

City Of Hart

407 S. State St

Hart, Mi 49420

Planning Commission

Thursday, September 3rd, 2026

Minutes, Approved

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Clark, Jim Cunningham, Jim Evans, Cynitha Fout, Diane LaPorte, and Betty Root

ABSENT: Andrew Mullen,

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Nichole Kleiner, City Clerk/Treasurer Karla Swihart, Jacklyn Chase, Jessica Molengraff, Bill Ryder and Wes Vanderwilk

- C. Fout called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- B. Root motioned to approve the agenda adding 5-1 addition discussion items on agenda items and was supported by D. LaPorte
 - Ayes: 5 Nays: 1 Absent: 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- L. Clark motioned to approve the minutes from August 6th, 2026, and was supported by J. Evans
 - Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

- None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- Special Land Use Request for a Boarding House at 111 Church Street.
Public Hearing to consider a request for a Special Land Use Request for a Boarding House at 111 Church Street
 - D. LaPorte motioned to open Public Hearing at 4:05pm and was supported by J. Evans
 - Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Absent: 1
- With no public comments
 - J. Cunningham motioned to close the Public Hearing at 4:25pm and was supported by D. LaPorte
 - Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

ACTION ITEMS:

- Consideration of Special Land Use Request for a Boarding House at 111 Church St
- The Planning Commission should determine whether the application satisfies the general Special Land Use standards of Chapter 1256 and the specific boarding house requirements of Section 1256.15

Findings of Fact in Accordance with Section 1256.15:

Ordinance Requirement	Finding of Fact
Site/Floor Plan	Applicant submitted a floor plan identifying the use and square footage of each room. <i>Condition Required</i>
Cooking Facilities	No separate cooking facilities are proposed within individual bedrooms
Parking	3 Rooms are proposed for rent, requiring 3 (=) off-street parking spaces. The site provides parking in the back and also a bus that shuttles residents around.

Residential Appearance	The existing structure maintains the appearance of a single-family residence. <i>Condition met</i>
On-Site Management	Applicant proposes that a manager will reside on-site as the required
500-Foot Separation	Staff determined that the property does meet the required 500-foot separation from another approved boarding house.
Rental Code	Approval shall be conditioned upon compliance with the City's Housing Rental Code. <i>Condition Required.</i>

- J. Cunningham motioned to approve with Conditions a Special Land Use Request for a Boarding House at 111 Church Street based upon the Planning Commission's findings in accordance with Section 1256.15 and was supported by B. Root
 - Ayes: 5 Nays: 1 Absent: 1

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 301 S. State St Street – Rezoning Discussion / Staff Follow-up
 At the August meeting, the Planning Commission asked staff to look further into whether the proposed use at 301 S. State Street (former funeral home) could be considered a short-term rental rather than rezoning residential property to B-2 (Business District)
 The City's Zoning Ordinance does not specifically define or regulate "short-term rentals," Instead, it distinguishes between lodging for **transient guests** and lodging for people who are **not transient**.
 A hotel/motel is lodging offered to the public for **transients guests**, while a boarding house provides lodging to two or more people who are **not transients**.
 For 301 S. State Street, the key question is therefore **how the property will actually operate**- particularly who will stay there, how long they will typically stay, and whether it operates like a traditional short-term rental or more like a residence/boarding house.
 For reference, **315 S. State Street was rezoned to B-2 and classified as a hotel/motel in 2020 and has since been used as transitional lodging for women**. However, that decision does not necessarily require the City to classify 301 S. State the same way.
 - D. LaPorte motioned that 301 S. State Street should be rezoned as B-1 and take appropriate action to move forward and supported by J. Evans
 - Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Absent: 1
- Dog Boarding – a request from an existing dog grooming business to add Dog Boarding. Grooming has been operating as a permitted personal service establishment; however, the Zoning Ordinance does not permit kennels or animal boarding in any zoning district. Therefore, there is currently no mechanism to approve the requested use.
 Does the Planning Commission wish to initiate an ordinance amendment to:
 1. Update the definitions of animal grooming and boarding/kennels:
 2. Determine the zoning districts where these uses should be allowed:
 3. Establish animal boarding/kennels as a Special Land Use subject to appropriate standards?
 CM will take next steps and prepare draft ordinance amendments for public hearing and Planning Commission consideration.
- Consideration of Recreational Zoned Areas – for further review at October PC meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS and COMMUNICATION FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

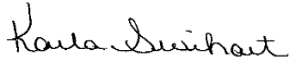
- J. Evans while back we talked about a structure in the back of Hart Auto, they do live there, no permits, no inspections on fire, gas and electricity. As the Planning Commission, we need to take action.
- J. Cunningham stopped by Vets Park and I just want to say job well done and extend thanks to each and every person that helped make it possible. The new Bricks look great.

PUBLIC COMMENTS GENERAL:

- NONE

ADJOURN:

- There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned upon a motion by D. LaPorte and supported by J. Evans. The next meeting scheduled will be held on October 1st, 2026



Karla Swihart
City Clerk