



COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Bellbrook City Council

From: Community Affairs/Administration Committee

Date: February 27, 2026

Subject: Key Actions and Decisions from Committee Meeting

Decisions / Direction Reached (Committee Consensus)

- Proceed with drafting legislation to replace the current Village Review Board (VRB) with an advocacy-focused Old Village District Advisory Commission (OVDAC) that is advisory (non-quasi-judicial).
 - Tentative commission composition: five (5) members appointed by Council — (a) one district resident; (b) one business or property representative within the district; (c) three at-large city residents. Staff to revise language to read 'business "or" property' (not 'and') to avoid excluding tenant businesses.
 - Initial term staggering to avoid simultaneous expirations: 2 members for 1 year, 2 members for 2 years, 1 member for 3 years (thereafter, 3-year terms).
 - Include explicit expectations and guidelines emphasizing beautification, walkability, age-friendly orientation, civic/community events, small-town friendly focus, and alignment with the Comprehensive Plan; discourage uses out of character with downtown (e.g., storage buildings, pole-barn style construction, industrial uses, large multifamily, and non-service retail).
 - Clarify the role to make recommendations to BZA and Planning Board and to coordinate with City Council, Planning Board, CIC, and other community organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce) to enhance reinvestment and events.
 - Manager may (optionally) retain a registered architect to advise the commission when needed (not a requirement).
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Key Implications for Council

- Legislative action will be required to disband the VRB and establish the OVDAC with the updated scope, composition, and expectations.
- The OVDAC will be advisory and advocacy-oriented; it will not have quasi-judicial authority. Design/style outcomes (e.g., prohibiting pole barns, setting facade/material standards) require separate amendments to Planning & Zoning Code if Council desires enforceable standards.
- Better coordination with event organizers and community partners (e.g., during large soccer tournaments) may improve visitor experience and downtown

business activity; OVDAC can assist, but operational changes for private businesses remain voluntary.

- Difficulty in recruiting applicants to the current VRB motivated this restructuring; a clearer advocacy mission may improve engagement and outcomes.
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Actions & Tracking

- Administration: Convert the working draft into legislative form reflecting committee edits ("or" for business/property member; corrected term staggering; expectations/guidelines; optional architect advisor; coordination with community organizations). Target: Present to committee in early April 2026, then to Council.
 - Committee: Invite public feedback (email/phone) and reconvene in early April 2026 to finalize a recommendation to Council to disband the VRB and create the OVD Advisory Commission.
 - Planning Board Vacancy: Three applicants; schedule interviews immediately prior to the next regular Council meeting on Monday, March 9, 2026 (or earliest feasible date). Aim to recommend appointment that night to ensure quorum for a case scheduled this month.
 - Administration: Place the routine, no-change Sugar Maple Festival operating agreement on an upcoming agenda for renewal.
 - Clerk/Administration: Track and publish the early-April committee meeting date/time and circulate the legislative draft to committee members in advance.
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Open Decisions / Policy Choices for Council

- Approve the structural change: Disband the Village Review Board and establish the Old Village District Advisory Commission (advocacy-focused).
- Confirm final commission size/composition and approve the "business or property" qualification language.
- Affirm whether the Manager should be expected (or merely permitted) to retain a registered architect advisor for complex matters.
- Direct staff whether to prepare separate Planning & Zoning Code amendments for enforceable downtown design standards (materials, massing, roof pitch, fenestration, pole-barn prohibition, etc.).