

**MINUTES**

**III. Regular Meeting - Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman McDonald at 6:00 PM.

**IV. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and led by McDonald.

**V. Roll Call**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Ralph McDonald, Vice-Chair Tony Houser, Secretary Jen Garry, Jacob Brown, Peter Lysy, Matt Pleasant, Commissioner Dan Vigansky

**ABSENT:** None

**CITY STAFF:** City Manager, Tony McGhee; Community Development Director, Rich Murphy; City Clerk, Kalla Langston

**SPECIAL GUEST:** St. Joseph City Community Development Kristen Gundersen

**VI. Approve Agenda**

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Houser to approve the agenda, as presented. Voice vote carries unanimously.

**VII. Public Comments - Agenda Items**

None.

**VIII. Approve Minutes**

**A. Minutes**

*1) Consider approving the amended minutes from March 11, 2025.*

Motion made by Houser, supported by Brown to approve the amended minutes from March 11, 2025 to include the update X.A Zoning Project roll call vote to change "1" to "2". Voice votes carry unanimously.

*2) Consider approving the regular meeting minutes from April 8, 2025.*

Motion made by Brown, supported by Lysy to approve the April 8, 2025, regular meeting minutes, as presented. Voice votes carry unanimously.

**IX. Old Business**

**X. New Business**

**A. Short-Term Rental Discussion - City Manager, Tony McGhee**

*Guest Speakers City of New Buffalo City Manager, Darwin Watson & City of St. Joseph Community Development Director, Kristen Gundersen.*

Highlighted key points of discussion are listed below.

- City of St. Joseph regulated rentals of one month plus since the 1970s; short-term rentals issues emerged in 2006-07 due to neighborhood complaints.
- Short-term rentals are allowed only in specific districts (Water Recreation, R3, Multiple Family, Downtown) not allowed in R1 residential.
- About 20 non-conforming short-term rentals exist in residential districts, grandfathered if registered within 10 days of sale.
- Short-term rentals are considered commercial use per a Michigan court ruling, subject to stricter regulations than long-term rentals.
- Registration process requires a conditional use permit, inspection, and registration fee.
- Inspections required biannually; safety requirements include smoke/CO2 detectors, fire extinguisher, evacuation map in each sleeping room.
- Occupancy capped at 4 people per sleeping room; parking requirements increase with the number of bedrooms, and must be on private property.
- Local agent required within a specified radius for out-of-town owners, must be reachable for issues.
- Advertising without a permit is prohibited; violations are fined \$1,000 (first offence), \$2500 (subsequent).
- Short-term rental leases must include owner/agent contact info, address, and specific stipulations.
- HOA's may impose stricter rules than the city ordinances.
- Short-term rentals impact housing stock, potentially reducing year-round residency and worker housing.
- State-level legislation could override local control; cities monitor legislative developments closely.
- Complaints are mostly addressed by public safety, a few issues with permitted units, and more with unpermitted rentals
- City's policy goal: maintain a year-round community, support local schools, and avoid seasonal vacancy.

Proactive approach and community impact discussed. Short-term rental impact on the community highlighted the potential loss of 50 houses. Affecting school funding by \$750,000 (assuming 1.5 kids/house, \$10,000/kid). Emphasized the need for holistic, long-term planning by the commission. Suggested possible cap on rental days (e.g., 18 days/year). Compared to the local situation in New Buffalo (47% second home/vacation properties), noting the difference. Stressed the importance of proactive policy before issues escalate. Mentioned 8-month moratorium on short-term rentals; concern about rushing policy at month 7. Discussed the balance between occasional rentals (e.g., event weekends) and frequent/empty rentals.

#### **B. On-Street Parking Discussion**

Discussion focused on the on-street parking policy during the zoning ordinance review. The current ordinance prohibits overnight on-street parking. Common approach in other communities: allow on-street parking except mid-December to mid-March (snow season), alternate sides by date (odd/even). No immediate action is required; topic to be considered in future zoning updates. Narrow streets noted as a constraint; one-sided parking suggested as a potential solution. Policy review and comments assigned as follow-up.

#### **XI. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only**

#### **XII. Community Development Director Comments**

Murphy provided zoning project update. Detailed call scheduled with Susan Henderson from Placemakers to finalize zoning ordinance draft. Staff are actively preparing and finalizing the draft.

**XIII. Commissioner Comments**

*Garry- Appreciated the discussion and getting to hear a different community's input.*

*Pleasant- Appreciated the discussion and gave an update with the tree friends picking out downtown trees.*

*Houser- Very constructive meeting, Houser will be presenting a 20-minute presentation on form-based code and use-based code as he tries to become a master citizen planner.*

*Brown- Thanked Kristen for her contribution and local expertise. The discussion was great.*

*Vigansky- Comments about the presentation being educational. Apologize for the meeting scheduled dates.*

*McDonald- Trail extension has great progress and looks beautiful. As always thanks everyone here tonight for your time and effort.*

**XIV. Adjournment**

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Houser to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 PM. Voice votes carried unanimously.