

**VILLAGE OF SPARTA
PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
March 2nd, 2026 @ 6:30 PM
276 W. Division St. (Sparta Village Complex)**

- 1) CALL TO ORDER
- 2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 3) ROLL CALL
- 4) ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE BUSINESS & CONSENT AGENDA
Consent Agenda:
 - a. Approve Regular Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of February 2nd, 2026
- 5) APPROVAL OF CONSENT & BUSINESS AGENDA
- 6) PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS
- 7) COMMUNICATIONS –
 - a. Bedford Falls Update
- 8) PUBLIC HEARING –
 - a. Ord. 26-01 An Ordinance to amend Section 82-106 “Keeping of Animals” of the Village of Sparta Zoning Ordinance
- 9) NEW BUSINESS –
 - a. Ord. 26-01 An Ordinance to amend Section 82-106 “Keeping of Animals” of the Village of Sparta Zoning Ordinance
- 10) UNFINISHED BUSINESS –
 - a. None.
- 11) PUBLIC COMMENT
- 12) VILLAGE MANAGER REPORT
- 13) COMMISSION COMMENT
- 14) ADJOURNMENT

VILLAGE OF SPARTA

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
February 2, 2026 @ 6:30 PM
276 W. Division St. (Sparta Village Complex)

Present: Chairperson Emilie Henry, Commissioners Robert Carlstrom, Bob Liscombe, and Robert Whalen.

Absent: Gary Moody, Vice Chairperson Rose Frederick,

Also present: Village Manager Jim Lower, Village Clerk Kristen Phelps

1. CALL TO ORDER
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chair Henry
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
 - a. The Pledge was Recited
3. ROLL CALL
 - a. Formal roll call was taken. Those in attendance/absent are noted above.
4. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE BUSINESS & CONSENT AGENDA
 - a. Consent Agenda: Approve Regular Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2025
5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT & BUSINESS AGENDA
 - a. Motion to approve business agenda and consent agenda as presented by Whalen, supported by Carlstrom. **Motion passed 4-0**
6. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS
 - a. Tom Peoples 179 Alma Spoke about the Chicken Permits
7. COMMUNICATIONS –
 - a. Meeting Recordings
 - i. Manager Lower spoke about the meetings being recorded.
 - b. Planning Commission Vacancy
 - i. Applications are due by 02.11.2026
8. PUBLIC HEARING –
 - a. None.
9. NEW BUSINESS –
 - a. Chair, Vice-Chair, & Secretary Selection

- i. **Chair:** Motion by Carlstrom to reappoint Henry with support by Whalen. **Motion Passes 4-0**
 - ii. **Vice Chair:** Motion by Carlstrom to reappoint Frederick with Support by Whalen. **Motion Passes 4-0**
 - iii. **Secretary:** Motion by Carlstrom to appoint Village Clerk Kristen Phelps with Support by Whalen. **Motion Passes 4-0**
- b. Chicken Permit Revision Discussion
 - i. Planning Commission is open to changing the Ordinance. Manager Lower will draft the updates.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS –

- a. None.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. Ricky Johnson 29 Centennial Spoke

12. VILLAGE MANAGER REPORT

- a. Village Manager spoken about ongoings in the Village

13. COMMISSION COMMENT

- a. None

14. ADJOURNMENT

- a. There being no further business to come before the planning commission the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 pm by Chair Henry



ACTION MEMO

Staff Communication

DATE: March 2, 2026
TO: Planning Commission Chair and Planning Commission Members
FROM: James A. Lower Village Manager
RE: Ord. 26-01

Background

I have take the ideas below that were discussed last month and incorporated them into the proposed Ordinance 26-01 you have before you.

Revisions Contained in Ord. 26-01

1. Chicken Limits by Lot Size

- **5,500–7,999 sq. ft.:** Up to **6 chickens**
- **8,000 sq. ft. or greater:**
 - Up to **6 chickens initially**
 - After **one year of successful compliance**, the property owner may apply to increase the limit to **up to 12 chickens**

This approach rewards demonstrated compliance while maintaining safeguards for surrounding properties.

