

Midway Council grants encroachment permit for ‘eyesore,’ 116 E. Main

SCOTT WHITE
MANAGING EDITOR

Midway City Council approved a 60-day extension of an encroachment permit for 116 E. Main Street at its meeting on Monday, Sept. 15. This historic building was built in the late 19th century for the Midway chapter of the African-American Order of Oddfellows and sits in the heart of the prime tourism section of the town.

The City Council, on a 5-1 vote, approved the request, which will allow the scaffolding covering the sidewalk to remain in place until Nov. 17. Councilmember Steve Simmoff was the only “no” vote, preferring instead a 30-day extension to the encroachment permit.

The building has a well-known, tortured history concerning its rehabilitation and remodeling, which has long frustrated city officials and led many of them, as well as residents and visitors, to call it an “eyesore.”

Purchased in 2017 by Nasser “Nass” Alamdari

of Lexington, renovation began in 2020, per building permit records. Since then, it has been a subject of controversy involving the Midway City Council, the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Commission and the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Architecture Review Board, with deadlines set and little progress made.

In the last year, the project has had two turning points: the involvement of the Kentucky Historical Commission, which began assisting Alamdari with the project; and Midway Mayor Grayson Vandegrift, with support from the City Council, reinvigorating the Midway Code Enforcement Board by working with the Planning Commission, appointing all new members and enacting stronger ordinances with fines.

In support of the request, Alamdari provided a detailed progress report and said he expects to have the project completed within the extension period and the scaffolding removed. Vandegrift confirmed progress had been made and said, the building “looks a lot better.”

Jeremy Divine honored Since Sept. 21, Jeremy Divine, a teacher at Woodford County High School and a Midway resident, has served as the Midway Parks manager on a volunteer basis, and the Midway Park Board itself since 2020. Divine is stepping down from this position. In recognition of Divine’s service, the Midway City Council passed a resolution naming the week of Sept. 15, 2025, “Jeremy Divine Week” in Midway.

Vandegrift read the proclamation, which listed some of the board’s accomplishments while Divine was manager, including the addition a smaller canine section to the dog park, the installation of Monarch Butterfly Waystations, the integration of Blue Jay Park into the park system, which included building a new fence around the park and installing a new sign, the planting of native flowering plants on the

northside entrance of Walter Bradley Park, the continued maintenance of the paths, and the construction of an ADA compliant access point at the Newton Street entrance of Bradly park.

“One of the things that makes Midway great is the volunteerism spirit of our residents,” Vandegrift said. “(Divine) worked for zero dollars. Sometimes things were difficult, but he just moved on, and we are so proud and grateful for him.”

FEMA award Vandegrift announced the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved grants relating to flood mitigation issues, which arose during and after the historic April 2025 flooding. The total amount is approximately \$300,000 to \$350,000. The money will be used to repair or mitigate a sewer line, road repairs and the reimbursement of overtime incurred while dealing with those floods.

Vandegrift said documents still need to be finalized, but timing details should be announced in the coming months.

Halloween Council approved Halloween trick-or-treat for Oct. 30, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Midway Fall Festival Vandegrift reminded everyone that this coming weekend, Sept. 20-21 is the annual Midway Fall Festival.

“It is really great we live in a town where people want to come and visit,” he said. “Based on cell phone data, we know about 30,000 people visit us that weekend. It really helps tourism and fund(s) the Midway Merchants Association,” which pays for and promotes the event.”

Vandegrift added, every time residents get frustrated with traffic or the crowds, just say, “Fall Fest, Fall Fest, Fall Fest” silently to yourself, which is what he says to remind himself this is a great thing for the community.



MIDWAY MAYOR GRAYSON VANDEGRIFT proclaimed the week of Sept. 15, 2025, as “Jeremy Divine Week” in Midway. Divine served as the unpaid Midway Parks manager from September 2021 until September 2025. From left, Vandegrift and Divine holding the city proclamation. (Photo by Sonya Conner)

Weighing changes to in-family ordinance

BY BOB VLACH
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

A discussion about possible amendments to the ordinance regulating in-family land conveyances continued Sept. 11, with the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Commission making progress on provisions for how long a lot needs to be held by a property owner before being sold.

Weighing the implications of requiring someone to hold a primary or parent tract of land for two years or five years, a majority of the commissioners supported a provision that requires a property owner to hold a lot created by an in-family conveyance for 10 years and the primary tract for five years. Also, a hardship provision has been added, which could allow someone to sell a primary or parent tract earlier than five years.

Commissioner Chris Sharp, who serves on a subcommittee that discussed possible amendments prior to the commission meeting, said someone owning a 30-acre conforming lot in the A-1 agricultural district should not have to wait five years to sell that property just because an in-family lot was created from that primary parcel.

Commissioner Rich Schein said he understood that legal logic, but voiced frustration because of the rationale for implementing an in-family ordinance, so parents can convey land on the family farm to their children and their families.

The zoning ordinance and Comprehensive Plan include language about maintaining, preserving and enhancing agricultural lands in Woodford County, Planning Director Steve Hunter said, so “we’re in the business of preserving farmland, preserving family farms.” If the community wants to move away from that aim, then language in the

Comp Plan needs to change, he added.

While not directly addressing Sharp’s assertion that “There’s no money in agriculture anymore, unfortunately,” resident Lori Garkovich again shared statistics showing millions of dollars of income are generated by sales from commodities produced on Woodford County farms.

“I would suggest that farming is a viable economic activity in Woodford County. Otherwise, it’s hard to produce those kinds of numbers,” she said prior to the public hearing being closed.

Hunter recommended that the commission not forward proposed changes to the in-family land ordinance to Woodford Fiscal Court until he can revise the language in Articles II and VII of the zoning ordinance.

While making that recommendation, which was supported by the commission after a lot of back-and-forth discussion, Hunter said amendments are also proposed to provisions that regulate residential uses, which the City of Versailles has been waiting on.

Those proposed changes include increasing density in most residential zoning districts and creating a new R-1D district to create opportunities for more affordable housing. Also, manufactured homes will be allowed in some single-family districts in the amended ordinance. Manufactured homes are now required to be allowed by state law in residential districts.

Stub streets The commission approved amendments to its subdivision regulations at the request of the City of Versailles that adds language to ensure developers will connect stub streets. The request was made after the developer of The Legends did not connect stub streets in that subdivision on Troy Pike, Hunter said.

There were no comments from the public on the proposed changes during a hearing, which was closed prior to the commission unanimously approving amendments to Article VI of the subdivision regulations.

Going forward, stub street connections must be constructed or bonded during the first phase of construction, and if a project is under the construction, those connections must be made during the next phase of construction, Hunter said.

He said road connections improve traffic circulation, which is why the city asked developers of The Legends to connect stub streets in that subdivision.

Another amendment to the regulations will require any subdivision with more than 20 lots to have more than one way in and out for public safety, Hunter said.

Non-conforming lots The commission recommended text amendments to Articles VIII and X of the zoning ordinance that will allow property owners impacted by recent Kentucky River flooding to rebuild/construct houses on the building footprints of nonconforming lots.

The recommendation to amend the ordinance goes to Woodford Fiscal Court and city councils for approval.

Housing study The commission approved a contract with Blueprint Kentucky to move forward with a housing study, contingent upon the review of its attorney, Henry Smith. The study will be completed next June rather than January because the cost would increase if that date was not moved. Commissioner Whitney Stepp abstained from voting on the contract because she works for the University of Kentucky, which offers consulting services through Blueprint Kentucky.

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OCTOBER 15, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

KCTCS

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WOODFORD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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