

GAINES CHARTER

TOWNSHIP

PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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Executive Summary

Section 19(2) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008) requires the Planning Commission to “make an annual written report to the legislative body concerning its operation and the status of planning activities, including recommendations regarding actions by the legislative body related to planning and development.”

The 2023 Planning & Zoning Department Annual Report provides the Planning Commission and Township Board with the following information:

- An update on development activities within the Township
- The meeting activity of both the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals
- Code enforcement activities
- Internal department activities
- A review of Master Plan implementation actions

The Annual Report offers information that is intended to be relevant to the Planning Commission, Township Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Township staff, and the public. The work program will help guide the department’s actions throughout the upcoming year and serve as a benchmark when preparing the subsequent year’s Annual Report.

The following statement serves as the Department’s vision:

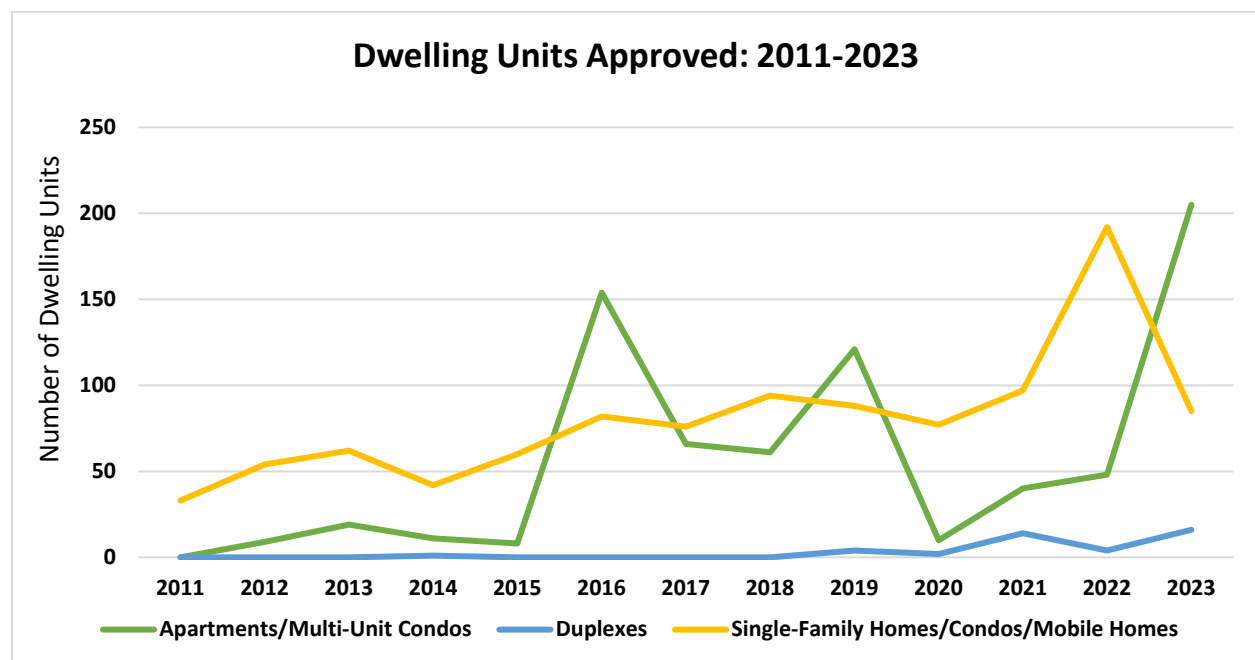
In our capacity as Planning and Zoning Department staff, we are committed to providing the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Township Board with professional assistance so that together we may work towards the vision created in the Township Master Plan. As staff, we see ourselves as the facilitators between the many various stakeholders within the Township and strive to develop consensus on the multitude of land use issues that come before the Township. As always, our goal is to provide for the health, safety, and general welfare of the community as a whole. We take seriously this obligation and strive to accomplish this goal in every facet of our department’s actions.

