



PRESQUE ISLE TOWNSHIP
Joint Planning Commission and
Zoning Board of Appeals
Special Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.

The joint meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Present for the Planning Commission were Chair Lisa Larkin, Secretary Cynthia Paavola, and members Richard Lefevre, Michael Cermak, and Tom Ludwig. Absent were Vice Chair Stacy Holmén and Board Liaison Jennifer Wiczorkowski.

Present for the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) were Chair Mary Anne McCoy, Vice Chair Larry Fields, Secretary and Planning Commission Liaison Cynthia Paavola, Board Liaison Mary O'Neill, and members Dennis Cleary, David Larkin, and Charles Smith. No members were absent from the ZBA.

Also present was Supervisor and Zoning Administrator Steve Lang.

Nonconforming Structure Discussion

Chair McCoy provided an overview of a recent variance request brought before the ZBA involving the proposed expansion of a nonconforming waterfront residence. McCoy reported that, while considering the request, the ZBA encountered difficulty interpreting §3.25(E)(1) of the Presque Isle Township Zoning Ordinance, which states: "Such nonconforming structure shall not be altered or remodeled in a way which increases its nonconformity; it may be altered in a manner which brings it into greater conformance with this Ordinance or which does not make it more nonconforming."

The applicant argued that, although the proposed expansion of the structure would remain within the required 50-foot setback, the nonconformity would not be increased because the new structure would be located farther from the lake than the existing building. McCoy noted that, due to the ambiguity of the ordinance language, the request was ultimately approved.

Members agreed that the language should be clarified to reduce the potential for differing interpretations. Several members also recommended revising the ordinance to explicitly prohibit any expansion of nonconforming residences within required setbacks.

McCoy also noted that the variance request included plans to demolish a substantial portion of the existing structure in order to construct a new concrete foundation. She referred to §3.25(H)(1) of the zoning ordinance, which states: "if a nonconforming structure is damaged or destroyed by any means, it shall be allowed to be rebuilt in the footprint of the nonconforming structure which existed immediately prior to the damage or destruction." She recommended removing the phrase "by any means" from the ordinance language. Several members agreed that, while owners of dilapidated or damaged homes should be permitted to make improvements, the ordinance should not allow the demolition and complete rebuilding of nonconforming residences.

The procedural process for ordinance amendments was also discussed. Lang explained that revisions to the ordinance would be drafted by the Planning Commission and subsequently considered at a public hearing prior to Township Board approval.



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Planning Commission members then discussed scheduling a public hearing and agreed by consensus to hold the hearing at the June 1 meeting.

With no further discussion, ZBA members were asked to submit any additional suggestions to Chair Larkin via email.

Accessory Structure Discussion

Chair Larkin and the Commissioners reviewed the proposed ordinance revisions currently under consideration by the Planning Commission and addressed questions from ZBA members.

Discussion included the following considerations:

1. Removing the size cap for accessory structures and replacing it with a limit based on percentage of lot size.
2. Clarifying the definitions of “building” versus “structure.”
3. Removing the greenbelt requirement for accessory structures.
4. Removing the maximum accessory structure sidewall height requirement of 14 feet for properties zoned R1.
5. Removing the limit on the number of accessory structures allowed.
6. Removing design regulations.
7. Reducing the required greenbelt along waterfront property from 60% to 40%.

Following the discussion, ZBA members were encouraged to send input and suggestions to Chair Larkin via email as the ordinance revisions move forward.

Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

The next PC meeting will be held on Monday, June 1st, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

The next ZBA meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 7th, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.