2. Hen House and Pen Size

- Current limits:
 - Hen house: **25 sq. ft.**
 - Pen area: **40 sq. ft.**
- Proposed limits:
 - Hen house: **50 sq. ft.**
 - Pen area: **80 sq. ft.**

Staff recommends allowing the larger structures at the outset so residents do not need to expand facilities later if they intend to apply for additional chickens after the compliance period.

3. Egg Sales, Breeding, Fertilizing

- The current ordinance prohibits the sale of eggs, breeding chickens, or federalizing of eggs for commercial sale.
- In practice, these provisions are difficult to enforce.
- Staff recommends revising the ordinance to strike these provisions.

Any such activities would already need to comply with state and federal regulations, and we are not allowing enough chickens for this to be a realistic concern. The Village does not need to duplicate or enforce those standards locally or have unenforceable provisions in our ordinance.

Recommendation:

A motion to recommend adoption of Ordinance 26-01 to the Village Council.

**VILLAGE COUNCIL
VILLAGE OF SPARTA
KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

Ordinance No. 2026-01

At a regular meeting of the Village Council for the Village of Sparta at the Village Hall on _____, 2025, and commencing at __: __p.m., the following Ordinance was offered for adoption by Council Member _____ and was seconded by Council Member _____:

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 82, ARTICLE III, DIVISION 1,
SECTION 82-106 OF THE SPARTA VILLAGE CODE ENTITLED
“KEEPING OF ANIMALS.”**

THE VILLAGE OF SPARTA (the “Village”) ORDAINS:

Article 1. Amendment of Section 82-106. That Chapter 82, Article III, Division 1, Section 82-106 of the Sparta Village Code entitled “Keeping of Animals,” is hereby amended to read in its entirety as follows:

The keeping, housing, raising, use or care of animals is subject to the following limitations and conditions:

- (1) Definitions. For purposes of this section 82-106, the following words, terms, and phrases shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:
 - a. *Customary household pets* means such animals used for human companionship including but not limited to dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, small reptiles, amphibians and similar animals.
 - b. *Dangerous animals* means the same as defined in MCL 287.321(a) of the Dangerous Animals Act, Act 426 of 1988.
 - c. *Large carnivore* means the same as defined in MCL 287.1102(f) of the Large Carnivore Act, Act 274 of 2000.
 - d. *Livestock* means animals used for farming activities including but not limited to: horses, roosters, ducks, geese, goats, sheep, pigs, and any other farm livestock used for commercial purposes.
 - e. *Owner*. Any animal that remains about any premises for a period of five days is deemed to be in possession of the owners or occupants of such property for the purposes of this section. Owner under this chapter does not necessarily describe title holder to said animal.
 - f. *Wolf-dog cross* means the same as defined in MCL 287.1002(p) of the Wolf-Dog Cross Act, Act 246 of 2000.

- (2) No person owning, possessing, or having charge of any dog four months of age or over shall permit such dog to be:
 - a. At-large, unless in the custody of some person.
 - b. Unleashed and unmuzzled if the dog is a dangerous animal.
 - c. At-large at any time, unless vaccinated against rabies within the past year and unless such dog shall have a tag on its collar showing such current vaccination; provided, this subsection shall apply only to dogs four months of age or older.
 - d. If a female dog, at-large when such dog is in heat.
 - e. Unreasonably disturb those in the vicinity where kept because of loud or frequent or habitual barking, yelping, or howling, or by reason of damaging or trespassing on the property of others.
- (3) Large carnivores, wolf-dog cross, and other exotic animals are expressly prohibited within the village.
- (4) Chickens may be kept in the village subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Chickens may be kept in the village with a valid chicken permit subject to all of the following conditions:
 1. Eligible Properties. Chickens may only be kept on a lot on which is located a single-family dwelling. Chickens may not be kept on a lot containing a multi-family dwelling.
 2. Minimum lot size and number permitted. Chickens may be kept only on a lot having a minimum area of 5,500 square feet, subject to the following limits:
 - (i) Lots 5,500 to 7,999 square feet. Up to six (6) chickens may be kept.
 - (ii) Lots 8,000 square feet or greater. A property owner may keep up to six (6) chickens initially. After one (1) year of demonstrated compliance with all applicable regulations while maintaining six (6) chickens, the property owner may apply for a permit to keep up to twelve (12) chickens.
 3. Chickens may only be kept by an occupant of a dwelling unit located on the real property on which the chickens are kept.
 4. Chicken feed must be kept in rodent resistant and weatherproof containers.
 5. The person keeping the chickens shall abide by all health and safety standards of the village's International Property Maintenance Code (IMPC).
 6. Odors from chickens, and chicken manure shall not be perceptible at the property boundaries, in conformance with the village's nuisance ordinance. Perceptible odor shall be abated within 48 hours of notification of the violation by the village.
 7. Perceptible noise from chickens shall not be loud enough at the property boundaries to unreasonably disturb neighboring property owners in

