

Harpersfield Township Zoning Commission
1481 Old Harpersfield Road
Harpersfield Twp., OH 44041

Regular Session

Held on April 6, 2026

The Zoning Board of Harpersfield Township held a regular session meeting in the Harpersfield Township Administration Building. Gary Somnitz, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm with the following members and visitors present:

Members: Ken McLeod Gary Somnitz Debbie Mihalick Pat Linehan Chris Duffus

Clerk: Debbie Riffle

Zoning Administrator – Larry Lister

Trustees: Ed Pristov, Lisa Linehan

BZA Members: Dave Snyder

Visitors: Tim and Bonnie Burzanko, Jeff Lang, Ken Benson

Members and attendees rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

- March minutes were reviewed. Motion to approve by Debbie M.; seconded by Chris. Motion passed unanimously.

Zoning Inspector Report

- No major zoning activity since the last meeting.
- A few small residential permits were issued.
- No new commercial or utility related items.

Old Business Variance Update Sheets Project

- The variance for Sheets was approved.
- Representatives from Sheets, Dales, and township trustees attended the hearing.
- Discussion occurred about possibly reducing the 30-foot side setback for parking areas to 15 feet for future zoning text amendments.

Public Comment

Oil Wells: Jeff Lang

- Question and concerns about oil wells being moved.
- Board advised that State of Ohio is the regulatory authority; the township has no setback authority.

Data Centers:

- Bonnie Burzanko expressed concern about potential data centers in the township.
- Concerns included water usage, heat discharge, and environmental impact on vineyards and agriculture.
- Discussion included zoning limitations, industrial requirements, and statewide petitions to ban data centers.
- Board noted Harpersfield Twp likely lacks the necessary gas pipeline access for large data centers.

Zoning Text Review held on 3/18/26 with Verdantas

Section 602.2

- Campers may be stored in front, side, or rear yards, if unoccupied
- Does not limit where they are parked.

- Occupied RVs must be inside or rear yards.
- A 14-day occupancy limit remains; up to 60 days per year with conditions.

Section 603.1 Fencing

- Discussion on shared fencing agreements and maintenance responsibilities.
- Proposal to simplify fence height rules: 3 ft front yard, 8 ft rear yard.
- Remove side yard restrictions and treat anything behind the front building line as rear yard.
- Maintain 1 ft setback from right of way.

Section 605.2 Junk and Outdoor Storage

- Section considered broad enough, but enforcement challenges noted.
- Example discussed: a covered motorhome that a neighbor wanted removed was determined not to be junk under zoning rules.

Zoning Text Timeline

- Comments on the draft text are due by May 1.
- Final PDF with corrected references and links expected by the May meeting.
- Public hearing is likely to be scheduled for June.

Airbnb and Spire Properties Update

- Spire has begun selling several of its houses in the township.
- The township's legal case regarding conditional use for bed and breakfast is moving forward.
- Prosecutor's office declined to represent the township due to anticipated legal costs but agreed to co-council; case transferred to Ohio Township Association legal counsel.
- Court date scheduled for April 16

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting is scheduled for **Monday, May 4, 2026, at 7:00 PM.**

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM was made by Debbie Mihalik and seconded by Pat Linehan. The motion carried unanimously.

Debbie Riffle
Harpersfield Zoning Clerk