

**VILLAGE OF SISTER BAY
SPECIAL PLAN COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026
APPROVED**

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Denise Bhirdo called the Special Plan Commission meeting to order on Monday, APRIL 20, 2026, at 5:34 P.M., and roll call was taken.

Present: Commission members Chair Denise Bhirdo, Nate Bell, Laurel Harff, Skip Heidler, Patrice Champeau and Steve Bacsí via Zoom.

Staff Member(s): Administrative Assistant Sarah Bertges, Village Administrator Benjamin Andrews was absent.

Others: Kurt Harff, Jolene Brydon, Corey Brydon, Erin Peddle, Pam Ledesic, Kevin Ledesic, Louise Howson. VIA ZOOM: Barbara, Jenn, Jake Forestville Builders, Dominick Zarcone, MKS, Alex Chemerys, Dr. Jennifer Hall, Marjorie Grutzmacher, Ron Kane, Jill Wiebe, Dave, Julie Thyssen

2. Approve the Agenda

Bell requested to move item 4c (discuss the history of the sign permit process) after item 4e to provide better context for the sign-related discussions.

Motion by Bell, second by Heidler to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried- all ayes.

3. Comments, Correspondence, and Concerns from the Public

Bhirdo opened the floor for public comments on non-agenda items. No public comments were received either in person or via Zoom.

Before proceeding to action items, Bhirdo read a statement explaining the background of the meeting. She noted that on April 13, 2026, she observed a sign that had not received proper plan commission approval, prompting her to request an open records review of all permits from January 5, 2026 to present. During her review, she discovered permits had been issued without the plan commission chair's approval, contrary to established procedure. She attempted to contact the village president about this issue but received no response.

4. Action Items

a. Appeal the Decision of the Zoning Administrator Issuing a Zoning Permit on March 23, 2026 for 2613 South Bay Shore Drive, John Sawyer, 4,000 Sq Ft Garage. Parcel# 181080005

Bhirdo presented the appeal regarding John Sawyer's 4,000 square foot garage permit. She explained that the administrator incorrectly told the applicant that plan commission approval was not required, when all commercial property permits must come to the plan commission. The permit application showed metal siding, which the village does not allow, and the structure's 100-foot length would require architectural features to break up the wall.

Heidler noted additional code compliance issues, suggesting the structure might require conditional use permit approval as a storage facility under section 166.032.03.i, which would necessitate sprinkler systems and other requirements. Bell raised concerns about the village appealing its own decision and the potential complications if the appeal process begins.

After a brief recess to consult with village attorney Randy Nesbitt, the commission agreed to pursue a cooperative approach with the property owner.

Motion by Bhirdo, second by Champeau directing village attorney Randy Nesbitt to contact John Sawyer to request replacement of the proposed metal siding with code-compliant materials. If the property owner agrees to make the change, no appeal will be filed. If the property owner refuses to

1 *cooperate, the plan commission authorizes staff to proceed with the appeal process. Motion carried-*
2 *all ayes.*

3
4 **b. Discuss and/or Appeal the Decision of the Zoning Administrator Issuing or Not Issuing a Zoning**
5 **Permit to 10855 North Bay Shore Drive, Zarcone, 16X20 Boathouse/Storage Shed. Parcel#**
6 **181270015**

7 Bhirdo outlined the complex history of this property, explaining that the previous owner had
8 discussions with former administrator Julie Schmelzer about maintaining an accessory structure
9 while building a new house. The current owner, Dominick Zarcone, ultimately demolished both
10 structures but later applied for a new accessory structure.

11 The primary issue is that the proposed structure is within 20 feet of the ordinary high watermark,
12 violating the 50-foot setback requirement. Additionally, no formal zoning permit application was
13 found in the file—only email communications requesting a \$200 fee payment.

14 Zarcone joined the meeting via Zoom and explained his understanding that boathouses were
15 allowable within the 20-foot setback. He clarified that the new structure would be 15 feet from the
16 property line (unlike the original structure which was 18-24 inches from the line) and would match
17 the architectural style of their new home. The concrete pad has already been poured at an
18 estimated cost of \$10,000-\$12,000 to remove and relocate.

19 Heidler researched DNR requirements during the meeting, finding that structures must be at least 35
20 feet from the ordinary high watermark, with most structures requiring 75-foot setbacks. The
21 commission noted that the structure doesn't meet the village's definition of a boathouse since it
22 won't be accessible by boats from navigable water.

23 After extensive discussion about moving the structure closer to the house (which would compromise
24 aesthetics and functionality), the commission reluctantly decided to allow the permit to stand given
25 the extenuating circumstances, including the village's error in the permit process and the precedent
26 set by a similar conditional use permit granted to neighboring property.

