

Meeting Overview: Council Work Session 10/2/2025

- **Attendees:** Mayor Southard, Councilpersons Passeun, Koss, Pinter, Martin, Grant, Camara, and Village Attorney Jesse Shamp.
 - **Format:** No formal agenda; open work session discussion.
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Key Topics Discussed

1. Noise Ordinance Review

- **Concern Raised:** With a new automobile-related business moving in, council members worried that the existing noise ordinance may be too vague and unenforceable.
 - **Current Ordinance:**
 - Defines noise as unreasonably loud if:
 - *Plainly audible* at a residential property >50 feet away, **or**
 - *Exceeds 85 decibels* outside the property line.
 - **Challenges Identified:**
 - Difficult to enforce (police must stay on-site to measure).
 - Lack of time-based standards (e.g., how long noise must persist).
 - Potential loopholes for repeat offenders.
 - **Comparisons to Columbus/Dublin:**
 - Columbus uses zone-specific limits and decibel averages (hourly or 15-minute).
 - Their code is more detailed but often not enforced.
 - **Council Opinions:**
 - Some members advocated proactive tightening to prevent future issues.
 - Others argued current rules are already stricter than Columbus, and no actual complaints exist yet.
 - Proposal to conduct **data collection & sound experiments** (using decibel readers, trucks, and distance tests) before making changes.
 - **Consensus:** Do more research and testing before amending the ordinance.
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2. Village Vision & Long-Term Planning

- **Themes for Future Planning (5–10 year horizon):**
 - **Charter Adoption:** Discussing whether to pursue a municipal charter for more local control (past attempt failed).
 - **Governance Structure:** Clarify job descriptions, performance measures, and explore creating a **Village Administrator** role.
 - **Infrastructure:** Roads, sewers, and funding mechanisms.
 - **Funding & Communications:** Improve transparency, branding, and engagement while managing realistic expectations.

- **Community Engagement:** Control how the village attracts visitors—structured events vs. open access.
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3. Communications Strategy

- **Current Tools:** Email blasts, social media, limited text messaging (via Textedly).
 - **Challenges:**
 - Few residents subscribe to text alerts (≈250 people).
 - Limited text quotas due to budget.
 - Social media reach is weak compared to resident-led groups (algorithm issues).
 - **Feedback:**
 - Residents expect more frequent updates (especially for road projects).
 - Concern that over-communication raises unrealistic expectations for a small village.
 - Calls for a more professional communications approach (marketing expertise, better equipment/software).
 - **Council Direction:** Balance transparency with capacity; possibly upgrade tools and refine message strategy.
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4. Permit & Event Regulations

- Discussion of whether to enforce existing code requiring permits for public events (concerts, amphitheater use).
 - Current practice: permits not always issued, though code requires them.
 - Idea: formalize a permit process and fees while allowing initial flexibility.
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5. Next Steps – Charter Focus

- **Decision:** Next work session (Nov. 6, 2025) will focus on the **Charter**.
 - **Preparation:**
 - Review past charter commission work and why it failed.
 - Gather staff reports, legal input, and lessons learned.
 - Ensure communication to residents is clear, simple, and emphasizes benefits.
 - **Goal:** Draft a simplified charter framework to strengthen local governance without overwhelming changes.
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Overall Tone & Outcomes

- **Noise Ordinance:** No immediate changes; pursue research and sound testing.
- **Vision & Charter:** Agreement to prioritize charter discussions as the foundation for future governance.

- **Communications:** Acknowledgement that improvements are needed, but budget and capacity are limiting factors.
- **Event Permits:** Need for consistency and compliance with existing code.