



Village of Stockbridge
PLANNING COMMISSION
May 01, 2025, APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
118 N. Center Street ~ 517 - 851 - 7435

Call P.C. Meeting Call to order. Att:6:33 p.m.

Roll Call commissioners present : Laura Loomis, Jennifer Conant, James Johnson,
Daryl Anderson

Commissioner Absent: Amy Good

Also in attendance: Mario A. Ortega, AICP- from McKenna, Village President, Jill Ogden, Village Trustee, Molly Howlett, Stockbridge Township/Village : Zoning Administrator Katrina Griffith, MPC.

Motion to approve May 01, 2025, agenda by Laura seconded by Jennifer motion received unanimous approval by voice vote.

1. **Motion** to approve the agenda as amended to include only item 1: Redline version of Article 6 and item 2: Redline version of Article 7, thereby focusing tonight's work solely on these revisions. This was proposed during the meeting and seconded by James Johnson, with unanimous voice vote support.

1. **Discussion**

- Discussion centered on revising only Articles 6 and 7 as a redline effort, noting that the redline version of Article 3 was missing and the zoning map should be deferred.
- Mario acknowledged the omission of Article 3's red line version and committed to providing it for the next meeting.
- Mario agreed to provide both a red line and a clean version of documents.
- Concerns were raised regarding the timely submission of proposed changes, particularly by McKenna, emphasizing the need for at least a one-week notice before meetings.

Motion to approve April 08, 2025, meeting minutes. was made by Jennifer Conant and seconded by James Johnson. Discussion . Zoning Administrator Katrina Griffith last name spelled incorrectly . New motion to approved amended minutes correcting then spelling of Katrina Griffith last name received unanimous approval by voice vote.

Enforcement process for zoning violations and complaints.

- **Description:** Discussion about the current complaint-based enforcement system, its limitations, and the need for a formal process to avoid discrimination.
- **Conclusion:** The village will continue to use a complaint-based system as recommended by the state, requiring a complaint form to initiate investigations.
- **Reasons:** A formal complaint process is necessary to avoid claims of discrimination and to comply with state guidelines.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Two people in the audience: Jill Ogden, Village Trustee, Molly Howlett no public comment

Reports: Mario A. Ortega from McKenna stated that the Mandatory Quarterly Report was submitted via the MSHDA portal.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Renaming and restructuring Article 6 from 'Subdivision Control' to 'Use Standards'.

- **Description:** The zoning diagnostic recommended reorganizing the ordinance for clarity, moving related items together and renaming Article 6.
- **Conclusion:** Article 6 will be renamed and restructured as 'Use Standards' to group similar items and improve clarity.
- **Reasons:** The reorganization aims to make the ordinance more logical and user-friendly.

Motion made to exclude accessory dwelling units ADU's from the current zoning ordinance update. Proposed by Jim during the meeting on 2025-05-01 because of concerns regarding the village's current enforcement capabilities and the potential for these units to turn into unregulated rental spaces which could degrade the community's quality of life. Second was by Jennifer?.

Conclusion Discussion highlighted that while accessory dwelling units could provide additional living space for certain family members, enforcement ability possible at this time. Multiple speakers (including Zoning Administrator Katrina Griffith, MPC., and village President Jill Ogden) expressed concerns that allowing ADUs might lead to unintended rental conversions and further complications in zoning enforcement. The group reached a consensus to exclude ADUs from the current update.

Voice vote to not include ADU in this current zoning update. 4 in favor/0 opposed/1 abstention motion carried.

Motion to amend paragraph C by changing the term 'right of way licensing' to 'right of way permit'. The motion directs that the permit be issued by the zoning administrator based on a submitted plot plan and accompanying documentation. This change is intended to correct terminology, clarify administrative responsibility, and streamline the approval process for uses such as outdoor dining areas.

Discussion: Participants discussed that the village council does not approve licensing matters and agreed that the zoning administrator is better qualified to issue a zoning permit. There was also dialogue regarding the need for a new permit form to replace the previous licensing reference.

- Additional conversation involved clarification of the process, comparing the proposed change with current practices, and briefly touching on related topics such as home occupations and auto repair regulations.
- **Voting Results:** No formal vote details were provided in the transcript.

