

Village of Onekama Planning Commission
August 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes—APPROVED
5283 Main Street, Onekama, MI

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

Members present: Chair Christopher Forth, Vice Chair Debby Storms, Tom Foster. Two other members of the public was present.

Approval of the Agenda: Forth mentioned that Sid and Colleen Wildie, 4594 Main Street, were in the audience to discuss their garage project. Forth suggested adding them to the agenda as the first item so they don't have to wait until the public comment period at the end. Motion by Storms, seconded by Foster, to approve the agenda as amended. All in favor, motion carried.

June 9, 2026 Meeting Minutes: There being no changes to the June 9, 2026 meeting minutes, a motion was offered by Foster, seconded by Storms, to approve the June 9th draft meeting minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Public Hearings:

None

New Business:

1. Proposed Accessory Building, 4594 Main Street. The property owners, Sid and Colleen Wildie, were present to explain they were working through the approval process to build a new detached accessory building. The property was previously occupied by two nonconforming detached accessory buildings, one of which has been removed. The grading has been completed to build the new building; however, due to high construction costs associated with a new building, the Wildie's want to add an 8-foot by 32-foot addition to the remaining nonconforming accessory building. Since the remaining accessory building is nonconforming, it cannot be enlarged without either a zoning code amendment or review and approval of a variance by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The existing building does not meet the required front yard setback.

After discussing the situation with the Wildie's, the Planning Commission recommended the Wildie's pursue a variance from the Zoning Board. Based on information provided by the Wildie's, practical difficulties and/or hardships appear to exist which involve steep side slopes, soil conditions and the presence of a natural spring. Also, a building closer to the front lot line does not appear out of character for this area.

2. Raising Manistee County Initiative: Proposing solutions to promote reliable childcare. Chair Forth indicated the Planning Commission has been working with Manistee County Planning and Networks Northwest to prepare a group daycare home zoning ordinance amendment that will help promote quality, affordable childcare. This is a county-wide initiative. Additionally, there is

3. a \$500 grant available to communities to help defray to the costs associated with adopting/amending local regulations.

The Planning Commission, in conjunction with Networks Northwest, have prepared a draft ordinance. Since the June Planning Commission, Forth noted he made changes to the preliminary ordinance and include the following:

- The separation distance between uses has been reduced from 1,500 feet and 500 feet to 1,000 feet and 300 feet, respectively.
- A minimum four foot high fence to enclose the outdoor play area.
- A wall sign is permitted in lieu of a freestanding sign.
- A reduced fee of \$150 is proposed. The current fee for a special use permit is \$600. Forth indicated the average cost to include a public notice in the Manistee News Advocate for this type of use is approximately \$90. A fee of \$150 will cover all hard costs plus some staff time. Also, and more importantly, a reduced fee will provide some financial relief to daycare providers.

After discussing the proposed modifications, the Commission members agreed with the changes and elected to proceed with scheduling the public hearing. Forth state he would coordinate with Manistee County Planning staff to schedule the public hearing for the September Planning Commission meeting.

4. Master Plan Recommendation: Proposed Reduction in Residential lot sizes. Forth mentioned a communication has been received by Mr. Greg Carlson that the Planning Commission consider reducing lot size and dwelling size. The Master Plan recommends the Village consider these zoning changes to facilitate attainable/workforce housing options. The zoning changes could include a reduction in minimum lot area sizes, setbacks, first floor minimum area and other standards that could help reduce the overall costs associated with new development or redevelopment.

The Commission discussed Mr. Carlson's proposal to reduce lot width from 75 fee to 50 feet; reduce lot area from 12,000 sq. ft. to 5,000 sq. ft.; reduce side yard setbacks from 10 feet to 7.5 feet and reduce the ground floor are of a single-family dwelling 900 sq. ft. to 700 sq. ft. The Commission discussed current residential development in the Village and current and historical lot lines. Options could include Village-wide amendments or development of another residential zoning district with the reductions noted above and applied to specific areas of the Village. Forth suggested that it would be helpful from a visual perspective to have a map that shows current lot lines, historical lot lines and nonconforming lots. The Commission agreed. Forth said he will contact the Manistee County Planning department and request the map.

Old Business:

None

Public Comment:

None

Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Forth", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christopher Forth, Chair
Village of Onekama Planning Commission