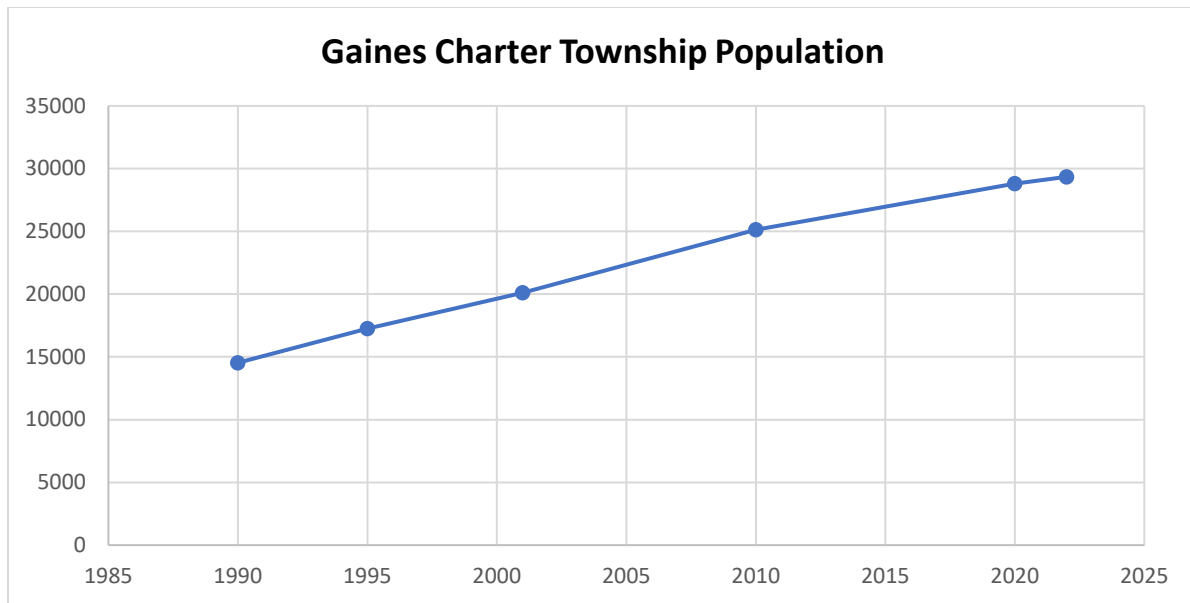
Current Planning Division

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

Table 1 details the number of new dwelling units constructed per year over the last 11 years 2011 to 2023. This includes single-family dwellings as well as attached units and apartments/condos.

	Apartments/ Multi-Unit Condos	Duplexes	Single Family Homes/Condos/ Mobile Homes	Total Units
2023	205	16	85	306
2022	48	4	192	244
2021	40	14	97	151
2020	10	2	77	89
2019	121	4	88	213
2018	61	0	94	161
2017	66	0	76	142
2016	154	0	82	236
2015	8	0	60	68
2014	11	1	42	54
2013	19	0	62	81
2012	9	0	54	63
2011	0	0	33	33





PROJECT REVIEWS

Table 2.

Summary of 40 application reviews completed by the Planning Commission, and subsequent Township Board action if applicable. The items are listed by the order in which they were considered.

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
3950 60 th Street SE	Site Plan Review	123 Net, construction of a new 35,700 SF data center; site improvements include 27 parking spaces, truck docks, detention pond, landscaping, sidewalk, and a relocated entrance off 60 th Street.	Approved	N/A
34 Coleman Street	Zoning Map Amendment	Rezone one parcel from R-3 to C-2.	Approved	Approved
6581 College Ave	Special Use Permit	Construction of a 400 SF accessory building in RL-10.	Approved	N/A
7307 Hammond Avenue & 3316 68th Street	Tentative Preliminary Plat	Thornapple Farms Phases 1-6 of Thornapple Farms Plat. 169 single family homes.	Approved	Approved (Amendment Approved 8/14/2023)
6658 East Paris Ave	Site Plan Review	Howie's Hockey Tape, construction of a 53,900 SF manufacturing and warehouse building.	Approved	N/A
10478 East Paris Ave	Special Use Permit	Total of 3,456 SF of accessory buildings in the Ag-RR zoning district.	Approved	N/A
10656 Hannah Lake Ave	Special Use Permit	Total of 3,174 SF of existing accessory buildings in the A-B zoning district.	Approved	N/A
2550 100 th Street	Special Use Permit	Total of 4,627 SF residential accessory buildings in the A-B zoning district.	Approved	N/A
6291 Wing Ave	Special Use Permit	Total of 1,740 SF of residential accessory buildings in the RL-10 zoning district.	Approved	N/A

