

# Planning Commission

## Work Session Minutes Wednesday, February 3, 2016 10:00 a.m., Council Chambers



City of South Haven

The meeting was called to order 10:00 a.m. by Chair Paull. Present were planning commission members Peterson, Gruber, Webb, Fries and Heinig. Zoning administrator Anderson and members of the public were also in attendance.

Public comment was received from Dorothy Appleyard and Gerald Webb.

Anderson reviewed the most recent draft ordinances with the group. The planning commissioners agreed that the ordinance is heading in a good direction and that they are finally making some real headway.

Discussion centered on occupancy and maximum house size to be permitted by zone. Fries argued that unfinished basements should not be included in residence size. He worries about the safety of allowing sleeping rooms in areas which may lack adequate egress. It was suggested that we are more concerned for short term renters than for long term renters of owner occupied residents.

Gruber recommended forgetting about house size and placing the focus on occupancy. Webb agreed stating that they should not get bogged down with basements when occupancy limits will resolve the house size issue, as well.

Anderson asked for clarification. Webb stated that she proposes not counting bedrooms, just have an occupancy cap.

Peterson stated that under that arrangement a very small house could have up to 16 people. He proposed that they consider something like 2 people per bedroom plus 2 extra people per occupied floor. Children under the age of 6 would not be included in the total. The total may not exceed 16 people. There followed discussion about those wanting more occupants in a single bedroom. For example, the houses where there is only one very large bedroom upstairs may apply for planning commission site plan review to allow more than 2 people in the room but in no case shall be given approval to exceed the maximum capacity of 16. There was consensus among members that these rules would apply only to the R1-A, B and C zoning districts.

Anderson repeated the decision so as to be clear: In the R1A, B and C zones there will be no maximum house size but there will be a limit of 2 people per bedroom plus 2 extra people per occupied floor, children under 6 are exempt and there is a hard cap of 16 people. Planning

commission approval is needed for additional people per bedroom but no relief is allowed for occupancy exceeding 16 people.

All members agreed.

(Chair Paull called for a 5 minute break.)

Discussion then shifted to the RM-1, B-3 and R-2 zoning districts. The planning commissioners decided to put in place the same requirements as in the residential zones but the planning commission would be allowed to grant an occupancy cap over 16 but no more than 24 if all standards now proposed are met as well as the following:

- Has a parking site plan allowing sufficient access for emergency vehicles.
- Automatic sprinkler systems
- Fire alarm systems
- Interconnected smoke alarm systems.
- Fire rated corridors
- Fire rated stairwell enclosures.
- Sleeping rooms with automatic door closers.
- A sufficient number of emergency exits, suitably placed in relation to the designated bedrooms

References to maximum house size and number of toilets should be deleted as no longer relevant.

There was a question regarding existing houses that are in the RM-1, B-3 and R-2 zones with enough space to accommodate over 16 people. It was decided that the cap of 24 would still be in effect but is it legal (or advisable) to require that the structures be retrofitted with the above standards? Anderson said she would get a legal opinion on that.

There was brief conversation regarding the principal residence exemption (PRE) issue. Webb stated that she thinks the rentals qualifying for the PRE but who rent their homes for less than 15 days a year should be included in the rental registration. Anderson stated that the city attorney feels strongly that PRE houses should be exempt. It was decided to revisit this issue later.

Next meeting February 17 at 10:00 a.m. Focus of discussion will be Section 10-244, Violations and Revocation of Registration.

Meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,  
Linda Anderson, Zoning Administrator