ms. Walters, yes; Mr. Royer, yes; Mr. Canda, yes; Ms. Frank-Hensley, yes. The motion was approved.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Royer made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Walters to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote: Ms. Walters, yes; Mr. Royer, yes; Mr. Canda, yes; Ms. Frank-Hensley, yes. The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted:

Karen Walters, Chairperson

Date

*Karen Walters*

5/11/26