



Cooper Charter Township

1590 West D Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49009-6321
(269) 382-0223

STAFF MEMO

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

To: Township Board
From: Julie Johnston, AICP
Planner/Zoning Administrator
Regarding: Keeping Domestic Animals Draft Ordinance – First Reading

Township staff expressed concern about the regulations for domestic animals, specifically dogs. They often get calls from residents asking how many dogs are permitted per parcel in Cooper Township. Currently, the only way they can answer this question is indirectly through the definition of a kennel. This definition states that four or more dogs are considered a kennel. And, kennels are not allowed on residentially zoned properties. There are no direct regulations they can provide residents related to pets or the behavior of domestic animals. It was requested the Planning Commission consider ordinance language to provide clarity.

The Planning Commission spent several months drafting an ordinance to help regulate domestic animals. The draft development of an ordinance began with limiting the number of pets. However, the Planning Commission was not comfortable with this approach as a good pet owner could have multiple dogs that have no impact on neighboring properties. In the end, they desired an ordinance that would be more directed toward behavior, and particularly “nuisance” behaviors that can impact neighbors’ enjoyment of their own property.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the current ordinance on March 18th and had no comments from residents. They have recommended the ordinance for the Township Boards approval. Therefore, staff recommend the Township Board approve Resolution No. 26-281, which introduces (first reading) Ordinance No. 281 and set adoption (second reading) for May 11, 2026.

Thank You,

Julie Johnston, AICP
Planner/Zoning Administrator

Attachments: Resolution No. 26-281, Ordinance No. 281, Public Notice

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COOPER
RESOLUTION NO. 26-281**

**RESOLUTION INTRODUCING ORDINANCE NO. 281, AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT AMENDMENTS TO THE
TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE**

A resolution made and adopted at a meeting of the Township Board of the Charter Township of Cooper, Kalamazoo County, State of Michigan, held on April 13, 2026, at 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: _____

ABSENT: _____

The following Resolution was offered by _____ and seconded by _____.

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Act 110 of 2006, MCL 125.3101 *et seq.* ("MZEA"), the Charter Township of Cooper ("Township") has authority to adopt and amend zoning ordinances regulating the use of land in the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Township desires to consider amending its Zoning Ordinance, specifically Section 120.14: Definitions to clarify the definition for kennels and to add Section 120.485 Keeping of Domestic Animals; and

WHEREAS, the definition for a kennel should relate only to those that are a commercial operation established for financial gain, and that the ordinance for keeping of domestic animals should help regulate any potential behavioral impacts. Regulations include requirements for maintaining animals in good health, keeping animals on premises, and managing nuisance behaviors; and

WHEREAS, upon giving notice in accordance with the MZEA, the Township Planning Commission ("Planning Commission") held a public hearing on March 18, 2026 regarding the proposed zoning ordinance amendments; and

WHEREAS, following the public hearing, the Planning Commission recommended that the proposed zoning ordinance amendments be approved; and

WHEREAS, the Township wishes to consider an ordinance approving the proposed zoning ordinance amendments.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Township Board of the Charter Township of Cooper resolves as follows:

1. The Township hereby introduces Ordinance No. 281, An Ordinance to Adopt Amendments to the Township Zoning Ordinance (the "Ordinance," attached as Exhibit A).

2. The Township Board will consider adopting the Ordinance at its next regular meeting on May 11, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

3. Pursuant to Section 20 of the Michigan Charter Township Act, Act 82 of 1994, MCL 42.1 *et seq.* (the "Act"), the Clerk is directed to publish the Ordinance in accordance with Section 8 of the Act by posting it in the office of the Clerk and on the Township's web site. The Clerk is further directed to publish notice of the posting in a form substantially conforming to Exhibit B to this Resolution in a newspaper of general circulation within the Township within seven (7) days after the posting. The notice shall describe the purpose of the Ordinance and state that the Ordinance is posted in the office of the Clerk and on the Township's web site.

4. A copy of the Ordinance shall be available for examination at the office of the Clerk, and copies may be provided for a reasonable charge.

5. Any and all resolutions that are in conflict with this Resolution are hereby repealed to the extent necessary to give this Resolution full force and effect.

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
 :
COUNTY OF KALAMAZOO)

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting Clerk of the Charter Township of Cooper, Kalamazoo County, Michigan, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of certain proceedings taken by the Township Board at a regular meeting held pursuant to the Open Meetings Act on the 11th day of November, 2024.

DeAnna Janssen
Clerk, Cooper Charter Township

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COOPER
COUNTY OF KALAMAZOO
ORDINANCE NO. 281
AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE REGARDING ACCESSORY USES OR BUILDINGS**

The Charter Township of Cooper ordains an amendment to Section 120.14: Definitions and to add Section 120.485: Keeping of Domestic Animals of the Zoning Ordinance:

Section 1. Amendment to Section 120.14: Definitions.

