

Corporation of Harpers Ferry Ordinance Review Committee
Minutes of Special Meeting, July 9, 2026
Town Hall, Harpers Ferry

Members present: Kevin Carden, Chair

Christian Pechuekonis

Chris Craig, Taking minutes

Others present: Karen Sagisi, Dark Sky Committee Chair

Call to order: Kevin Carden called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Agenda: *Mr. Craig moved to accept the agenda moving New Business item 4 to immediately follow approval of minutes and changing "sign permits" to signed permits" on Unfinished business item #4. Mr. Carden seconded; passed 2-0.*

Approval of minutes: *Mr. Craig moved to approve the April 29, 2026 minutes as presented. Mr. Carden seconded; passed 2-0.*

Unfinished business –

1. Discussion and action on proposed Ordinance 2026-04, Signs, pertaining to historic and solicitation signage.

This ordinance was sent back to ORC by the Town Council at its first reading to find language that would avoid display of solicitation signage after its 60 days of permitted use. The group found consensus on such language, and Mr. Carden will amend the draft and take to Council for first reading.

Mr. Craig moved to amend ORC's draft of Ordinance 2026-04 to clarify the posting of solicitation signs as presented. Mr. Pechuekonis seconded; passed 3-0.

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

There was again discussion on the most efficient way to alter the language of several ordinance articles. It was agreed that, to avoid confusion, each article will need to be amended individually. Mr. Craig will type up the changes previously agreed upon and send to Mr. Carden to use in preparing the drafts for first reading.

3. Discussion and Action on changes to Section 1303.07 concerning expiration of signed permits.

Mr. Craig presented his proposed changes to this ordinance, which had proven acceptable to the town Compliance Enforcement Officer. All agreed that this would be acceptable to prepare for first reading.

Mr. Craig moved to recommend the amendment to Section 1303.07 as submitted to Town Council. Mr. Pechuekonis seconded; passed 3-0.

4. Discussion and Action on proposed Dark Sky Ordinance.

Ms. Sagisi presented the 5th draft of her committee's proposed dark sky ordinance. This draft added several definitions to what was presented earlier to ORC, slightly altered the language regarding environmental impact statements, and placed definitions earlier in the draft. All members of ORC felt this addressed their previous questions and concerns regarding the draft.

There was additional discussion on where to place the ordinance in town code and where the illustrations should be included, and all agreed that the text should be included in Part 13 (zoning regulations) with the illustrations included in Appendix A.

Mr. Craig moved approval of the Dark Sky Ordinance by ORC as presented and that the ORC chair be authorized to prepare its draft for first reading. Mr. Pechuekonis seconded; passed 3-0.

New Business –

1. Discussion and action on Section 1109.02(a)(1), to define “brush pile” and amend the definition of “debris.”

There were several questions among ORC members on the purpose of this request and what is needed. Mr. Carden agreed to speak with the town Compliance Enforcement Officer and/or the Mayor about this prior to any ORC action.

2. Discussion on 2026 Senate Bill 659, which enacted West Virginia Code §§ 8-40 / 8-42.

This bill, passed by the state legislature in its 2026 session, overrules Harpers Ferry’s ban on accessory dwelling units on developed lots and greatly restricts town regulation of such structures. There was extensive discussion on the implications of the bill and what the town’s response should be. Mr. Carden agreed to include news about the bill in his report to the July Council meeting, seeking future guidance.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Ordinance Review Committee is to be determined.

Adjournment. *Mr. Craig moved to adjourn. Mr. Pechuekonis seconded; passed 3-0.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Minutes approved on _____.

Kevin Carden, ORC Chair