



CITY OF IONIA
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
4:30 PM, Thursday, September 11, 2025
IONIA CITY HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of Agenda

IV. Approval of Minutes

1. August 13, 2025 – Regular Meeting

V. Public Comments

VI. Public Hearings and Associated Action

1. Public Hearing to receive comments on Ordinance No. 598 to create Chapter 1294: Short-Term Rentals
Action Required – Recommendation for City Council to approve or reject Ordinance No. 598.

VII. Old Business

VIII. New Business

1. City of Ionia 2025-2030 Master Plan
2. Planning Commission Training Opportunity

IX. Commissioner Comments

X. Adjournment

Next Meeting - October 8, 2025

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY: The City of Ionia Planning Commission encourages public comment on agenda and non-agenda items. Those desiring to speak should do so under Public Comments at the beginning of the meeting. After that point during the meeting public comments are not normally allowed. The Chairperson may limit the amount of time allowed for each person wishing to make comments during the meeting.



CITY OF IONIA
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
4:30 PM, Wednesday, August 13, 2025
IONIA CITY HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Bailey called the meeting of the Ionia Planning Commission to order at 4:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call revealed a Quorum with Planning Commissioners Logan Bailey, Michael Donaldson, Ryan Gregory, Keturah Kelley, Tim Lee, and Judy Swartz present. Commissioner Jason Perry was absent.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Bailey introduced the agenda and asked if there were any requested changes. Planning Commissioner Lee made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Swartz, to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(IV.1.) July 9, 2025 – Regular Meeting

Minutes from the regular meeting of July 9 were reviewed. Planning Commissioner Kelley made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Lee, to approve the July 9, 2025, meeting minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eric Asher (1938 Harwood Road) commented to the Planning Commission on the future development of the Deerfield-Riverside property, as an adjacent landowner. He cited potential environmental and noise concerns, and requested the Commission to keep these in mind when development occurs. Mr. Asher also expressed interest in the expansion of utilities on Harwood Road.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACTION

(VI.1.) High-Tech Business Park Zoning

Assistant City Manager Bowman summarized the steps taken by the City to acquire 80 acres of land for a future high-tech business park. Bowman emphasized that the land was previously owned by the State of Michigan and not zoned. He explained that, in order to prepare the property to be redeveloped, it is necessary to assign a zoning classification.

The Commission asked questions about the proposal and discussed the impact future development may have on the area.

Chairperson Bailey opened the public hearing at 4:50 PM.

Eric Asher (1938 Harwood Road) advised the Commission to consider truck traffic on Harwood Road and potential light pollution from future development. He indicated that he was looking forward to the redevelopment of the property.

Chairperson Bailey closed the public hearing at 4:56 PM.

Planning Commissioner Kelley made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Gregory, to recommend approval of Ordinance No. 597 by City Council to assign the T-Technology Innovation Business District zoning classification to 80-acres of land owned by the City of Ionia on Harwood Road.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

(VIII.1.) Steele Park - Final Site Plan Presentation

Assistant City Manager Bowman presented a site plan for the Planning Commission to review for the creation of Steele Park.

The Commission asked questions about the design and provided feedback.

Planning Commissioner Lee made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Gregory, to approve the final site plan for Steele Park.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(VIII.2.) Request to Reschedule September Planning Commission Meeting

Chairperson Bailey requested to reschedule the September Planning Commission meeting, due to an event scheduled at the same time to raise money for the Ionia Community Library Foundation. Bailey noted that all Commissioners were invited to the event.

Planning Commissioner Kelley made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Swartz, to reschedule the September Planning Commission meeting to Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 4:30 PM.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(VIII.3.) Short-Term Rentals

Bowman presented a draft ordinance for short-term rentals. He explained the need for the Zoning Code to define short-term rentals and permit them in designated zoning districts. Bowman further informed the Commission that City Council would be reviewing the City's Rental Registration Program, and that it is necessary to add short-term rentals.

The Commission discussed the desired zoning districts to permit short-term rentals and the impact on surrounding neighborhoods. It was mentioned that the ordinance would not allow short-term rentals in accessory dwelling units.

Planning Commissioner Donaldson made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Kelley, to assign an ordinance number and schedule a public hearing for the next Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 4:30 PM at Ionia City Hall.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None.

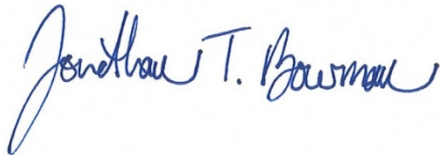
X. ADJOURNMENT

Planning Commissioner Kelley made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Swartz, to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan T. Bowman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.

Jonathan T. Bowman, Recording Secretary
for Judy Swartz, Secretary



CITY OF IONIA

STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: VI.1

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Jonathan Bowman, Assistant City Manager

DATE: September 11, 2025

RE: Public Hearing to receive comments on Ordinance No. 598 to create Chapter 1294: Short-Term Rentals

Background:

A part-time rental inspector was hired to administer the City's Rental Registration Program. As dedicated staff take over this program, a comprehensive review was conducted by City Staff and the City Attorney to evaluate if any updates are needed. The rental program is outlined in Chapter 858 "Renting of Residential Property" and was originally adopted in 1990 with revisions made in 2014.