Motion The motion calls for revised language regarding non-conforming and unsafe structures. It permits repairs or alterations to a non-conforming structure provided that such work does not increase its non-conformity. If a structure is damaged (from fire, tornado, etc.), repairs may be undertaken with a cap (25% of the structure's fair market value) and completed within one year, ensuring that the structure is restored to safe conditions. Additionally, if a structure is declared unsafe, the building official will provide a six-month period to address repairs toward full code compliance or trigger demolition if the repairs would not remedy the unsafe status.

Conclusion The discussion concluded that while the proposed text allows some flexibility for repairs on non-conforming structures, it emphasizes the critical need for public safety. It was agreed that unsafe structures must either be brought fully into compliance or be

demolished, and that a six-month window for repair provides a fair opportunity for property owners, with building officials retaining discretion based on the structure's age and historic code standards.

Motion was passed stating that unsafe nonconforming structures, when damaged or destroyed, shall be allowed up to six (6) months for obtaining a permit to reconstruct the structure within its existing footprint. Any major alteration leading to an expansion must comply fully with current zoning regulations. This provision is intended to balance the need for timely repairs while ensuring that any significant changes are in line with community standards.

Redline Version of Article 3 Pending (Mario)

- Mario apologized for not sending the redline version of Article 3 during the meeting and committed to providing it for the next meeting to ensure complete documentation.

Question was asked does the village have full autonomy to update and change ordinances, or are there state requirements tied to the grant?

- **Description:** Clarification was sought regarding the extent of local control over ordinance updates versus state-imposed requirements, especially in relation to the grant.
- **Conclusion:** The village has the autonomy to update ordinances as it sees fit; the state grant does not impose specific requirements beyond encouraging discussion of housing options.
- **Reasons:** The grant's intent is to encourage communities to review and update ordinances, particularly regarding housing options, but does not mandate specific changes.

Question was asked Is there a requirement to implement data-driven strategies for greater housing density as referenced in the enhancement grant?

- **Description:** A participant referenced Exhibit A in the enhancement grant, questioning whether there is an obligation to pursue greater housing density.
- **Conclusion:** There is no requirement to implement greater housing density; the community can discuss and decide what fits best.
- **Reasons:** The grant encourages discussion of housing types and density, but decisions are left to the community.

Should the quarterly grant-required report be a regular agenda item for planning commission meetings?

- **Description:** Discussion about whether to include the quarterly report as a standing agenda item for transparency and tracking progress.
- **Conclusion:** The quarterly report will be included as an agenda item for future planning commission meetings.
- **Reasons:** Including the report as an agenda item provides a benchmark for progress and ensures transparency.

Clarification of permissive zoning ordinance language.

- **Description:** Participants discussed the need to make it clear in the ordinance that only explicitly permitted uses are allowed, to avoid assumptions by residents.
- **Conclusion:** The ordinance will include standard language stating that if a use is not explicitly permitted, it is prohibited.

The question was asked should the section on accessories and outdoor uses be moved in the ordinance?

- **Description:** A brief discussion about reordering sections of the ordinance for clarity.
- **Conclusion:** It was agreed to move the accessory, outdoor section, to put it in alphabetical order.
- **Reasons:** The change is for organizational clarity, and no one objected.

The question was asked how should ordinances be reorganized and re-lettered for clarity and compliance?

- **Description:** Discussion about the need to periodically reorganize ordinances, especially to maintain alphabetical order and clarity. Reference to Michigan state practices and the living nature of such documents.
- **Conclusion:** Ordinances will be reorganized in alphabetical order during mass updates, but new additions will be appended to the end to avoid frequent re-lettering.
- **Reasons:** Maintaining alphabetical order improves clarity, but frequent re-lettering is cumbersome. The document is a living one, so appending new items is more practical.

The question was asked how should the approval process for outdoor dining area renewals be structured?

- **Description:** There was confusion over the correct wording and responsible parties for approving outdoor dining renewals. The discussion included whether the zoning administrator or planning commission should have authority, and whether the village council or Department of Public Works (DPW) should be involved.
- **Conclusion:**
 - The zoning administrator will have the authority to issue permits for outdoor dining areas and renewals, with appeals possible to the village council.
 - The village council, not the DPW, will approve outdoor dining areas, but DPW's opinion may be considered as maintenance-related issues.