Subsection 120.14: Definitions is amended to update the following definition:

Kenel: Land and associated facilities where domestic animals are boarded for financial gain, which may also include those owned by the owner or occupant of the premises.

Section 2. Addition of Section 120.485: Keeping of Domestic Animals.

A new subsection is added to the Zoning Ordinance to help regulate domestic animals, as follows:

A. Number of Domestic Animals

All domestic animals shall be limited to maintain the animal(s) state of good health. Adequate shelter and protections shall be provided suitable for the species, age, condition, size, and type of each domestic animal. It shall be unlawful to own, possess, shelter, keep, harbor, or maintain any domestic animals under such conditions or in such a manner as to create a nuisance by way of noise, odor, menace to health, or otherwise.

B. Sanitation

The owner of any domestic animal shall be required to follow procedures and practices to maintain healthy conditions and to ensure that no public nuisance shall be created or maintained or that no threat to the health of persons living in the dwelling or elsewhere shall be created. All domestic animal owners shall:

1. Maintain sanitary conditions in areas where domestic animals are kept for any period of time, including the prompt removal of animal waste.
2. Provide sufficient and proper ventilation in all areas where domestic animals are kept for any period of time.
3. Provide adequate nutrition for all domestic animals.
4. Take reasonable care to prevent the transmission of disease, including necessary veterinary care.
5. Follow all other applicable state or federal statutes, rules and regulations regarding the keeping of domestic animals.

C. Soiling of Public or Private Property

It shall be unlawful for any person owning or having charge, care or control of any dog to allow or permit such dog to soil any public or private property other than that of the owner, keeper, custodian or person having control of such dog without promptly removing or disposing of, in a sanitary manner, any excrements deposited by a dog upon any public or private property.

D. Prohibited Acts

It shall be unlawful for any owner to keep, harbor or have charge of, any domestic animal, whether licensed or unlicensed, when any one or more the following facts exist:

1. The domestic animal shows vicious behaviors and has molested any person or animal lawfully in or upon any public street or place. Vicious behaviors include menacing and aggressive behavior; propensity, tendency, or disposition to attack; has, without provocation or justification, caused bodily/physical injury to a person. For purposes of this section, a domestic animal who has bitten or attacked another person shall be presumed to be vicious.
2. The domestic animal, by destruction of property or trespassing upon the property of others, has become a nuisance in the vicinity where it is kept. Proof of trespass or property damage must be provided with any complaint.
3. No person shall permit any dog, when under that individual's control or when on that individual's premises or on premises under his control, to become a nuisance to others by loud barking, howling, or yelping, provided that any complaint about this fact shall be made by not less than two persons from two separate households.
4. The domestic animal appears to be suffering from rabies or are affected by hydrophobia, mange or other infectious or dangerous disease.

E. Running at Large

1. No person shall cause or permit any domestic animal to run at large within the Township.
2. Dogs which are on any public or private street, sidewalk, right-of-way, or any other public place, without being held securely on a leash, shall be deemed to be running at large.
3. It shall be unlawful to permit any dog to run at large on the property of another without the permission of the owner of that property.

F. Wild and/or Exotic Pets

No person shall shelter, exhibit, market, raise, harbor, breed, house or maintain any wild or exotic animal as defined in Section 120.14: Definitions.

G. Violations

Any person who violates a provision of this Ordinance, or fail to comply with any of the requirements herein, shall be responsible for a municipal civil infraction.

Section 3. Severability and Validity.

If any portion of this Ordinance is found invalid for any reason, such holding will not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

Section 3. Repealer.

All other ordinances inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent necessary to give this Ordinance full force and effect.

Section 4. Effective Date.

This Ordinance takes effect upon the expiration of 7 days after publication as required by MCL 125.3401(7).

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COOPER

NOTICE OF POSTING TO INTRODUCE PROPOSED ORDINANCES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that at its meeting on April 13, 2026, the Township Board received the following proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments:

1. Consideration of Ordinance No. 281 to amend Section 120.410: Definitions of the Township Zoning Ordinance to update the definition of a kennel to ensure it only addresses commercial operations and to Section 120.485: Keeping of Domestic Animals, which is a new ordinance to help regulate domestic animals and any potential behavioral impacts. Regulations include requirements for maintaining animals in good health, keeping animals on premises, and managing nuisance behaviors.
2. Consideration of Ordinance No. 282 to amend Section 120.410: Accessory Uses or Buildings of the Township Zoning Ordinance to clarify the allowed maximum height of an accessory structure and the requirements of accessory structures on a corner lot.

These Ordinances will be considered for adoption on May 11, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. The proposed Ordinances are available in their entirety for public inspection. The proposed Ordinances are posted at the office of the Township Clerk, 1590 West D Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan, and are posted on the website of the Charter Township of Cooper, www.coopertwp.org.

DEANNA JANSSEN, Clerk
Cooper Charter Township Hall
1590 West D Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
(269) 382-0223