HARLAN PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION – OCTOBER 14, 2026

The Harlan Planning & Zoning Commission met on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 12:07 P.M. in the City Council Chambers and electronically via Zoom.
Present: Phil Perkins, Debbie Davis, Shane Pitts, Mark Maxwell, Rick Schaben
Absent:
Present Electronically:
Also Present: Recording Secretary Maya Kenkel, Planning & Zoning Administrator Gervas Mgonja, Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer Chris Bylund, City Clerk Ashley Schleis, Jenney Kelly, Joe Rueschenberg, Jeremy Schechinger, Fr. Clement

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Perkins. It was moved by Maxwell and seconded by Pitts to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Davis and seconded by Schaben to elect Shane Pitts as Chairperson and Phil Perkins as Vice-Chairperson through June 30, 2027. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Pitts presided over the remainder of the meeting.

Chairperson Pitts asked that any conflicts of interest be stated. None were stated.

It was moved by Davis and seconded by Pitts to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2024, meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Pitts announced that this was the date, time, and place for the public hearing regarding:

a. **CASE PZ2026-001** – Application by St. Michael's Catholic Church for re-zoning as an R-2 Zoning District

Motion to open public hearing by Perkins and seconded by Davis. Motion carried unanimously.

Applicant – Joe Rueschenberg, Jeremy Schechinger, and Fr. Clement were present on behalf of St. Michael's Catholic Church. Rueschenberg described the amenities of the proposed addition and noted it would be within twenty-six (26) feet. He explained that R-2 allows a 25-foot setback compared to the 35-foot setback for R-1. The addition will not be closer to the street than surrounding homes, and the sidewalk will be relocated closer to the street. Secretary Maya Kenkel clarified that re-zoning is a permanent change and will not revert due to a change in ownership.

Gervas Mgonja – Zoning Administrator was present to clarify that this re-zoning applies only to the parcel at 2001 College Pl, leaving the rest of the neighborhood unchanged. Regarding the email received from Gina Glenn at 1608 Lincoln Ave, he assured that the zoning change will not trigger an automatic property reevaluation or tax increase. If the county raises neighborhood property taxes, it will not be due to the zoning classification change. It was noted that the City of Harlan does not spot zone homes.

Neighbors Present: Chris Howell at 1513 Linda Ln, Doris Schmitz at 1906 18th St, Ginny Muenchrath at 1516 Linda Ln, and Linda Devine were present. Neighbor Gina Glenn at 1608 Lincoln Ave sent objections via email.
Linda Devine asked whether there would be changes to church parking. Rueschenberg assured that parking stalls would not be lost, though they could be moved. She and Chris Howell were concerned if any of the Linda Lane properties would be affected; none of the neighboring properties would be changed.
Chris Howell objected to additional dwellings on the property, and the applicants said additional housing would not be constructed.
The applicants answered various questions from the public about the project specifications.

Chris Bylund – Code Enforcement and Building Inspector was present to explain that, in general, the east side of 12th St is an R-2 Zoning District, and the west side of 12th St is an R-1 Zoning District, so that's why zoning for churches in Harlan is not uniform.

Motion to close public hearing by Davis seconded by Schaben. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Perkins and seconded by Davis to approve re-zoning for 2001 College Pl to an R-2 Zoning District. Motion carried unanimously.

Whereupon the motion was carried out and will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Maya Kenkel

Maya Kenkel, Recording Secretary
These minutes are subject to Board approval at the next regular meeting.