

VILLAGE OF PENTWATER

65 South Hancock Street, P.O. Box 622, Pentwater, Michigan 49449
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www.pentwatervillage.org

**Planning Commission Regular Meeting
August 25, 2026 - 6:00 P.M.
Park Place Event Center – 310 N. Rush Street**

Agenda

- 1. Opening** – Welcome, Call to Order, and Pledge of Allegiance
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Agenda and Minutes**
 - A. Approval of Agenda
 - B. Approval of Minutes of July 28, 2026
- 4. Public Comments:** For items on the agenda.
- 5. Public Hearing:** None
- 6. Action Items:** None
- 7. Discussion Items**
 - A. Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Text Amendment
 - B. Sign Ordinance Text Amendment
 - C. Other discussion items
- 8. Old Business:** None
- 9. Department/Committee Reports**
- 10. Public Comments**
- 11. Communications from Planning Commission Members**
- 12. Adjournment**

Planning Commission
July 28, 2026
Park Place – 310 North Rush Street

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Stoneman called the meeting of the Pentwater Village Planning Commission to order at 6:00 pm from Park Place Meeting Center, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Stoneman, Nugent, Provencal, Ressel-Hodan, Roberson, Andrews

Absent: Conroy

Also present: Zoning Administrator Aaron Bigelow, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Jody TerHaar, Administrative Assistant Casey Kies

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA – None

IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Stoneman requested approval of the Agenda. *Motion* by Ressel-Hodan, supported by Provencal to approve the agenda as presented.

Voice vote: Yes: 6. No: 0. Absent: 1. Motion approved 6-0.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Chair Stoneman requested approval of the Minutes. *Motion* by Ressel-Hodan, supported by Provencal to approve the previous Minutes as presented.

Voice vote: Yes: 6. No: 0. Absent: 1. Motion approved 6-0.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Text Amendment

Commission used Shelby's ordinance as a model to compile draft. All agreed roof-mounted solar should not exceed 10 ft above height of roof for residential and commercial use. No permit will be required.

E.11 of Section 3.37. Accessory Use Solar Energy Systems – it was unanimous that this be eliminated - due to being too ambiguous.

Following discussion on the 1-acre restriction for ground mounted systems, the Commission determined that the proposed provisions were appropriate. Principal use systems may be revisited at a future date.

B. Sign Ordinance Text Amendment

It was stated you can't regulate based on content. Following discussion regarding sign ordinance options, all agreed temporary signs should be taken down within 7 days after the event.

Commission determined that "Special Event" signs should be removed from exempt status. The remainder of the existing sign ordinance language should remain as is currently written.

C. Other Discussion Items

Continued discussion about hotels and size of acreage allowed. No changes suggested at this time.

Commission wants more discussion on Items A & B at next meeting.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS - None

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

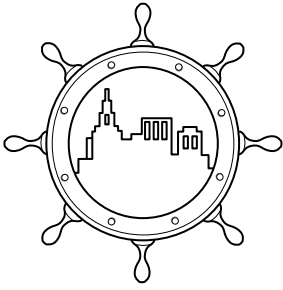
IX. COMMUNICATION FROM PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS - None

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ressel-Hodan to adjourn at 7:38 pm. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jody TerHaar
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer



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MEMORANDUM

To: Village of Pentwater Planning Commission
From: Aaron Bigelow
Date: August 18, 2026
Re: Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Amendment

As discussed at recent Planning Commission meetings, the Village of Pentwater does not currently have any regulations for Solar Energy Systems. Due to this lack of regulation, Solar Energy Systems (SES) are not currently allowed in the Village. To allow for the future development of SES in the Village, the Planning Commission has reviewed draft language that permits accessory use solar in the Village.

Planning Commission Requests

At your June 23 meeting, the Planning Commission deliberated on what the preferred regulations for solar in The Village of Pentwater may be. The Commission also reviewed an example solar energy systems ordinance from The Village of Shelby. As directed, we have prepared a draft ordinance text amendment which includes the following changes:

- Applies the structure and majority of the regulations from the Village of Shelby sample ordinance.
- Prohibits solar energy systems in the waterfront yard of any property.

