



HOCKING COUNTY  
ZONING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes  
January 30, 2025

**Members present**

Audie Wykle

Rob Beiter

Steve Buckley

Bruce Ebert

Jim Kilbarger

Michael Linton, Hocking County Commissioner

John Fuller

**Minutes**

- Mr. Wykle asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 2024 meeting. Mr. Buckley made a motion to approve, Mr. Ebert second. All vote in favor, motion passes.
- December meeting was a presentation completed by David Baird with American Structure Point.
- Short-term renter stake holder meeting held yesterday 1-29-25 at the Logan Theatre from 2-4 PM. Mr. Wykle stated that the meeting was well attended.
- Mr. Baird with American Structure Point presentation providing updates
  - Zoning survey had over 400 responses. The most populated township (38%) where respondents were from was Falls township.
  - 68% of respondents want zoning to slow the growth of short-term rentals. 2/3 of respondents were concerned that the county would turn into another Gatlinburg.
  - Goal of the township meetings and remaining public meeting is asking for them to tell us what their problem(s) are, because if we can understand what the problem is then the consultant can try to provide a solution. Mr. Baird stated that there seems to be a disconnect with what the perceived solution is when in reality it could be something that's less intrusive.
- Mr. Wykle explained that we've received a large amount of feedback from the stakeholder meetings and the monthly meetings with individuals from the public attending. The feedback that we've heard are surprising, but underlines what the group has been thinking. Individuals who have lived in Hocking County their whole lives have some disappointment and concern that they don't have some input into what happens or the effects that development may have.



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- Mr. Beiter asked if, based on the community's input so far, do we need to shift from a zoning aspect to more building regulations.
  - Mr. Baird displayed on the presentation to the group that are regulation options that can be done that are not zoning by state law, and can be passed on a quicker basis.
- Mr. Buckley also stated that the amount of survey respondents (400) was not close to the population amount of Hocking County, which is almost 28,000. There are ~16,000 registered voters in Hocking County that are either apathetic, don't care, or didn't see the survey. He feels that there wasn't much opinion or information gathered from the survey.
  - Mr. Baird that he takes a different view on it. He thinks the term in the survey "no zoning" was interpreted by the public as "no regulation". In hindsight, the question could have been asked in that way. But at the time it was not an issue that was perceived at that time. Mr. Wykle explained that the intention of the zoning survey was to get an understanding or feel of what the public's feeling was.
  - Mr. Baird and Mr. Wykle both stated that the number of responses received was higher than expected. There were responses received from each township, and while Falls township had the most responses, it is the higher populated township of the county.
- Mr. Baird stated that the next option is to have a permit in place for short-term rentals, for the purposes of contact information. After speaking to the bed tax administrator, minimal contact information is submitted to them. When a short-term rental is listed, they do not have to put down a phone number or contact information for a 24-hour contact.
  - Mr. Fuller asked if the permit fee would go directly to the county or be split between the townships. Mr. Baird stated that the best person to answer that would be the bed tax administrator. Mr. Wykle stated it's not so much as the fee as much as the permit needs to be put into place. Mr. Baird stated there are some new apps and technology that can be looked into that help locate an individual if an address can't be found.
  - Mr. Linton asked if there is currently a permitting process for short-term rentals. Mr. Wykle answered that it is currently a registration process. Mr. Linton asked for clarification if there is a review or checkbox for ingress, egress, etc. Mr. Baird stated that there currently is no permit or true review, and there might need to be but we aren't currently at that point yet. Mr. Fuller agreed that the ingress and egress is important to be looked at.



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- Mr. Baird explained that there are options to meet what the county needs in regards to standards that may not require the full zoning process. That is not the recommendation of American Structure Point at this time, but that is the approach that they will be utilizing going into the township meetings.
  - Mr. Baird stated that after speaking with the assistant County Prosecutor, and they are in agreement that where the line passes to “zoning” legally by Ohio state law, is where something is outright prohibited on a piece of property. For example, passing an ordinance that states “no mobile home parks on that property” would be zoning. But if you list 10-11 site standards, and the owner could still put the mobile home park on the property, that is not zoning.
  - Property maintenance; impact fees (water & sewer, road maintenance, etc.) are options for the county without being considered “zoning”. Mr. Linton asked if the impact fees are something that the County Commissioners would have the ability to vote on based on the financial impact on emergency services, for example. Mr. Baird explained that something can be placed in the ordinance where the applicant would have to fund an engineering study that the Commissioner’s select, based on a specific criterion decided by the County to calculate the cost of the impact.
  - Mr. Baird stated there are some laws that tie where the impact fees are assessed to ensure that the money goes at that location. The details of that would need to be discussed with an attorney/legal team to make sure the process is handled correctly.
- Mr. Baird met with the bed tax administrator. To date, there are approximately 607 businesses registered-that is not units. Some of the businesses could have multiple units. Mr. Linton added that there are approximately 1900 total units. 30-35 people are delinquent on tax, which means over 90 days. Then there are 13 properties that the bed tax administrator is working with the county Prosecutor on for legal options.
  - Mr. Baird stated that based on other counties that he has worked in, the compliance rate is pretty high.
  - Mr. Baird also explained about the software program that the bed tax administrator uses appears to function well, as it searches websites and provides reports.

## Upcoming Meetings



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