

**Village of Onekama Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes - Approved**  
**5283 Main Street, Onekama, MI 231-889-3171**  
**September 10, 2024**

Members present: Chair Chris Forth, Vice Chair Debby Storms, Tom Foster, Susan Halloran. Also present: Jodie Lynch, Zoning Administrator with the Manistee County Planning Department, and Village Council members John Wemlinger and Andrea Arthur.

Meeting called to order at 6:00p.m.

Motion to approve the agenda as presented by Halloran, seconded by Storms. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to approve the July 9, 2024 meeting minutes as presented by Storms, seconded by Halloran. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to approve the August 15, 2024 meeting minutes as presented by Storms, seconded by Halloran. All in favor, motion carried.

Member Tom Foster arrived at 6:05p.m.

Chair Forth summarized the Short-Term Rental (STR) ordinance draft language for the public present. He stated the Village's attorney has recommended this be a stand-alone ordinance rather than be included in the Zoning Code. Zoning Administrator Jodie Lynch stated the County Planning Department will administer and enforce the ordinance on behalf of the Village. Zoning Administrator Lynch stated Onekama Village will be their first contract for Short-Term Rental enforcement.

Halloran asked for clarification of what kind of signs are required and allowed for a property being used as a STR site. Storms asked if neighbors could object to the installation of a sign. Forth stated if the sign was under two square feet in area or less it would be permitted.

Storms noted the requirement of the owner/manager to be within two hours of the rental property might not be close enough to address any problems that may occur. Chair Forth stated that would still give time for the owner/manager to speak to the tenants even though the situation that required action by the owner/manager no longer exists.

Public hearing opened at 6:18 p.m.

Duane Anderson asked if the owner/manager's phone number could be included on the sign. Chair Forth responded that the number is part of the required information to be posted on the property and be visible from the street. John Wemlinger clarified that there are two different signs allowed: one required by the ordinance with owner information as well as other

information such as occupancy limit to be visible from the street, and an optional sign of no more than two square feet for advertising or identification by the owner.

Joe Suchocki asked how much the application fee would be. Andrea Arthur stated the Council talked about a minimum of \$250 to cover costs of administering the STR program. Suchocki expressed his concern that this ordinance will be unenforceable. Zoning Administrator Lynch explained her responsibility under the contract in case of a complaint or infraction. Tom Foster added that there is a schedule of increasing fines for repeated infractions. Wemlinger stated there have been historical problems with short-term renters in the past, and this is the Village's way to attempt to address these issues going forward.

Heather Schlafy questioned the wording of the draft ordinance regarding the two signs allowed. Forth thanked her for the suggestion. Schlafy asked for clarification regarding the language regarding how many units per parcel will be allowed to be STR units. This led to discussion regarding the difference between STR and Boutique Hotel status. Arthur stated the wording and policy needs to be revisited for clarification in the final draft.

An unidentified audience member asked what problem this ordinance is intended to fix. Forth stated STRs can negatively impact adjacent neighbors due to tenants who are not respectful of others around them. STRs are an issue locally, but state/nation-wide as well as in several European countries. Forth also stated the Michigan Court of Appeals has opined more than once that STRs are a commercial use that communities are allowing in residential areas and can be regulated as such.

Greg Carlson asked if there was empirical data showing complaints regarding STRs in the village. Carlson was concerned about over-regulation. Arthur stated that because there was no place to register complaints other than with the police, there is no record of complaints. Forth stated that currently STRs are not allowed in the village at all, so having this ordinance in place would legally permit them in the village. Forth also stated regulations get adopted to address a problem. Wemlinger said that unless you have a mechanism to collect data, it can't be done. This ordinance can be that mechanism.

Suchocki asked if there could be some penalty for owners who don't register for the program. Foster said once the ordinance is in place, failure to register a property for STR use is a violation of the ordinance and the owner can then be fined. Forth added it violated number 5 of the ordinance, so a first offense would be a \$250 fine.

Forth summarized a list of suggested changes to be made in the ordinance language. Halloran was not in favor of multiple free-standing advertising signs for STR properties, suggesting wall-mounted signs instead.

Motion to adjourn the public hearing portion of the meeting until October 8<sup>th</sup> at the next Planning Commission meeting by Halloran, seconded by Storms. All in favor, motion carried.

Public hearing closed at 7:18 p.m.

Master Plan update: the next steering committee meeting will be on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. There have been over 200 responses to the online survey. CIB has begun analysis of the results. The survey will be open until November 1<sup>st</sup>. Demographic information will be posted on the website.

Old Business: none

Public comment: Halloran offered her thanks for attending this meeting. She stated there is currently an opening on the Planning Commission and encouraged people to send a letter of intent to the Village Clerk if they were interested in joining the Commission.

Motion to adjourn by Foster, seconded by Storms. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Tom Foster, Secretary