At your 7/28 meeting, the Planning Commission also requested the following changes:

- Eliminate section E.11
- Revise the maximum height in Section D.1 to not exceed ten (10) feet above the finished roofline.
- Add SES as an exemption in Section 3.02.A

Items of Consideration

As shown in the attached draft ordinance, an exemption for SES has been added to Section 3.02.A, maximum permitted building height. However, due to the recent amendment of the C-3 height requirements of Section 12.04 which raises the maximum permitted height to 47 feet, the Planning Commission should review the current 50-foot height limit for the listed exceptions under Section 3.02.A, as shown below, and determine if this is still appropriate:

A. The following buildings and structures shall be exempt from regulations in all districts if they do not exceed fifty (50) feet and do not constitute habitable space: chimneys, elevated water towers, church spires, penthouses housing necessary mechanical appurtenances, wind-powered electric generators, and television and radio reception and transmission antennas and towers.

Planning Commission Review

At your August 25, 2026, meeting, the Planning Commission will review the proposed ordinance text amendment and determine if the presented regulations may be appropriate for the Village of Pentwater.

Following Planning Commission deliberations, we can return with an updated draft amendment that incorporates any desired changes or prepare the amendment for a Public Hearing at the next available meeting.

AB
Planner

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE VILLAGE ZONING ORDINANCE [Solar Energy Systems]

THE VILLAGE OF PENTWATER ORDAINS:

Section 1. Definitions. Section 2.19 of the Village of Pentwater Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended by the addition of the terms “Solar Energy Collector- Building Mounted”, “Solar Energy Collector- Ground Mounted”, “Solar Energy System- Accessory Use” and “Solar Energy System- Principal Use”, which shall be defined as follows:

SOLAR ENERGY COLLECTOR-BUILDING MOUNTED

A solar energy collector attached to the roof or wall of a building, or which serves as the roof, wall, or other element in whole or in part of a building. Also includes building-integrated photovoltaic systems (BIPV).

SOLAR ENERGY COLLECTOR-GROUND MOUNTED

A solar energy collector that is not attached to and is separate from any building on the lot on which the solar energy collector is located.

SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM- ACCESSORY USE

A solar energy system that is an accessory to the primary use of a lot, such as a residence or a commercial building, and that primarily provides electricity intended for use by a primary structure located on the same parcel as the solar energy system. Accessory systems can range in size and configuration. They typically range from being small enough to power an exterior light fixture to being large enough to power electricity for multiple buildings, for instance livestock or equipment barns. Accessory systems can be affixed to the roof or wall of a building or can be freestanding, ground-mounted structures.

SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM- PRINCIPAL USE

A ground-mounted solar energy system that captures and converts solar energy into electricity, for the purpose of sale or for use in locations other than solely the solar energy system principal lot.

Section 2. Accessory Use Solar Energy Systems. Chapter 3 of the Village of Pentwater Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended by the addition of a new Section 3.37 which shall read as follows:

SECTION 3.37. ACCESSORY USE SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

A. **Applicability.** This section applies to any system of accessory use solar energy collector systems within the Village.

- B. **Exemption.** This section does not apply to solar energy collectors mounted on fences, poles, or on the ground with collector surface areas less than five (5) square feet and a height of less than five (5) feet above the ground. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit collective solar installations or the sale of excess power through a net billing or net-metering arrangement.

