

Taconite Harbor Advisory Committee - Kickoff Meeting Summary

Date: October 29, 2025, 6-7:30pm

Location: Schroeder Town Hall

Facilitators: Lauren Walburg, John Shardlow (Stantec)

Other Presenters: Kurt Anderson, Michael Scharenbroich (Minnesota Power)

Participants: Advisory Committee Members (Krishna Woerheide, Peter Clissold, Kyle Nelson, Terry Hartman, Richard Furlong, Mark Buckman, Al Trippel, Amy Brugge, Rose Thoreson, Hans Krengel, Jeanne Kegler, Roxanne Lillis, Mark Pederson, Patrick McGrann)

Purpose of the Meeting

To launch the Advisory Committee process for the strategic planning and redevelopment of the Taconite Harbor site. To introduce committee members, establish roles and responsibilities, and provide historical context.

Introductions

Each Advisory Committee member shared their name, background, and connection to the area. Themes included deep personal and familial connections to Taconite Harbor, interest in preserving environmental integrity and community accessibility, and desire to contribute professional expertise in land development, education, governance, and law.

Presentation Highlights

The Advisory Committee was formed by the Cook County/Grand Marais Joint EDA to advise on future reuse scenarios for the site. Goals include developing two alternative redevelopment scenarios and a strategic implementation plan. Roles and responsibilities were outlined for the Advisory Committee, MN Power & Cleveland Cliffs, EDA, Stantec, and the public.

Historical Context

Taconite Harbor was developed in the 1950s to process and ship taconite pellets. It included a dock, power plant, and residential community. The site was once the fastest and most efficient loading dock in MN/WI. The Taconite Harbor townsite supported a vibrant community until its decline in the 1980s. The power plant site was idled in 2016 and decommissioning began in 2023.

Minnesota Power Update

MN Power is actively decommissioning the power plant site with environmental remediation underway. There are no current plans for future power generation. Cleanup includes removal of coal piles, sealing of wells, and revegetation. MN Power remains committed to transparency and community engagement.

Key Discussion Points

Concerns were raised about Cleveland Cliffs' involvement and coordination. Questions were asked about environmental permits, site access, and long-term land use. There was interest in understanding the

broader planning scope beyond the immediate site and emphasis on maintaining community values and environmental stewardship.

Next Steps

Virtual meetings are scheduled regularly through Spring 2026. Initial sessions will focus on education: physical site, environmental conditions, and economic context. Visioning and scenario development will follow, with a public visioning session planned for later stages.