

Whitefish Township Planning Commission Minutes Regular Meeting September 17, 2025

- Regular Meeting Called to Order by Chairman Jason Hughes at 7 pm.

- Role call: Commissioners Carol Bowden, Jason Hughes, Glenn Gomery, Lynda Ferguson, Adam Krause, Present.

- 1 public attendee, Tim Domeier, present.

- Minutes: Motion by Gomery to: Approve the Minutes of August 8. 2nd by Hughes. Discussion: None. All in Favor: Five Ayes, Zero Nays. Motion carried.

- Public Comment: None.

- Proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments: Zoning Administrator West gave a summary of the ongoing proposed ZO amendments, including:

- Petition by landowner Domeier to: Change the Zoning of their parcel # 016 435 05 00 in the Timberlost / W M-123 area now zoned R1 (single family residential), to RF (recreational forest,) and Zoning Administration initiated proposed inclusion of the entire R1 district (includes a total of eight parcels) within that Timberlost / W M-123 area from the present R1 to RF zoning district, amending the Zoning District Map.
- Zoning Administration initiated Zoning Ordinance text amendments within SECTION 2.02 DEFINITIONS, and SECTION 6.10 RENTING AND LEASING:
 - Text of the proposed amended SECTION 6.10 RENTING AND LEASING is shown below:
 - *PURPOSE: The intent of this Ordinance is to preserve and retain the residential community character of the Township, so that Short-Term Rental activity permitted and regulated through this Ordinance resembles the existing traditional residential uses by resident owners and lessees, and protects and promotes the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens of Whitefish Township, as well as those visiting the area, by requiring the Registration and Licensing of Short-Term Rentals (STRs).*
 - *Short-Term Rentals provide a community benefit by expanding the number and type of lodging facilities, however, the transient nature of occupants of Short-Term Rentals can impact any neighborhood. The provisions of this Ordinance are necessary to prevent negative impacts on residential neighborhoods posed by Short-Term Rental properties, and to minimize burdens placed upon Township services.*
 - Reference: (from SECTION 2.02 DEFINITIONS:)
 - - SHORT-TERM RENTAL (STR) – The renting or leasing for a term of twenty-seven (27) days or less of an existing as of Township record December 31, 2023, home, cabin, cottage, yurt, residence, or any such habitable dwelling suitable for residential occupancy under the Michigan Building Code.
 - - DWELLING - (Residence) means one or more rooms with bathroom (privies permitted by Chippewa County Health Department Environmental Health Division included), bedroom, and kitchen facilities designed as a self-contained unit for occupancy for living, cooking and sleeping purposes.
 - *a. The Whitefish Township Board shall, by resolution from time to time, establish a Schedule of Fees for the administration of this Ordinance, and the Schedule of Fees shall be on public display in the office of the Zoning Administrator and within the Township website. Such Fees may be established and changed only by the Whitefish Township Board. No Certificate, Permit or Operating License shall be issued or renewed unless required Fees have been paid in full.*
 - *b. A cap placing a limit upon the number of Short-Term Rental Operating Licenses to be issued in the Township at thirty-five (35) is established by the 2024 Amended Zoning Ordinance SECTION 6.10. The Whitefish Township Board may, by resolution from time to time, change that number at the sole discretion of the Township Board.*
 - *c. Any Special Land Use Approval by the Planning Commission granting a Short-Term Rental Annual Operating License under SECTION 8, SPECIAL APPROVED USE REVIEW, Approves With Conditions a Special Land Use Permit for a Short-Term Rental Annual Operating License only. Operating Licenses shall be non-transferable with any arm's length change of ownership of the parcel, shall be renewed annually, and shall be subject to Application and Annual Renewal requirements per this SECTION 6.10, and Fees per paragraph a. above.*