C. **General Requirements.**

1. **Permitted Use:** Accessory Use Solar Energy Systems are a permitted use in all zoning districts.
2. **Permit Required.** No accessory use solar energy system shall be installed or operated except in compliance with this section. A zoning permit shall be obtained from the Zoning Administrator prior to the installation of a ground-mounted solar energy system. A zoning permit shall not be required for building mounted systems that remain parallel to the roofline and do not exceed the peak of the building to which they are attached. All accessory use solar energy systems shall be constructed, installed, operated, and maintained in strict accordance with the Michigan Building Code, the Electrical Code, and the manufacturer's specifications.
3. **Glare and Reflection.** The exterior surfaces of solar energy collectors shall be generally neutral in color and substantially non-reflective of light. A unit may not be installed or located so that sunlight or glare is reflected into neighboring dwellings or onto adjacent roads or private roads.
4. **Installation.**
 - a. A solar energy collector shall be permanently and safely attached to the ground or structure. Solar energy collectors, and their installation and use, shall comply with building codes and other applicable village and state requirements.
 - b. Solar energy systems shall be installed, maintained, and used only in accordance with the manufacturer's directions. A copy shall be submitted to the Village prior to installation.
5. **Power Lines.** On-site power lines between solar panels and inverters shall be placed underground.
6. **Abandonment and Removal.** A solar energy system that ceases to produce energy on a continuous basis for twelve (12) months will be considered abandoned. Following the abandonment of a solar energy collector system, the following standards are applicable:
 - a. The responsible party may reinstate the system up to six (6) months after the system is declared abandoned if the Village is given substantial evidence of the responsible party's intent to maintain and reinstate the operation of that system.
 - b. The responsible party shall remove all equipment and facilities and restore the lot to its condition prior to the development of the system within one (1) year of abandonment.

- D. **Building Mounted Solar Energy Collectors.** These systems may be established as accessory uses to principal uses in all zoning districts subject to the following conditions.

1. **Maximum Height.** Building-mounted solar energy collectors shall be attached directly to the building and shall not exceed ten (10) feet above the finished roofline. ~~be taller than the peak of the building to which they are attached.~~

2. **Obstruction.** Building-mounted solar energy collectors shall not obstruct solar access to adjacent properties.

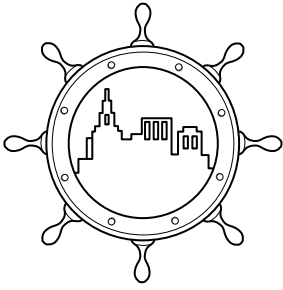
E. **Ground Mounted Solar Energy Collectors.** These systems may be established as accessory uses to principal uses in all zoning districts subject to the following conditions.

1. **Rear and Side Yards.** A ground mounted system may be located in the rear yard or the side yard and shall be subject to the setbacks for accessory buildings.
2. **Front Yard.** Except for waterfront lots, the unit may be located in the front yard only if located not less than one hundred fifty (150) feet from the front lot line.
3. **Waterfront Lots.** Any ground mounted system shall not be located between the principal building and any lake, river or stream.
4. **Obstruction.** Ground-mounted solar energy collectors shall not obstruct solar access to adjacent properties.
5. **Vegetation.** All vegetation underneath solar energy infrastructure shall be properly maintained as to not block access to solar collectors.
6. **Maximum Number.** There shall be no more than one (1) ground-mounted solar energy collector per principal building on a lot.
7. **Maximum Size.** There shall be no more than one percent (1%) of the lot area, up to one thousand five hundred (1,500) square feet of collector panels on a ground-mounted solar energy collector system.
8. **Maximum Height.** The maximum height shall be sixteen (16) feet, measured from the natural grade below the unit to the highest point at full tilt.
9. **Minimum Lot Area.** One (1) acre shall be the minimum lot area to establish a ground-mounted solar energy collector system.
10. **Screening.** Screening shall be required in cases where a ground-mounted solar energy collector impacts views from adjacent residential properties. Screening methods may include the use of material, colors, textures, screening walls, and landscaping that will blend the unit into the natural setting and existing environment.
- ~~11. Applicants requesting ground-mounted solar energy collectors shall demonstrate the system's projected electricity generation capability, and the system shall not regularly exceed the power consumption demand of the principal and accessory land uses on the lot. However, larger systems may be approved if greater electricity need is demonstrated to power on-site buildings and uses.~~

Section 3. Maximum Permitted Building Height. Section 3.02.A of the Village of

Pentwater Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended to read as follows:

- A. The following buildings and structures shall be exempt from height regulations in all districts if they do not exceed fifty (50) feet and do not constitute habitable space: chimneys, elevated water towers, church spires, penthouses housing necessary mechanical appurtenances, wind-powered electric generators, solar energy systems, and television and radio reception and transmission antennas and towers.



