



CITY OF BETHLEHEM
OFFICE OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: Rachel Leon, Council President
From: Matthew J. Deschler, Assistant Solicitor
Re: Zoning Ordinance Amendments
Date: May 13, 2026

Enclosed for City Council's consideration is an Ordinance amending the City's Zoning Ordinance. The proposed amendments modify the definition of "hotel" in the Zoning Ordinance so as to include transient guests, who are defined as individuals renting lodging for fewer than 30 consecutive days. The amendments would have the effect of excluding short-term rentals in residential districts where hotels are prohibited. Other proposed amendments (a) modify the definition of boarding house to maintain consistency with the modified definition of hotel; (b) amend Article 1307, relating to the workforce housing incentive, to include the CL district; and (c) revise Article 1318.26 to prohibit multiple single-family detached dwellings on the same lot. among districts.

As these amendments are proposed by City staff, I would respectfully request that City Council, as the City's governing body under the Municipalities Planning Code ("MPC"), forward the proposed Ordinance to the City's Planning Commission and to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission for review as required by the MPC.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew J. Deschler".

Matthew J. Deschler
Assistant Solicitor

Cc: J. William Reynolds
Laura Collins, Esq.
John F. Spirk, Jr., Esq.

BILL NO. ____ - 2026
ORDINANCE NO. 2026-_____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM, COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING PART 13 OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM CODIFIED ORDINANCES TITLED “ZONING ORDINANCE”.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AND ENACT THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCE:

SECTION 1. Article 1302.13 of the City of Bethlehem Codified Ordinances, defining a “boarding or rooming house” in the Zoning Ordinance, is hereby amended to read as follows (**bold underlined** text denotes additions, whereas ~~strikeouts~~ denote deletions):

Boarding or Rooming House. A dwelling in which at least two rooms ~~are offered for rent,~~ **not meeting the definition of dwelling unit are rented for habitation,** payable in money or other consideration, whether or not meals are furnished to lodgers and in which no ~~transients~~ **transient guests** are accommodated and no public restaurant is maintained. A school or college dormitory, fraternity or sorority house, membership club with residents, and other similar uses are not deemed to be a boarding or rooming house.

SECTION 2. Article 1302.60 of the City of Bethlehem Codified Ordinances, defining a “hotel” in the Zoning Ordinance, is hereby amended to read as follows (**bold underlined** text denotes additions, whereas ~~strikeouts~~ denote deletions):

Hotel. ~~A building or groups of buildings which has a central office and which contains 1 or more rental units which are rented to transient visitors to the area, and which may also~~ **An establishment where members of the public may obtain, for money or other consideration, sleeping accommodations in a building or group of buildings serving transient guests. An establishment which has sleeping accommodations available to the general public as rooms, suites or other sleeping quarters for periods less than 30 consecutive days is a hotel within the meaning of this definition, even though the establishment may have other accommodations which are used for purposes other than sleeping, and even though the establishment may have rooms, suites or other sleeping quarters which are available only for periods of 30 consecutive days or more. A hotel may** include an accessory tavern, restaurant, pool, exercise facilities or meeting facilities. **No room, suite or other sleeping quarter in a hotel, regardless of the consecutive period for which such room, suite or other sleeping quarter is available to members of the public as sleeping accommodations, and regardless of whether such room, suite or other sleeping quarter otherwise meets the definition of a dwelling unit, shall be considered a dwelling unit.**

SECTION 3. Article 1302.44 of the City of Bethlehem Codified Ordinances, defining a “treatment center” in the Zoning Ordinance, is hereby amended by inserting the following

definition of “transient guest(s)” as the new Article 1302.44 and renumbering the definition of “treatment center” as Article 1302.45 and renumbering all subsequent sections of Article 1302 accordingly (**bold underlined** text denotes additions, whereas ~~strikeouts~~ denote deletions):

Transient guest(s). One or more persons that occupy a single dwelling unit or room, suite or other sleeping quarter for money or other consideration for a period of less than 30 consecutive days.

SECTION 4. Article 1322.03(h) of the City of Bethlehem Codified Ordinances, providing for additional requirements for “boarding or rooming houses” in the Zoning Ordinance, is hereby amended as follows (**bold underlined** text denotes additions, whereas ~~strikeouts~~ denote deletions):

(h) Boarding House (includes Rooming House).

- (1) Minimum lot area- 15,000 square feet.
- (2) Minimum side yard building setback - 15 feet each side
- (3) Maximum density- 3,000 square feet of lot area per rental unit.
- (4) See occupancy limits in the Property Maintenance Code.
- (5) ~~Rooms shall be rented for a minimum period of 5 consecutive days.~~

SECTION 5. Article 1307.01 of the City of Bethlehem Codified Ordinances, relating to the “workforce housing incentive” in the Zoning Ordinance, is hereby amended as follows (**bold underlined** text denotes additions, whereas ~~strikeouts~~ denote deletions):

1307.01 Workforce dwellings are rental or owner-occupied dwelling units that meet the standards of this Article 1307. This Article 1307 shall only apply within the CM-LTN, IR-R, RT, CB, **CL** and CS zoning districts. All of the requirements of this Ordinance shall continue to apply, except for provisions specifically modified by this Article 1307.

SECTION 6. Article 1318.26 of the City of Bethlehem Codified Ordinances is hereby amended to add the following subsection (e) as follows (**bold underlined** text denotes additions, whereas ~~strikeouts~~ denote deletions):

(e) **No more than one single-family detached dwelling may be located on a lot.**

SECTION 7. All ordinances and parts of Ordinances inconsistent herewith be, and the same are hereby repealed.

Sponsored by: /s/ _____

/s/ _____

PASSED finally in Council on this _____ day of _____, 2026.

/s/ _____
President of Council

ATTEST:

/s/ _____
City Clerk

This Ordinance approved this _____ day of _____, 2026.

/s/ _____
Mayor