

**VILLAGE OF ONEKAMA  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, January 10, 2023 6:00 P.M.  
5283 Main Street, Onkama, MI (231) 889-3171**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

Planning Commission members present: Christopher Forth, Deborah Storms, Susan Halloran, Wendy Kamaloski. Katie Mehl, Manistee County Planning

**ACCEPT/AMEND AGENDA**

Forth requested a brief description of a proposed Department of Transportation RAISE grant be added to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

December 13, 2022 – Halloran moved, Storms 2nded, all approved

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. Coastal Sustainability Assessment prepared by LIAA – Final Draft being approved at LIAA and will be available for next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Commercial Residential zoning district amendment. Forth explained the amendment is to allow hotels/motels in the Commercial Residential zoning district. At this time, they are not listed as either a permitted or special land use. The Manistee County Planning Department was requested by the Village to draft language to amend the zoning ordinance to permit hotels/motels in the Village. Mehl summarized the County staff report.

Existing uses that were in operation when the zoning ordinance was drafted are “grandfathered,” but new uses would not be allowed (nor conversion from one use to another). Forth stated the Manistee County staff report is available online for review on the Village’s website. Zoning language would need to include definitions of each land use and what is allowed. Typically, other communities specify off-street parking be provided by hotels/motels (1 space per room) and limitations on lighting to preserve dark skies and rural character (example: 0.3 candle foot of light is emitted by the full moon on a clear night; City of Manistee allows 1.0 candle foot to be emitted at the property line). The current master plan supports tourism and economic development including hotels on the north side of M-22. It is anticipated that a public hearing on the recommended zoning

language will be scheduled at the next Planning Commission meeting, on February 14<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.  
Public Comment Invited:

Joseph Suchocki – would like to see short term rentals allowed in the Commercial/Residential district. Mr. Suchocki also mentioned commercial uses are not allowed on the south side of M-22.

Mr. Forth clarified that commercial uses are allowed on the south side of M-22, but require a special land use permit and review by the Planning Commission and Village Council. If the Portage Lake Overlay District is passed by Council next week, then an additional amendment to the description of the district would be necessary in order to allow hotel/motel land use.

Nola Teye – would like to see the Master Plan updated first and then zoning changes made; the Onekama Township Short Term Rental zoning ordinance requires a manager to be on-call within 45 minutes and suggested this time frame should be shorter.

Marcia Rogers – where are we at with the current Master Plan. Forth stated an effort is underway to secure funding to pay a consultant to help develop the plan). How do the existing parking restrictions relate to the zoning. Mehl stated zoning usually relates only to private property; other ordinances and policies such as via the County Road Commission may influence parking. Rogers also asked if the zoning regulations also apply to the street lights. Mehl responded by stating governmental agencies and public properties wouldn't necessarily be required to comply, but some cities do try to comply with their own policies in good faith. Rogers asked what does "grandfathered" mean, does it relate to the use, and does the use need to be continuous? For example, VRBO didn't exist when the zoning was developed so how could that be allowed now. Mehl explained grandfathered uses.

Lane King – More dining and entertainment establishments are needed; more staff are needed (affordable housing is a barrier); there isn't enough happening here to sustain younger population. Forth noted that Gov. Whitmer just signed 4 bills that encourage development of workforce housing through property tax breaks.

Joseph Suchocki – "Onekama Collaborative Recovery" Effort is trying to address this issue.

Marcia Rogers – The intent of limiting development between M-22 and Portage Lake is to preserve the views that people come here for; people also come here for festivals and concerts in the summer.

Kamaloski asked that a map of commercial and commercial/residential zoning should be available for review by all during these meetings. Mehl stated generally it is the first few parcels on each side of M-22. Halloran has requested it to be posted in the hallway.

Marcia Rogers – what is the status of the platted alleys that aren't in public use? Mehl indicated vacation of a public right-of-way in a platted subdivision requires retaining the assistance of an attorney and circuit action, which typically costs \$7,000-\$10,000.

2. U.S. Department of Transportation RAISE Grant Application – The federal government is funding transportation improvements such as the sidewalks, stormwater treatment and wildlife passage under roads that many residents have requested over the years, and for which grant funding was

previously unavailable. The Planning Commission Chair and Village President will meet with MDOT representatives to see if a grant application for improvements along M-22 will be possible in 2023. Approximately 3,000 feet of sidewalk would improve pedestrian passage on the south side of M-22 from the west end of the Village Park to the Farr Center, 8 stormwater outlets should have pre-treatment prior to discharge to Portage Lake, 8 ramps are needed for accessibility between the sidewalks and streets, 3 wildlife culverts and various other improvements could be added (\$3-4 million). The cost could require the project to be phased because it will be a reimbursement-based grant where the Village would need to pay the contractor and then receive the money from the federal government afterwards. Knowing what the community would prioritize would be helpful (for example, focus on downtown first, or focus on connectivity from the east to the west end of the Village on the south side of M-22. The deadline for application submission is February 2023.

3. Annual Planning Commission Update to the Village Council – No changes to the draft report were requested so Forth indicated it will be submitted to the Village Council.
4. Update of Planning Commission Bylaws – Forth stated a draft will be prepared for review during the February 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.
5. Blighted conditions along Main Street – Halloran explained the concern of blight and the impact it is having on the community. There are properties with junk and debris and business signs for businesses that are no longer open. Forth indicated the zoning ordinance should include a provision that requires obsolete signage to be removed. Halloran expressed frustration that at least one property remains in violation (junk and debris) even after a ticket had been issued. Forth stated a civil infraction ticket results in a judgement, fine and compliance order. If the violation is still not corrected, then a show cause hearing is typically scheduled. If the violation still persists, a court order can be obtained authorizing the Village to remove the blight. It was noted the County's enforcement officer is not always available.
6. 2023 meeting schedule – Forth noted there appears to be no conflicts with meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month in 2023 so no schedule changes are needed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES)**

No comments were provided.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting the of Village of Onekama Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectively submitted,



Christopher Forth, AICP  
Chairperson