At present, the City Code is silent on short-term rentals. Staff have historically treated short-term rentals (STRs) the same as any other rental property. The City Attorney has recommended adding short-term rentals to City Code to explicitly define operations and appropriate zoning districts. Short-term rentals have been a growing issue across the state, typically in areas with a high level of tourism, i.e. lake communities. Ionia has received interest in short-term rentals, but it has not been a pressing issue. However, recent conversations about the lack of hotel options in the City have led to short-term rentals being considered a reasonable alternative.

The drafted zoning ordinance creates definitions related to short-term rentals and designates specific zones for this use to be allowed as a use-by-right. Feedback from Planning Commission is requested on the zones in which short-term rentals would be allowed. The proposed ordinance allows for short-term rentals in most zones that allow residential uses, including: LDR, MDR, HDR, B-2, and B-3. Section 1294.02 of the ordinance prohibits STRs under certain conditions. As an example, the ordinance would not allow an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) to be used as an STR.

After Planning Commission makes a recommendation on this ordinance, City Council will also review regulatory guidelines related to the Rental Registration Program.

Requested Action / Motion:

It is requested that the Planning Commission conduct a public hearing and decide whether to recommend that City Council approve or reject Ordinance No. 598, an ordinance to amend Chapter 1240, Section 1240.11; enact a new Chapter 1294 entitled "Short-Term Rentals"; amend Chapter 1248, Section 1248.02; amend Chapter 1250, Section 1250.02; amend Chapter 1252, Section 1252.02; amend Chapter 1258, Section 1258.02; and amend Chapter 1260, Section 1260.02 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ionia.

Motion By:

Seconded By:

CITY OF IONIA
IONIA COUNTY, MICHIGAN
(Ordinance No. 598)

At a regular meeting of City Council for the City of Ionia, Michigan held at City Hall on _____, 2025, beginning at 6:30 P.M., City Council Member _____ made a motion to adopt this Ordinance, which by motion was supported by Council Member _____.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 1240, SECTION 1240.11; ENACT A NEW CHAPTER 1294 ENTITLED “SHORT-TERM RENTALS”; AMEND CHAPTER 1248, SECTION 1248.02; AMEND CHAPTER 1250, SECTION 1250.02; AMEND CHAPTER 1252, SECTION 1252.02; AMEND CHAPTER 1258, SECTION 1258.02; AND AMEND CHAPTER 1260, SECTION 1260.02 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF IONIA.

The CITY OF IONIA (the “City”) HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. Amendment to Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1240, Section 1240.11. Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1240, Section 1240.11, Subsection 102, including its subparts, of the Codified Ordinances is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

- (102) Setback: The distance required to obtain front, side or rear yard open space provisions of this Zoning Code.
- (102a) Short-term rental (“STR”) activity: The renting or leasing of a dwelling unit for compensation for a term between and including 1 night to 27 nights consecutively, where STR activity shall not be considered to include the following:
- A. Renting a bedroom on a non-commercial basis in an owner-occupied single-family residential home;
 - B. Transitional houses operated by a charitable organization;
 - C. Group homes such as nursing homes and adult-foster-care homes;
 - D. Substance-abuse rehabilitation clinics;
 - E. Mental-health facilities; and
 - F. Other similar health-care related facilities.
- (102b) Short-term rental (“STR”) dwelling unit: A dwelling unit for which the City has lawfully issued a registration for renting or leasing for STR activity.

(102c) Short-term rental (“STR”) property: Any lot, parcel or property on which at least one STR dwelling unit exists.

Section 2. Enactment of Chapter 1294. Part Twelve, Title Six of the Codified Ordinances is hereby amended to enact a new Chapter 1294 to read in its entirety as follows:

1294.01 FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

The City Council finds that while short-term rentals (“STRs”) provide positive benefits to tourism within the City, there are also potential problems and negative consequences associated with STRs. The purpose of this chapter is to establish standards and procedures to regulate STRs within the City to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the community, considering the potential benefits and consequences related to STRs.

1294.02 PROHIBITION.

None of the following shall be used as an STR property nor be rented or leased for use, habitation, or lodging for STR activity:

- (a) A tent, bunkhouse, shed, barracks, or similar structure.
- (b) A dwelling unit or structure that does not meet all applicable height, bulk, size, setback, and other requirements set forth in Appendix I, Schedule of Regulations.
- (c) A dwelling unit that was unlawfully built, expanded, or modified.
- (d) A camping trailer, recreation vehicle, popup trailer, bus, motorhome, or similar vehicle.
- (e) An accessory dwelling unit (ADU), as set forth in Section 1286.14.
- (f) A dwelling unit that has not been validly registered with the City as an STR dwelling unit.
- (g) A dwelling unit or structure that does not comply with all applicable requirements of this Zoning Code, building, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical codes, and the International Fire Prevention Code and International Property Maintenance Code that have been adopted by the City.

