

ONOTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
MAY 12, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 7pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Brian Mahoney, Fred Ivers, Vicki Ray, Brian Bresette, Michael Tarr, Erin Putvin

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made to adopt the agenda as presented.

Motion: Brian Bresette

Support: Vicki Ray

Motion carried:4-0

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the 4-14-2026 meeting as presented.

Motion: Vicki Ray

Support: Brian Bresette

Motion carried: 4-0

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Joan Potter Summer asked a question about data centers. At this point, ordinances have been written.

VII. REPORTS

A. Zoning Administrator: Mark Maki (Present)

- Mark Maki introduced himself, gave his work history which involves acting as Zoning Administrator in Rock River, Skandia, and Chocolay Townships.
- A few permit inquiries have been received
- A variance for Lot 2 on Deer Lake was filed.

B. Township Board Representative: Brian Bresette

- At the Township Board Meeting in May, the board made a decision to remove two members of the Planning Commission. Though still owning land in Onota Township, Erin Putvin and Mark Zitnik have relocated outside the township. Due to this, Erin Putvin and Mark Zitnik have been removed from the Commission. The Planning Commission will now have five (5) voting members. Erin Putvin will stay on as Recording Secretary and will not have voting privilege. This reorganization was reviewed by the Township Attorney.

- In the discussions concerning the public hearing, Brian Bresette will abstain from voting because he is a property owner on Old M-28

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing:

- The Public Hearing concerning rezoning of Old M-28 was called to order at 7:08 pm

Public Comment:

- Kyle Cork lives on Old M-28. He stated he is in support of rezoning.
- Chris Kimar is in support of rezoning for the benefit of all
- Jason Copeman is not in favor of rezoning and believes zoning should be left as is. Jason drew attention to how rezoning will negatively affect property value on lands that were purchased as commercial, thus will negatively affect individuals who purchased commercial properties with the intention of creating commercial opportunity.
- Teresa Cunningham read a letter. She is not in favor of the rezoning. She purchased commercial land with the intention of benefitting from its commercial zoning.
- Carl Hubinger is a resident on Old M-28 who has concerns about the tourist traffic on this road.
- Jarrod Beibel intentionally bought property in the Town Development section because it offers commercial zoning. Jarod also feels that purposeful “spot zoning” is in practice with this rezoning requestion
- Gary Webb asked if the area is rezoned will existing compliant STR be allowed to continue business. The response is yes.
- Ron Christensen from Shore Dr. does not support rezoning.
- Jack Barnes spent three days canvassing the township to see if people in the township are in favor of the rezoning. 97% of the people he talked to are in favor of rezoning Old M-28
- Linda Cork supports rezoning.
- Sarah Kimar stated that she initiated the process of the rezoning on May 7, 2025 by writing a letter of concern to the township.
- Bill Carmody believes that this request for rezoning M-28 is logical based on the current residential population.
- John Shauver remarked that he has not noticed a remarkable change over time. This area has always been a business area. Though businesses have shifted in the kinds of services they offer (from active businesses to STR). He recommends keeping the zoning as is.
- Lisa Hanson resident of Old M-28 is in favor of rezoning. She has noticed a major traffic increase on Old M-28 due to ATV and tourists.
- Andy Summer also expressed concerns about traffic on Old M-28
- Holden Beibel does not support rezoning.

- Nancy Bennett asked about non-conforming use.
- Michael Tarr began speaking about his interpretation of the rezoning effort. Sarah Kimar pointed out that Michael spoke out of turn. Michael closed the meeting and resumed his discussion.
- At 8:02 pm the Public Hearing was closed.

B. Post Public Hearing Discussion:

Michael Tarr:

This isn't just about short-term rentals. At its core, this is an effort to rezone a specific area in a way that limits what property owners can do with their land in the future.

Property owners make decisions based on the zoning that exists when they purchase their property. They invest, they plan, and in many cases they hold that property for years with a clear understanding of what it allows.

Someone could have purchased property in this area ten years ago with the intent to develop it later-maybe in retirement-based on that Town Development zoning.

To change that zoning now, mid-investment, and remove those options is something we need to be very cautious about.

Shelter Bay historically supported mixed use, which is why it was zoned Town Development. While it may look more residential today, that does not mean we should remove the zoning that allows for future development.

If we remove that zoning, we are permanently removing future development opportunities, and once it's gone, it's very difficult to get back.

When you look at the township as a whole, most of the shoreline is already zoned Lake Shore & River and R-5 with some timber production. There are only limited areas designated for Town Development.

So this proposal doesn't preserve balance, it reduces it. It takes one of the few remaining flexible areas and locks it down further.

If there are concerns with short-term rentals, those should be addressed directly with fair, township-wide standards. Which we addressed with new ord

Rezoning one area to stop a specific use is a permanent change that affects property rights and long-term planning.

We also need to ask: what is the actual land-use issue? Not perception but evidence.

Are there documented impacts that justify removing these development options?

Without that, it becomes difficult to support this change.

Zoning decisions should be based on long-term planning—not on limiting future options in response to a current concern.

Vicki Ray: Not in favor of rezoning as this is an attempt at spot zoning.

Brian Mahoney: Question: How many lots are currently buildable in this location?

Responses: Jason Copeman offered that there are currently four buildable lots.

Fred Ivers: The Planning Commission spent several months reviewing and working on the Onota Township Master Plan. This plan was adopted in 2024. At that time, very few people attended the meeting to review the progress of the Planning Commission or the process of reviewing and adopting a Master Plan. Fred encouraged people to show up to meetings regularly to stay informed.

- Brian Mahoney motioned that the Planning Commission make a recommendation to the Onota Township Board to keep the zoning on Old M-28 as it is currently written. Fred Ivers supported the motion.
 - Roll Call vote:
 - Brian Mahoney: Aye
 - Fred Ivers: Aye
 - Michael Tarr: Aye
 - Vicki Ray: Aye
 - Brian Bresette: Abstain
 - Roll call vote carried 4-0

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Public Hearing on the STR Ordinance will be scheduled for Tuesday, June 10, 2026 at 7 pm.

X. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm

Motion: Brian Mahoney

Support: Vicki Ray

Motion carried: 4-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Putvin

Planning Commission Recording Secretary