27 *Motion by Bhirdo, second by Heidler requiring Zarcone to submit a complete zoning permit*
28 *application for the accessory structure, with the relevant portion of tonight's meeting minutes*
29 *attached to provide historical context. Motion carried- all ayes.*

30 *By consensus, the commission agreed to take no further action on the appeal, effectively allowing the*
31 *structure to remain as permitted.*

32
33 **c. Discuss the History of the Sign Permit Process and Reaffirm or Change**

34 This item was moved to after item 4.e as agreed during agenda approval. Bhirdo explained the
35 historical evolution of sign permit approval from full plan commission review to delegation to the
36 plan commission chair and zoning administrator to expedite the process. The current criteria
37 requires wood materials or wood-look, dimensional features, and prohibits flat metal signs to
38 maintain the community's aesthetic character.

39
40 **d. Discuss the Sign Permits Approved by the Zoning Administrator**
41 **d.i. 10590 Country Walk, Unit 4, Bay Birch Gallery**

42 Bhirdo detailed her concerns with this permit, which was approved despite her identifying multiple
43 code violations including incorrect size calculations, missing dimensional requirements, and material
44 non-compliance. The administrator approved the sign without addressing her concerns or sharing
45 them with the applicant.

46 The business owner, Pam Ladesic, joined the discussion and clarified that she had submitted
47 corrected dimensions and confirmed wood composite materials per the administrator's request. She
48 confirmed the sign would have dimensional letters and provided the "little rad house" sign photo as
49 an example of similar style. The commission was satisfied that the final sign met code requirements.

d.ii. 10663 North Bay Shore Drive, Savor (approved February 11, 2026)

Bhirdo noted this permit was never submitted to her for approval. She questioned the application's missing dimensions for the projecting sign and the administrator's incorrect calculation listing it as 4x4 when it was clearly oblong. The linear frontage measurement was confirmed as accurate at 39 feet. After discussion with the business representative, the commission confirmed the sign included proper dimensional features and met code requirements.

d.iii. 10635 North Bayshore Drive, Juicy Burgers

This permit involved changing signage from "Savor" to "Juicy Burgers" using the same sign structure. Bhirdo confirmed the sign was made of 100% oak with routed raised letters, meeting dimensional requirements. The permit was approved without her review, though she had no substantive objections to the compliant sign.

e. Discuss and/or Appeal the Decision of the Zoning Administrator Issuing a Permit to 2363 Mill Road Unit 1, Sweetlana's Gelato, Approved March 27, 2026 Parcel# 181520001

Bhirdo identified multiple deficiencies in this permit application, including describing the sign as "wood polymetal" (which doesn't exist—it's actually polymetal with aluminum sheets), missing dimensional aspects, incomplete illumination details, and no administrator's review checklist. The sign lacked required wood texture and dimensional features.

Alex Chemerys, the business owner, joined via Zoom and explained he originally considered polymetal but was willing to use wood with 3D cut letters as requested. He confirmed the sign had not yet been manufactured.

Motion by Bhirdo, second by Heidler that if Sweetlana's Gelato and Coffee surrenders their current sign permit and resubmits a complete application, the commission will not appeal the original permit. The new application will be expedited and reviewed by the village administrator and plan commission chair. If they do not resubmit, staff is authorized to begin the appeal process. Motion carried- all ayes.

c. Discuss the History of the Sign Permit Process and Reaffirm or Change (continued)

Bell noted that the village code only explicitly grants sign approval authority to the plan commission chair in the B2 historic overlay district, despite the long-standing practice of chair approval for all signs. He suggested the code should be amended to formalize this practice if the commission wishes to continue it.

The commission discussed the need to improve sign permit applications to require complete information and include building frontage calculations. Bhirdo emphasized that incomplete applications should be returned rather than processed with missing information.

5. Matters to be Placed on a Future Agenda or Referred to a Committee, Official or Employee

-Bell requested staff provide an estimate of costs and timeline for a complete rewrite of the village zoning code, including the plan commission time commitment required. The commission discussed their experience with previous code revisions and the benefits of doing the work internally versus hiring consultants.

-Heidler requested that the commission receive current copies of the zoning code and that staff default to providing digital copies rather than printed versions unless specifically requested.

-The commission agreed to place sign application review and revision on a future agenda.

6. Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2026, at 5:30 P.M. in the Large Meeting Room at the Sister Bay-Liberty Grove Fire Station.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:48 PM.

1 *Motion by Bhirdo second by Champeau. Motion carried -all ayes.*

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3 Respectfully submitted by Sarah Bertges, Administrative Assistant

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