Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2025

**Members present**

Audie Wykle, Director of Regional Planning

Michael Linton, Hocking County Commissioner

Steve Buckley

Jim Kilbarger

Stacey Howe

David Baird, American Structure Point

**Minutes**

* Mr. Wykle asked for a motion to approve last month’s minutes. Motion made by Mr. Linton to approve, second by Mr. Buckley. All in favor, motion carries.
* Mr. Wykle asked for a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Motion made by Mr. Linton, second by Ms. Howe. All in favor, motion carries.
* Mr. Wykle stated that one of the concerns being voiced by members of the public since the last meeting is the fee amounts. He explained that those fees have not been decided yet, the fees will be put in place with the goal to only cover expenses and nothing more. Mr. Baird with American Structure Point added that they have researched similar areas that have short-term rentals to compare. The plan is to be open about what the fee amount is before any ordinance is adopted.
* Mr. Baird’s presentation today and in the agenda is a preliminary review of items that have been identified to be part of the proposed regulations. It is not draft regulations, but items that have been previously discussed.
  + Mr. Baird stated that it is important to get the details of the ordinance right now in the draft process.
  + American Structure Point has organized an outline of what the ordinances would look like.
  + 4 items that have been identified that regulations will be created for:
    - **Short-term rental permit**
    - **Impact fees**
    - **Special event permit**
      * Will be working with first responders
    - **Site standards for specific uses**
* Mr. Baird explained that there are certain terms that should be defined within the ordinances.
  + The difference between a road and a driveway. A road is anything that is publicly maintained for automobiles or other vehicles regardless of what level of government is maintained by. A driveway is privately maintained.
* Items required to obtain a **short-term rental permit**:
  + A 24-hour contact person living in Hocking County
  + Numbering requirements for addresses
    - Coordinate with the Mapping office on where the unit is, so that when first responders come out, they know which building exactly to go to
    - Example: providing a site plan and signage at the site so responders know which direction to go (if there are multiple cabins back a long private driveway).
    - Addressing needs to be standardized and consistent
* Occupancy limits & building code standards
  + This does not necessarily mean that a building inspector would need to be hired. However, Mr. Baird explained that in other jurisdictions with short-term rental permits, for larger units, they require that an registered engineer signs off on the decks that are on the unit to say that it was built for a certain stability.
  + The occupancy limits are mainly for the number of people that are sleeping the unit
  + The permit would be required for existing structures, not just new builds.
    - An existing structure with a deck, the owner would need to hire a licensed and bonded building inspector to evaluate the deck and the maximum capacity of the deck.
    - Mr. Buckley stated that it should be for the decks, balconies, and treehouses because some of the approaches have steps or swinging bridges to the treehouses with then a lot more people are in them.
* Platform requirement
  + Tax money would go directly to the county instead of VRBO, Air BnB, etc. and having to go to court to get that funding
  + This requirement is not to remove local providers as an option
* Mr. Wykle explained that what is being proposed with these ordinances doesn’t ban any use, it just puts conditions on the use.
* Noise & nuisance control
  + Mr. Baird stated that it is his recommendation that a county-wide noise and nuisance control ordinance be established outside of the short-term rental permit. A decibel level would need to be established, and then a meter to measure it. Mr. Baird explained that it would need to be measured off of the property line, and there typically is a standard decibel.
  + Mr. Buckley explained that he would like to know the decibel level and may need to have set hours. Mr. Baird explained that it could be broken down into short noise vs. long noise.
* Proof of insurance
* Notice of rules & requirements
  + Short-term rental owners need to provide rules to their renters
  + Mr. Baird explained that there needs to be a discussion with the County attorney regarding contract dispute vs. assault.
    - Example: Short-term rental tenant is evicted and causes a scene, doesn’t leave the property. Sheriff’s Office viewed the incident as a contract issue.
    - Mr. Baird researched, and found a policy for the City of Columbus, OH which says if there are 3 or more calls emergency calls for service (within a 12-month timeframe) then the short-term rental permit is suspended.
* Driveway requirements
* Mr. Baird would like to have clarification on what equipment first responders have that they would be bringing onto the driveways, so a minimum driveway standard can be established. What is the infrastructure that the fire department or EMS needs or is using.
* Mr. Baird explained that there needs to be an objective standard for driveways. Also to establish a standard for a parking area.
* Mr. Baird explained that one major difference between Gatlinburg, TN and Hocking County is that the majority of the cabins are accessed through paved, maintained roads. Hocking County does not have that.
* **Site standards**
  + Commercial businesses = uses where you invite the public in or employing people
  + Industrial uses = not typically open to the public but could still impact a neighbor (ex: salvage yard)
  + The purpose of site standards is to protect the neighboring property. Preventative standards to ensure that nuisances are less likely to occur.
* **Impact fees**
  + American Structure Point will meet with Engineers to create a formula on how to cover the impact on utilities (water, sewer, road infrastructure)
  + Mr. Linton asked if there are any financial models that could be evaluated in order to establish the fees. Mr. Baird explained that there are, and they will look into them.
* **Special event permit**
  + That is shifting to the EMA, but American Structure Point will provide consulting if needed
* Next steps
  + Meet with fire/EMS provider, County Auditor, Mapping Department
  + Follow up meeting with the County Prosecutor
  + Mr. Wykle will be setting up those meetings.
  + After the above meetings are held, then draft ordinances will be written.
  + Mr. Baird explained that after the draft is complete, it can go to the Zoning Commission for review, then the County Commissioners for review before taking the draft to a public meeting.
* Mr. Wykle explained that Scott has researched what Gatlinburg, TN requires for short-term rentals
  + Sevier County, TN is zoned, and they are stringent on short-term rental rules and regulations.
  + The short-term rental permit fee is $250 per year, and you are required every year to have an inspection.
  + In comparison, the requirements that Hocking County is looking to adopt is not as stringent as Gatlinburg or other areas that have a large number of short-term rentals.
  + Since 2015, short-term rentals have gone up 5-6 times. Sevier County, TN has 25,000 short-term rentals so even with the requirements, no one is being put out of business.
* Mr. Wykle asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Mr. Linton, second by Mr. Buckley. All in favor, motion passes.

**Upcoming Meetings**

* **July 31, 2025 @ 2:00 PM**

*Minutes respectfully* submitted *by Hannah Montgomery, MPH, REHS*