Corporation of Harpers Ferry Ordinance Review Committee
Minutes of Special Meeting, September 24, 2026
Town Hall, Harpers Ferry

Members present: Kevin Carden, Chair
Christian Pechuekonis
Chris Craig, Taking minutes
Others present: None

Call to order: Kevin Carden called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

Agenda: The agenda was accepted without changes.

Approval of minutes: *Mr. Pechuekonis moved to approve the August 31, 2026 minutes as presented. Mr. Craig seconded; passed 3-0.*

Unfinished business –

1. **Discussion and Action on 2026 Senate Bill 659, which enacted West Virginia Code § 8-42.**
   Mr. Pechuekonis presented his findings of conflicts between SB 659 and Harpers Ferry code in matters of water service and other utilities. The main conflict is that HF Article 905 requires that separate dwelling units have separate meters and taps. SB 659 disallows this requirement.
   Mr. Craig reported on his examination of HF Ordinance Section 13 and possible conflicts with SB 659. He was encouraged that most town zoning restrictions and its standards and guidelines could likely still be enforced. However, due to SB 659 allowing accessory dwelling units' gross floor area of up to 75% of the main dwelling unit on the lot or up to 1000 sq. ft., whichever is less, the size restrictions for accessory buildings in town code would likely need to be rewritten. Mr. Craig also listed language in section 13 that might need to be examined for conflicts: 1302 (definitions), 1304.02 d and e, 1304.03, 1311.02 a, Appendix A standards #1, #4, #5, and #6 (p. 11), p. 13 #6, p. 12-13, p. 19 (driveways and parking), p. 24 (outbuildings) #1 and guideline #1, p. 31 (new construction), and p. 36-37 (roofs).
   Mr. Carden agreed to take the list to the town attorney to receive his counsel on needed amendments to HF Code.

New business –

1. **Discussion and action on development of a Town charter.**
   Mr. Carden noted that due to new state requirements, town elections must be synchronized with county elections and administered by county staff on or before January 1, 2032. With some council interest shown in longer, rotating council terms, Mr. Craig suggested one possibility would be to alter terms for the 2027 town election, so that the winners of the mayoral and recorder elections would hold three-year terms, the two council candidates receiving the highest number votes serve three-year terms, and the three council candidates receiving the next highest number of votes serve one-year terms. Mr. Carden questioned whether this would be legal in West Virginia. He agreed to take the idea to the town attorney for advice, along with suggestions on adoption of a town charter. Mr. Pechuekonis and Mr. Craig agreed to study other WV town charters, particularly Charles Town's charter to get ideas of what might be included in a charter for Harpers Ferry.

2. **Discussion on formalizing Parking Committee into Town ordinances.**
   Mr. Pechuekonis stated his opinion that the parking committee should be codified in Harpers Ferry ordinances and his reasons for believing so. Mr. Carden agreed to place this matter on the October Council agenda to see if the council would like to send this task to ORC.

3. **Discussion on future meetings and topics.**
   Section 1109.02(a)(1), regarding definitions of brush pile and debris has already been sent to ORC. Mr. Carden will visit with the mayor about his concern and what the amendments need to accomplish.
   There was additional discussion about the confusion caused by the inclusion of certificates of appropriateness (COAs) in Article 131 (Historic Landmarks Commission). Mr. Craig outlined the history of the town zoning ordinance and how its adoption negated the need for COAs. It was agreed action on this matter would be delayed until ORC makes progress on other pressing matters.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Ordinance Review Committee will be at 7 pm, Tues., October 13.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Minutes approved on _____.

Kevin Carden, ORC Chair