conformance with the village's nuisance ordinance. Perceptible noise shall be abated within 48 hours of notification of the violation by the village.

8. Roosters are expressly prohibited, regardless of the age or maturity of the bird.
 9. Chickens may be slaughtered on site if it is done in an enclosed building and out of public view. Chickens may also be taken off site to be slaughtered. No slaughtering of chickens shall be permitted for commercial purposes.
- b. Enclosures shall be provided and shall be designed to provide safe and healthy living conditions for the chickens while minimizing adverse impacts to other residents and the neighborhood.
1. Chickens must be kept in an enclosed henhouse or fenced in chicken pen at all times. Chickens must be secured within the henhouse during non-daylight hours.
 2. Henhouses must be clean, dry and odor free, kept in a neat and sanitary condition at all times, in a manner that will not unreasonably disturb the use or enjoyment of neighboring lots due to noise, odor or other adverse impacts. No exterior lighting shall spill onto adjacent properties.
 3. The henhouse and chicken pen must provide adequate ventilation and adequate sun and shade and must be impenetrable to rodents, wild birds, and predators, including dogs and cats.
 4. The henhouse structure shall be enclosed and secured on all sides and shall have a roof, floor and doors. Access doors must be able to be shut and locked at night. Opening windows and vents must be covered with predator and bird proof wire of less than one-inch openings.
 5. The materials used in making the structure shall be uniform for each element of the structure such that the walls are made of the same materials, the roof has the same shingles or other covering, and any windows or openings are constructed using the same materials. The use of scrap, waste board, sheet metal, or similar materials is prohibited. The henhouse shall be well maintained and kept in a clean and sanitary manner at all times.
 6. The structure shall be painted; the color shall be uniform around the structure and shall be in harmony with the surrounding area.
 7. The maximum size of the henhouse may not exceed 50 square feet in overall size and may not exceed five (5) feet in height.
 8. The henhouse shall only be located in the rear yards. In no case, may a henhouse be placed in the side or front yards.
 9. The henhouse must be located no less than 20 feet from the owner's dwelling and no less than 35 feet from any neighbors dwelling and ten feet from any property line. Henhouses may be moveable, only if the dimensional restrictions contained in this article are held in compliance.

10. An enclosed chicken pen must be provided attached to the henhouse consisting of sturdy wire and fencing or may include a floor made of the same material as the pen secured on all sides. The chicken pen must be covered with wire, aviary netting, or solid roofing. The use of chicken wire is not permitted. The chicken pen must also include a self-latching door. The first 18 inches of the chicken pen must be made of sight obscuring material or screening with sight obscuring landscaping around all sides. The chicken pen must meet the same setback requirements as the henhouse.
 11. The chicken pen is limited to no more than 80 square feet in area.
- c. Any person wanting to keep chickens within the village shall first apply for and obtain a permit from the village manager or his/her designee, before that person may legally keep chickens within the village. Regulations pertaining to permits shall be as follows:
1. Any person applying for a permit to keep chickens within the village shall submit a permit application on a form promulgated by the village manager or his/her designee and shall pay an application fee established by resolution of the village council.
 2. If the applicant is not the owner of the real property on which he or she wants to keep chickens, the applicant must provide the written consent of the owner of the real property. Without such written consent, the permit application may not be granted.
 3. If the village manager or his/her designee grants the request for the permit, he/she shall do so in writing, which writing shall state the property address at which chickens may be kept, as well as the number of chickens allowed to be kept, and any other conditions of the permit to keep chickens.
 4. If the village manager or his/her designee denies the request for the permit, he/she shall do so in writing, which writing shall state the reasons for such denial.
 5. If the village manager or his/her designee denies the request for the permit, the applicant may file an appeal to the village council subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) The applicant must file a written appeal stating why the applicant feels that the permit should be approved with the village clerk within ten days of the permit denial; and
 - (ii) The village council will review the appeal at a regularly scheduled village council meeting and may grant the appeal, grant the appeal with conditions, or deny the appeal based on its review of the standards and provisions contained herein.

Any final decision shall be communicated to the appellant in writing stating the basis for the same.

6. An initial permit shall be valid for a period of one year. If, in the judgment of the village manager or his/her designee, the permittee has abided by all

article provisions and permit conditions and has not created a nuisance to the owners or occupants of adjacent properties or the neighborhood, the permit may be renewed for an additional one-year period. However, no permit issued pursuant to this article shall remain valid past the date on which this article either expires or is repealed, whichever is earlier.

7. Any permit may be suspended or revoked by the village manager or his/her designee, by written notice to the permit holder, upon a finding that the permittee has violated applicable village ordinance provisions or permit conditions.
 8. If the village manager or his/her designee suspends or revokes a permit, the provisions of section 22-45 of this Code regarding suspension and revocation of permits and licenses shall apply.
 9. A permit as described above is personal to the applicant. Such a permit may not be transferred to another individual. If ownership of the underlying real property on which the chickens are kept is transferred, the permit does not run with the land, and a person desiring to keep chickens on the property must apply for a new permit.
 10. Permit fees for the keeping of chickens will be established by village council through resolution.
 11. No person shall keep a chicken or allow a chicken to be kept on real property under his or her control, unless a permit to keep chickens is first obtained from the village in the manner provided for herein.
 12. In addition to the other penalties set forth herein, a violation of this subsection (4) will result in the revocation of the permit allowing the keeping of chickens. All henhouses and chicken coops shall be removed within 30 days following the revocation of a permit hereunder.
- (5) Customary household pets may be kept on a noncommercial basis provided that the number of these animals does not exceed four. It shall be unlawful for any person to keep livestock on any premises within the village except in slaughterhouses or yards adjacent thereto.
- (6) Animals other than household pets and not specified elsewhere in this section may be kept subject to the following requirements:
- a. Minimum lot size of three acres for the first two animals.
 - b. An additional one-half acre for each additional animal, provided that no more than a total of 20 acres shall be counted toward the allowance to accommodate animals under this limitation.
 - c. When animals are kept or permitted to roam outdoors, an adequate fence shall be provided and maintained to confine the animals from adjoining properties and roads.

- (7) It shall be unlawful for any person having control of any domestic animal on a leash to allow such animal to defecate on or upon any premises other than his own, unless the person shall promptly clean up any feces deposited by the animal.
- a. No person shall allow any animal under his ownership or control to leave excrement on any private or public property, unless that excrement is promptly and thoroughly removed from the property; provided, however, a person may fail to remove excrement from private property which that person owns or in which he has a lawful possessory interest. Nothing in this subsection shall be deemed to permit an accumulation of feces on a person's own property which may be detrimental to the public health.
 - b. It shall be unlawful for any person to appear with any animal on a private or public property, unless that person has in his possession an appropriate device for the immediate and thorough removal of any animal excrement; provided, however, the owner or lawful occupant of a vacant parcel of real property or a parcel of real property on which there is located a single-family residence may appear on his own property with an animal without possession of such device.
- (8) A violation of this section shall be a municipal civil infraction, punishable by a fine as established in section 82-589 of this Code. The property owners and the occupants of the property cited under this section are jointly and severally liable.

Article 2. Severability.

The provisions of this Ordinance are severable. If any portion of this Ordinance is declared void or inoperable for any reason by a court of competent jurisdiction, such declaration shall not void any or render inoperable any other part or portion of this Ordinance.

Article 3. Effective Date.

This Ordinance is effective upon the expiration of the 20th day following its publication in the manner required by law.

The vote regarding the adoption of this Ordinance was as follows:

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSENT/ABSTAIN: _____

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance was adopted by the Village Council for the Village of Sparta, Kent County, Michigan, at a regular meeting of the Village Council duly called and held on _____, 2025.

By:

Kristen Phelps
Village Clerk