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MEMORANDUM

To: Village of Pentwater Planning Commission
From: Aaron Bigelow
Date: August 18, 2026
Re: Potential Ordinance Amendments

As a reminder, at the May 26, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, it was determined that the sign ordinance references need to be updated for accuracy. At your June 23 meeting, it was determined that the entirety of the sign ordinance could be updated with a revised structure, with new possible regulations.

Following deliberations at your July 28 meeting, the Planning Commission determined that it was appropriate to limit the amendment of Chapter 21 to only include the following:

1. Special event signs must be removed 7 days after the event
2. Special event signs will be exempt from a permit, but must still comply with all requirements.
3. Correct the sign chapter references throughout the Zoning Ordinance

We have provided the attached draft amendment which incorporates the requested amendment. We seek the Planning Commission's direction on the proposed amendment and if any additional changes are desired.

Planning Commission Review

At your August 25, 2026, meeting, the Planning Commission will review the proposed ordinance text amendment and determine if the presented regulations may be appropriate for the Village of Pentwater.

Following Planning Commission deliberations, we can return with an updated draft amendment that incorporates any desired changes or prepare the amendment for legal review and a Public Hearing at the next available meeting.

AB

Planner

VILLAGE OF PENTWATER
COUNTY OF OCEANA, MICHIGAN

At a regular meeting of the Village Council of the Village of Pentwater, held at the Park Place,
310 N Rush Street, Pentwater, Michigan, on the ____ day of _____ 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Members: _____

ABSENT: Members: _____

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-__

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE VILLAGE ZONING ORDINANCE
[Signs]**

THE VILLAGE OF PENTWATER ORDAINS:

Section 1. Signs Exempted. Section 21.04.I is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

I. Special Event Signs shall not require a permit, but shall be removed within seven (7) days following event of activity, and shall comply with other applicable provisions of this Ordinance.

Section 2. R-R District. Section 4.04.C is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

C. Signs are permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter ~~17~~ 21.

Section 3. R-1 District. Section 5.04.C is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

C. Signs are permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter ~~17~~ 21.

Section 4. R-2 District. Section 6.04.C is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

C. Signs are permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter ~~17~~ 21.

Section 5. R-3 District. Section 7.04.C is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

C. Signs are permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter ~~17~~ 21.

Section 6. R-O District. Section 10.04.C is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

C. Signs are permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter ~~17~~ 21.

Section 7. C-1 District. Section 11.04.C is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:
C. Signs are permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter ~~17~~ 21.

Section 8. C-3 District. Section 12.04.C is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:
C. Signs are permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter ~~17~~ 21.

Section 9. C-4 District. Section 12A.04.C is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:
C. Signs are permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter ~~17~~ 21.

Section 10. LI District. Section 13.04.C is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:
C. Signs are permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter ~~17~~ 21.

Section 11. Signs Exempted The first unnumbered paragraph Section 21.04 is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:
The following signs shall be exempt from the provisions of this Chapter, except such signs shall comply with the requirements of Sections 21.11. ~~and 21.12.~~

Section 12. Signs For Other Land Uses Section 21.11.A is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:
A. Signs in the Planned Unit Development District shall comply with the applicable sign provisions of Section ~~17.16-~~21.09.

Section 13. **Effective Date.** This ordinance shall become effective seven (7) days after its publication or seven (7) days after the publication of a summary of its provisions in a local newspaper of general circulation in the Village.

AYES: Members:

NAYS: Members:

Village Of Pentwater

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ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT July 2026

The following is a summary of activity conducted by the Zoning Administrator in July 2026:

Zoning Permits – The following Zoning Permits were issued in June of 2026:

1. ZP 26-29 was issued to Thomas Sape for a new fence at 12 N Clymer St.
2. ZP 26-30 was issued to Terry Clutchey to replace the existing shed on the Village Green.

Sincerely,

Aaron Bigelow

Zoning Administrator