

Corporation of Harpers Ferry Ordinance Review Committee
Minutes of Special Meeting, January 8, 2026
Town Hall, Harpers Ferry

Members present: Kevin Carden, Chair

Christian Pechuekonis

Chris Craig, Taking minutes

Others present: Pat Morse, Office Administrator

Call to order: Kevin Carden called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

Agenda: *Mr. Craig moved to accept the agenda as presented; Mr. Pechuekonis seconded; passed 3-0.*

Approval of minutes: *Mr. Carden moved to approve the September 26, 2025 minutes as presented. Mr. Craig seconded; passed 3-0.*

New business –

1. Discussion and Action on adding a third zoning category to the zoning ordinances and map.

Mr. Craig reported on his meeting with Planning Commission about the purpose of this request of ORC. It was a suggestion coming out of the Comprehensive Plan work, and it seeks to provide better protection for the public lands currently not zoned in our ordinances and on our map. After much discussion, there was consensus that the best name for these green areas on the zoning map would be "Public Use and Environmental Conservation Zone." All members agreed to work on draft language needed for Ordinance Article 1310 as well as introductory and usage language for a new article (1314), using the present articles on residential and business zones as a model. Once ORC comes to agreement on draft language it will be presented to Council. They felt it is likely the Planning will need to be involved in the future for possible additions to this new zone, possibly including town parks, paper streets, and cemeteries.

2. Discussion and Action on historic signage.

The Board of Zoning Appeals requested ORC work on possible town code about to give guidance on private and organizational signage, including historical markers and commemorative signage. Though such signage is presently a valued part of the Harpers Ferry community, future concerns could be foreseen related to an overabundance, solicitation of donations, or slanted views. After much discussion, it was determined that Ordinance Article 1316 (Signage) would be the appropriate location for additions. All members agreed to list possible concerns for this new category within signage and to draft language that might address those concerns. These ideas will be discussed at the next ORC meeting.

3. Discussion and Action on nomination, appointment, and terms of town boards, commissions, and committees.

Mr. Craig presented a revision of a chart the former ORC chair had begun organizing town ordinances' guidance on these issues for town governmental bodies. This led to much discussion about the need for more alignment of terms for the various bodies, as well as more clarity in language about the appointment process. Mr. Carden agreed to contact the town lawyer with a question about the mayor's appointment to the Planning Commission, and whether that appointment should be confirmed by the council. All members agreed to look at the various

ordinances and see how they might be altered to meet the above goals, but without violating state code.

4. Discussion and Action on Ordinance 1312.02, concerning permitted and conditional uses within the business district.

The Mayor and Council referred this article to ORC, with specific concern about the present requirement the restaurants (a permitted use in the business district) be at least 25 feet from any abutting lot in a residential district. Presently two town businesses likely violate this setback requirement. There was extensive discussion on the added protection this language gives to town residents and whether it is needed.

Mr. Craig moved to delete the language "provided any such Structure shall be at least 25 feet from any Abutting Lot in a Residential District" from 1312.02(a)(2) and be prepared for first reading at the next possible council meeting. Mr. Pechuekonis seconded; passed 3-0.

5. Discussion and action on changing the title or Ordinance Compliance Officer to Code Enforcement Officer.

The Council changed the title of the Ordinance Compliance Officer to Code Enforcement Officer at its November meeting. However, numerous ordinances refer to the old title and somehow need to be adjusted.

Mr. Carden moved to change the language in Ordinance Article 126 to Code Enforcement Officer, along with an ordinance provision that states that all other mentions of the older title be covered by the new name. Mr. Craig seconded; passed 3-0.

Mr. Carden will prepare these changes to present for first reading at the next possible Council meeting.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of ORC was set for 5:30 pm, Wednesday, Feb. 4.

Adjournment. *Mr. Craig moved to adjourn. Mr. Pechuekonis seconded; passed 3-0.*
The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Minutes approved on _____.

Kevin Carden, ORC Chair