Section 3. Amendment to Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1248, Section 1248.02. Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1248, Section 1248.02 entitled “Principal Uses Permitted” of the Codified Ordinances is hereby amended to add a new subsection for the Low-Density Residential District as follows:

- (k) Short-term rental dwelling units subject to Chapter 1294.

Section 4. Amendment to Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1250, Section 1250.02. Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1250, Section 1250.02 entitled “Principal Uses Permitted” of the Codified

Ordinances is hereby amended to add a new subsection for the Medium Density Residential District as follows:

(l) Short-term rental dwelling units subject to Chapter 1294.

Section 5. Amendment to Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1252, Section 1252.02. Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1252, Section 1252.02 entitled “Principal Uses Permitted” of the Codified Ordinances is hereby amended to add a new subsection for the High-Density Residential District as follows:

(i) Short-term rental dwelling units subject to Chapter 1294.

Section 6. Amendment to Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1258, Section 1258.02. Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1258, Section 1258.02 entitled “Principal Uses Permitted” of the Codified Ordinances is hereby amended to add a new subsection for the B-2 Central Business District as follows:

(e) Short-term rental dwelling units subject to Chapter 1294.

Section 7. Amendment to Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1260, Section 1260.02. Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1260, Section 1260.02 entitled “Principal Uses Permitted” of the Codified Ordinances is hereby amended to add a new subsection for the B-3 General Business District as follows:

(ff) Short-term rental dwelling units subject to Chapter 1294.

Section 8. Severability. Should any portion of this Ordinance be declared to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such declaration shall not affect any other portion or provision of this Ordinance, which shall remain valid and in full force and effect.

Section 9. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective upon the expiration of seven (7) days after this Ordinance’s adoption, or a summary thereof, appears in the newspaper as provided by law.

The vote to approve and adopt this Ordinance was as follows:

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSENT/ABSTAIN: _____

ORDINANCE NO. 598 DECLARED ADOPTED.

CITY OF IONIA

Dated: _____

Jonathan T. Bowman, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the Ordinance adopted by the City Council of the City of Ionia as of the date, time, and place as specified above, pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Jonathan T. Bowman, City Clerk

Introduction and First Reading:
Notice of Public Hearing:
Public Hearing, Second Reading, Adoption:
Effective (7 days after publication):

DRAFT



CITY OF IONIA

STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: VIII.1

TO: Planning Commissioners
FROM: Jonathan Bowman, Assistant City Manager
DATE: September 11, 2025
RE: City of Ionia 2025-2030 Master Plan

Background:

At the August 6, 2025, City Council meeting, the City of Ionia 2025-2030 Master Plan was released for the required 63-day public review period. Subsequently, staff notified the applicable stakeholders and advertised the public review period in the *Daily News*. As this public period comes to a close, it is necessary for Planning Commission to schedule a public hearing on the Master Plan. Following this public hearing, Planning Commission will be asked to make a formal recommendation on the option of the Plan to City Council.

Requested Action / Motion:

It is requested that the Ionia Planning Commission schedule a public hearing for 4:30 PM, Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at Ionia City Hall to hear comments on the City of Ionia 2025-2030 Master Plan and conclude the 63-day public review period.

Motion By:

Seconded By:

**CITY OF IONIA
PLANNING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

City of Ionia 2025-2030 Master Plan

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE: The City of Ionia Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at 4:30 PM, Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at Ionia City Hall, 114 N. Kidd Street, Ionia, Michigan 48846, to receive comments on the City of Ionia 2025-2030 Master Plan. This public hearing will formally conclude the 63-day required public review period for the Plan.

At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Planning Commission will be asked to make a recommendation to City Council on the adoption of the Master Plan.

The proposed City of Ionia 2025-2030 Master Plan may be reviewed at City Hall during regular business hours or on the City's website at cityofionia.org. Comments or questions regarding the Plan may be offered at the public hearing or provided to Assistant City Manager & City Clerk, Jonathan Bowman, at the City Hall address above, by phone at (616) 523-0147, or via e-mail at jbowman@ci.ionia.mi.us prior to the public hearing.

The City of Ionia complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If auxiliary aids or services are required at a public meeting for individuals with disabilities, please contact the City Clerk's Office, (616) 527-4170 at least three (3) days prior to any such meeting.



CITY OF IONIA

STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: VIII.2

TO: Planning Commissioners
FROM: Jonathan Bowman, Assistant City Manager
DATE: September 11, 2025
RE: Planning Commission Training Opportunity

Background:

This past spring, the City of Belding inquired about the Ionia Planning Commission's interest in a joint training from Michigan State University Extension. Unfortunately, this training opportunity fell through, but, due to interest from the majority of Commissioners, we have reached out to MSU Extension and offered Ionia City Hall as a possible training location. MSU Extension has accepted this offer and decided to host a training session focused on the roles and responsibilities of a planning commission.

The training is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, January 27, 2026, from 6:00-8:00 PM. Staff request that the Commission reserve this date in their calendars.