The question was asked should the terminology for right-of-way access be 'license' or 'permit', and what documentation is required?

- **Description:** Discussion about the correct terminology for right-of-way access (license vs. permit) and the need to create appropriate forms.
- **Conclusion:** The term 'right-of-way permit' will be used instead of 'license', and a new permit form will be created for this purpose.
- **Reasons:** 'License' is not the correct legal term for this context; 'permit' is more accurate and aligns with standard practice.

The question was asked what are the requirements for foster care facilities, especially regarding lot size and state law compliance?

- **Description:** Clarification of state law requirements for foster care facilities, particularly the distinction between facilities with six or fewer residents (which must be permitted by the village) and those with more than six (which require local approval before state licensing). Discussion of minimum lot area requirements.
- **Conclusion:**
 - Facilities with six or fewer residents must be permitted in certain areas per state law.
 - Facilities with more than six residents require local approval before state licensing.
 - A minimum area of 1,500 square feet per resident is required, resulting in a 9,000-square-foot lot for six residents.
- **Reasons:** State law (Foster Care Act and Zoning Enabling Act) mandates these requirements, and local ordinances must comply.

The question was asked should the number of guests in bed and breakfast establishments be limited, and if so, to what number?

- **Description:** Discussion about whether to reduce the number of guest rooms from five to three and whether to limit the number of guests. Consideration of fire code and practical scenarios (e.g., families with children).
- **Conclusion:**
 - The number of guest rooms will be limited to three, but the guest limit will remain at 10.
 - There is a consensus not to further limit the number of guests, as fire code and room limits provide sufficient control.
- **Reasons:** Limiting guest rooms is sufficient, and additional guest limits may be unnecessary given fire code requirements and practical family arrangements.

The question was asked should home-based auto repair and cottage industries be allowed, and under what conditions?

- **Description:** Debate over whether to allow auto repair as a home occupation or cottage industry, with concerns about noise, frequency, and community impact. Examples cited include individuals repairing vehicles at home for income or due to family needs (e.g., caring for a special need child). Discussion of possible regulations such as limiting the number of vehicles, hours of operation, and requiring repairs to be done indoors.
- **Conclusion:**
 - There is no final consensus; the group discussed allowing auto repair as a special use or under cottage industry with restrictions (e.g., one vehicle at a time, compliance with noise ordinances, possible time limits, and indoor work requirements).
 - Further discussion and clarification are needed to finalize the regulations. Topic tabled until next meeting .
- **Reasons:** Some participants believe allowing limited auto repair supports local entrepreneurship and accommodates special family situations, while others are concerned about noise and neighborhood quality of life.

The question was asked how kennel regulations should be enforced, particularly regarding hours of operation, location, and noise?

- **Description:** The group reviewed kennel regulations, including compliance with village/county/state rules, hours of operation (changed from 9pm to 8pm due to barking), permitted zoning districts, and required distances from residential properties.
- **Conclusion:**
 - Kennels are permitted only in L1, C2, and C2 zones, not in R1 (residential).
 - Hours of operation for kennels were changed to end at 8pm to address noise concerns.
 - The required distance from residential property to kennel exercise areas was increased from 50 feet to 100 feet.
- **Reasons:** Noise from barking dogs and enforceability of regulations were primary concerns. Increasing the setback and reducing hours were seen as ways to mitigate neighborhood impact.

The question was asked what fencing and landscaping requirements should apply to self-storage facilities?

- **Description:** Discussion on self-storage centered on fencing requirements (six-foot fence with zero opacity) and the option to allow a greenbelt if approved by the planning commission.
- **Conclusion:** Self-storage facilities require a six-foot fence with zero opacity, and a greenbelt may be allowed if approved by the planning commission.
- **Reasons:** The intent is to provide adequate screening and maintain neighborhood aesthetics, with flexibility for greenbelt solutions.

NEW BUSINESS

No discussion on new business agenda items

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was made about some council members not reading their meeting packets.

P.C. COMMENTS CONCERNS OR SUGGESTIONS

None

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made and seconded, meeting adjourned at 8:15.
- Voting Results
 - Unanimous vote: all in favor, no opposition, no abstentions.
 - Total transcript available upon request

NEXT MEETING

- a. Next regular meeting will be June 05, 2025.