- *d. Applications for Special Land Use Approval for Short-Term Rental Annual Operating License shall meet all requirements within this SECTION 6.10 RENTING AND LEASING, SECTION 4 ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS, and SECTION 8 SPECIAL APPROVED USE REVIEW.*
- *e. A Short Term Rental Operating License shall not be granted or approved by the Planning Commission for any dwelling on a parcel with Recorded Deed Restrictions prohibiting such commercial use, whether by Subdivision, Condominium, or Homeowners Association Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions, or any Recorded Deed Restrictions that prohibit commercial use of the parcel.*
- *f. A home inspection report completed by a certified home inspector stating that the proposed Short-Term Rental dwelling meets the State of Michigan Building Code for transient residential occupancy shall be required with all Applications, including documentation of the presence and operation of smoke detectors, CO detectors, and a minimum of one rated fire extinguisher on each floor of the dwelling.*
- *g. A current Water Certificate of Analysis, including bacteria and nitrate analysis results shall be provided with all Applications.*
- *h. Running water and a functioning septic system shall be provided, maintained, monitored, and reported as specified herein to the Township by any Licensee owner or operator of a Short-Term Rental dwelling.*
- *i. A septic inspection report shall be completed every three years and provided by the Licensee during the appropriate year's annual renewal.*
- *j. Quarterly Water Certificate of Analysis, (bacteria) and annual nitrate analysis shall be maintained by the Licensee owner or operator, and provided at each annual renewal. Seasonal rental parcel owners missing winter reports must state so at annual renewal. Failure to maintain or to provide quarterly water test reports at annual renewal may result in suspension or non-renewal of an Annual Operating License.*
- *k. Only one (1) dwelling unit per parcel shall be eligible for a Short-Term Rental Operating License. All lodging by renters on a parcel with a Short-Term Rental Operating License must be within the dwelling unit and not in an accessory building, accessory dwelling unit, recreational vehicle, camper or tent.*
- *l. All parking associated with a Short-Term Rental parcel must be out of the roadway and entirely on-site.*
- *m. There shall be no more occupant renters than two (2) times the number of sleeping rooms or bedrooms in the dwelling unit, unless an Applicant demonstrates that the dwelling unit is suited to accommodate more guests.*
- *n. A local point of contact person shall be specified in Applications and Annual Renewals to respond to emergencies and questions or concerns of the guest, the Township, or another person or entity that may need to address a local person with the Licensee's authority to take remedial action and respond to any violation of this Ordinance, or other matters.*
- *o. Pets or other animals of renters of a Short-Term Rental parcel must be in compliance with Chippewa County Animal Control Ordinance, and SECTION 6.04 REGULATION OF ANIMALS. Whitefish Township does not enforce the Ordinances of Chippewa County. However, any verified citations by Chippewa County may be taken into consideration in the Application approval and renewal process.*
- *p. One sign on the parcel may identify the STR, shall not exceed six (6) square feet, and shall not be illuminated or have working parts, in accordance with SECTION 10 SIGN REGULATIONS.*
- *q. Secure trash receptacles and weekly trash removal services must be provided by the owner Licensee, and the method of disposal (transfer station or commercial pickup) specified in Applications.*
- *r. Annual Renewal Applications including required documentation, and the Annual Renewal Fee shall be provided by Licensees to the Zoning Administrator by December 31st of each year. The STR Operating License form is available in the Township Office and on the website, Departments > Planning and Zoning > Zoning Forms and Ordinances > Short-Term Rental Operating License Annual Renewal.*

- s. *The Zoning Administrator shall furnish the Planning Commission, at its first Regular Meeting of each year, with information detailing the status of all Short-Term Rental Operating Licenses, to include: The total number of STR Operating Licenses; The Annual Renewals received to date; Licensees delinquent or late in Annual Renewal, or lacking required water test reports; The number of STR Operating Licenses available under the present cap; A summary of documentation of all STR Ordinance Violation Complaints received the previous year; and, The outcome of investigations of complaints. The Planning Commission shall review the documentation and take lawful action as it may determine.*
- t. *The Planning Commission shall identify, document, and report to the Whitefish Township Board in the Meeting Minutes of the first Regular Meeting of each year the number of Licensed Short-Term Rentals and the number of available Operating Licenses.*
- u. *Each of the above SECTION 6.10 requirements of this Ordinance shall apply as Conditions of Approval for any new Application for Special Land Use Approval for STR Annual Operating License Granted or Approved by the Planning Commission beyond the date of this Ordinance amendment.*

- Motion by Gomery to: Schedule a Public Hearing for the Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments. 2nd by Ferguson. Discussion: None. All in Favor: Five Ayes, Zero Nays. Motion carried.

- Mandeville Application for Special Land Use Approval: Commissioners performed their Initial Review of the application. Motion by Gomery to: Schedule a Public Hearing for the Mandeville application October 29th 7 pm. 2nd by Ferguson. Discussion: None. All in Favor: Five Ayes, Zero Nays. Motion carried.

- Motion by Hughes to: Schedule four 2026 Regular Meetings, March 18th, June 17th, September 16th and December 9th, 2026, at 7pm. 2nd by Gomery. Discussion: None. All in Favor: Five Ayes, Zero Nays. Motion carried.

- Motion by Hughes to: Adjourn. 2nd by Gomery. Discussion: None. All in Favor: Five Ayes, Zero Nays. Motion carried.

- Regular Meeting adjourned 7:37 pm

Approval Signatures: