

**VILLAGE OF EPHRAIM PLAN COMMITTEE
WORKING SESSION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2026 - 12:00 PM
9996 WATER STREET**



Present: Laird Hart, Rick Hoyerman, Monique McClean, BD Thorp, and Ken Nelson – Chair.

Absent: Andy Bartelt and Grace Held.

Staff: Brent Bristol - Village Administrator and Kim Roberts - Deputy Clerk.

Guests: John Cox (online) and Kathy Pentler (online).

Call to Order: K. Nelson called the working session to order at 12:01 PM.

K. Nelson presented observations from Bartelt's nephew, an architect, who analyzed the Village's current Protected Waterfront ordinance. The architect identified the biggest problem was the roof pitch requirements, noting that the allowance of flatter roofs at twenty-three feet (23') allows for an easy design of a 2-story house. The architect recommended going to a twenty-foot (20') absolute height maximum, which would allow plenty of room to do a story and a half.

K. Nelson expressed concern about what happens when someone tears down a house that currently exceeds twenty-three (23'), questioning whether they would be restricted to the new height limits with a rebuild. He identified the biggest change from previous ordinances as §17.20(5)(a)(2), which allows footprint modifications in the Protected Waterfront District. He suggested that the Committee consider not allowing changes to the footprint to maintain the look of the Protected Waterfront District. He argued that allowing footprint modifications leads to houses that look uniform. He suggested that architects, seeking maximum square footage, would design square or rectangular structures regardless of the original house's character. He proposed restricting changes to footprints, allowing people to maintain existing footprints unless making them narrower. He noted that six (6) houses currently have more than fifteen hundred square feet (1,500 ft²) on the first floor. Unrestricted footprint modifications could result in very large structures.

Hoyerman disagreed with completely restricting footprint modifications, arguing that such restrictions would be too limiting. He suggested that people should have some flexibility to modify their properties while maintaining design review standards. Hoyerman proposed allowing modifications that don't increase width, particularly in incorporating accessory structures into the main building. Further, he suggested making the modification of the footprint a permitted use subject to design review.

The Committee discussed the current intent statement and the draft that Hoyerman prepared. Current Intent:

- 1) **INTENT.** *Recognizing that the open shoreline is one of Ephraim's most distinctive features, the intent of this ordinance is to provide for as much open viewing space along our shoreline as possible. As an important contributing component of the Ephraim Historic District Ordinance [§17.26](#), owners of residences in the Protected Waterfront "PW" District are encouraged to use and maintain their existing residences. Since most of the residential buildings in this area are sited on small non-conforming lots that would otherwise prohibit the erection of such structures under the existing ordinance unless otherwise noted or provided for in this section, structures shall be restricted to those in existence as of January 1, 1998.*

Draft language from Hoyerman:

- 1) **1) INTENT.** *The open shoreline is one of Ephraim's most distinctive features and is also characterized by buildings sited on mostly small non-conforming lots. This ordinance is intended to preserve the open views of the shoreline as well as the historic appearance of Ephraim's built environment while also allowing for some leeway for (PW) property owners to modify or replace their residences. Consistent with the intent and provisions of the Ephraim Historic District Ordinance (§17.26), property owners are encouraged to use and maintain their existing residences. However, if residential modification or replacement is desired, said modification or replacement must strictly conform to the provisions of §17.20 and §17.26. New*

construction is ~~generally~~ prohibited in the PW district as structures are limited to those existing on or before January 1, 1998, ~~unless specifically noted in this section.~~

The Committee reviewed Hoyerman's draft intent language, and Committee members discussed clarifying that no additional structures beyond those existing in 1998 would be allowed, addressing concerns about vacant lots. They agreed to use consistent language referencing the current 1998 baseline and to remove potentially confusing qualifying language. Hoyerman agreed to continue working on the "Intent" section by removing "generally" and "unless specifically noted in this section" from his draft language. The Committee further requested that another sentence be added back into the intent statement addressing "no new structures" pertaining to "vacant lots".

K. Nelson and Thorp presented their work on defining a one-and-a-half-story house: "A 1-1/2 Story House has a full first floor with full height interior walls (normally 8' - 10' high) and an upper level that has less floor area than the first floor. The upper level has steeply pitched roofs with gables and dormers (normally with windows). The upper level typically has sloped ceilings with knee walls (normally 5 - 7' high) that define the floor area. These features reduce the floor area on the upper level."

The Committee discussed knee wall requirements and the challenge of distinguishing between living space and storage areas. They debated whether to include specific percentage limitations (such as the upper level having no more than 50% of the first floor's square footage) or to rely on roof pitch requirements to naturally limit second-floor space. Bristol suggested that roof pitch restrictions might be more effective than trying to define habitable space.

The Committee extensively discussed roof pitch requirements, with K. Nelson advocating limiting roof pitches to a 6/12 to 12/12 range, noting that a 3/12 pitch enabled full two-story construction. Steeper pitches would naturally limit second-floor space. Committee members considered allowing limited shed dormers with flatter pitches to provide design variety. They discussed limiting shed dormers to a specific linear footage to avoid creating effectively full second floors. K. Nelson offered to write the shed dormer allowance based on square footage or percentage, depending on the roof system.

The Committee held a conversation on how to handle existing structures that exceed proposed height limits. They discussed allowing "reproduction" of existing non-conforming structures, meaning property owners could rebuild identical structures but would be subject to new restrictions if they chose to modify or expand their footprints. K. Nelson suggested this approach would encourage preservation of existing structures while preventing new construction from exceeding height and bulk limits. The Committee recognized the need to define "reproduction" clearly in the ordinance.

The Committee reviewed design criteria requirements, emphasizing that projects must be consistent with the Historic District character. They discussed concerns about overly complex roof lines, referencing a recent project that some members felt was too complicated. Bristol noted that the Historic District Ordinance already requires simplicity as a key design principle, with roof pitches between 3/12 and 12/12. However, the Committee agreed that the 3/12 minimum was problematic for the Protected Waterfront District's goals. K. Nelson suggested defining house attachments such as decks, porches, screened porches, and window porches as another way to control bulk, as well as replacement criteria, including roof pitch.

Kathy Pentler raised the issue of restricting construction during tourist season, citing examples from condominium associations that prohibit construction between Memorial Day and Labor Day. She noted that construction noise and disruption significantly impact the quality of the short tourist season.

The Committee agreed to consider seasonal construction restrictions, with Bristol suggesting that noise ordinance modifications might be more practical than zoning restrictions.

The meeting adjourned at 1:39 PM.

Recorded by Kim Roberts – Deputy Clerk