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
6968 Terra Cotta Avenue	Special Use Permit	Group Child Day Care Operation in residential home.	Approved	N/A
3179 84th Street	Special Use Permit	Total of 3,712 SF of accessory buildings in the Ag-RR zoning district.	Approved	N/A
9744 Meadow Valley Lane	Special Use Permit	Total of 3,203 SF of accessory building square footage in the A-B zoning district.	Approved	N/A
4149 & 4450 76th Street SE	Rezone	Steelcase, rezone approximately 330 acres of land from Ag-RR and A-B to Light Industrial (I-1)	Approved	Approved
1200 & 1326 60 th St KCC Daycare	Site Plan Review/ Special Use Permit	KCC, expansion of Day Care	Approved	N/A
4200 60th Street	Site Plan Review	Electric utility substation immediately south of Switch	Approved	N/A
1100 92nd Street	Special Use Permit	Construct a 3,456 SF accessory building in Ag-Business Zone	Approved	N/A
10287 Kalamazoo Ave	PUD-Mineral Removal Rezoning	Stoneco, rezoning of a 29-acre parcel to PUD-Mineral Removal	Approved	Approved
1200 60th Street	Site Plan Review	Ashford Woods Phase 1, 152-unit townhouse development	Approved	N/A
133 Wavell Street	Special Use Permit	Construct a 400 SF accessory building in R-3 zone.	Approved	N/A
190 92nd Street	Special Use Permit	Construction of a 903 SF pool house, for a total of 4,327 SF of accessory building square footage in Ag-Res zone.	Approved	N/A
500 Sunbrook Drive	Special Use Permit	Construction of a 196 SF accessory building, for a total of 296 SF of residential accessory buildings.	Approved	N/A
2864 60th Street	Special Use Permit	Construction of a 2,250 SF accessory building, for a total of 2,350 SF of residential accessory buildings in the RL-10 zone.	Approved	N/A
3820 100th Street	Special Use Permit	Construction of a 2,016 SF accessory building, for a total of 2,706 SF of residential accessory buildings on the property in the Ag-Business zone.	Approved	N/A
6266 & 6278 Division Ave	Site Plan Review	Elvis Auto, 4,096 SF addition on the rear of the building for auto repair business.	Approved	N/A
990 Windrow St	Special Use Permit	Construction of a 792 SF addition to an existing accessory building, for a total of 1,752 SF of residential accessory buildings in the RL-10 zone.	Approved	N/A
2688 100th Street	Special Use Permit	Construction of a 1,200 SF addition to an existing accessory building, for a total of 2,800 SF of residential accessory buildings in the Ag-Business zone.	Approved	N/A
8735 East Paris Avenue	Special Use Permit	Construction of a 3,120 SF accessory building, for a total of 5,616 SF of residential accessory buildings in Ag-Res zone.	Approved	N/A

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
8190 Division Avenue	PUD Rezone and Site Plan Review	Brewer Park Apartments, mixed use retail and 191 apartments.	Approved	Approved
4490 60th Street	Site Plan Review	Alliance Beverage, 100,250 SF warehouse addition	Approved	N/A
6646 Paris Avenue	Special Use Permit	240 SF addition to an existing accessory building, for a total of 880 SF of residential accessory buildings	Approved	N/A
377 76th Street & 410 72nd Street	Site Plan Review	Pediatric Behavioral Health Center, construction of a 135,000 SF treatment facility	Approved	N/A
4645 100th Street	Special Use Permit	Request to conduct a home occupation (auto detailing) in the accessory building	Approved	N/A
2464 68th Street	Tentative Preliminary Plat	Hoffman Meadows Phase II, 55 single family lots in RL-10 zone.	Approved	Approved
7979 Kalamazoo Ave	Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review	South Christian High School, 22,000 square foot education wing addition.	Approved	N/A
1235 100th Street	Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review	Sikkema Equipment, requests approval of a SUP permit for Agricultural Services Business in the Ag-Res zone, and site plan review for a 1,900 SF office space building addition	Approved	N/A
7610 Division Ave	Rezone	From Heavy Industrial to General Commercial	Denied	Withdrawn
9050 Kalamazoo Ave	4:1 Ratio Waiver	46.5 Acres before split	Approved	N/A
9625 East Paris Avenue	Special Use Permit	Construction of a 1,000 SF addition to an existing 1,600 SF accessory building, for a total of 2,600 SF of residential accessory buildings.	Approved	N/A
6729 Hanna Lake Ave	Site Plan Review	Construction of a 12,400-square-foot expansion to the Dutton Christian School.	Approved	N/A

Table 3

Summary of eight application reviews completed by Township staff as administrative approvals.

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Staff Action
1200 60th St	Minor Site Plan Amendment	KCC: Addition of a connector drive and addition of six (6) parking spaces.	Approved
1545 68th St	Minor PUD Amendment	Corewell: Removal and replacement of the wall sign and internally lit monument sign.	Approved

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Staff Action
4500 68th St	Minor PUD Amendment	Amazon: site work at the exiting drive lane, flatwork, striping and fencing. Relocation of gates, bollards, non-light pole and cameras	Approved
4640 60th St	Minor PUD Amendment	Grooters Industrial: Replacement of deferred parking on previous site plan with eleven (11) tractor trailer parking spaces. Relocation of twenty-two (22) deferred parking to the north side of the building.	Approved
1103 84th St	Minor PUD Amendment	Cooks Crossing; Phase 4: Removal of one unit and widening of the units on the north side of Brickley Street. Multiple lot lines on the north side of Brickley Street adjusted.	Approved
1103 84th St	Minor PUD Amendment	Cooks Crossing; Phase 4: two garage buildings with six units each in front of Buildings TH 9 and TH 10 have been changed to four garage buildings with three units each.	Approved
1440 Eastport Dr	Minor PUD Amendment	Crossings Apartments: Pond Renovation	Approved
6188 Eastern Ave	Minor PUD Amendment	Woodfield East Apartments: construction of a 5,000 SF maintenance barn with lighting to illuminate the paved areas between buildings.	Approved

VARIANCES

Table 4 provides a summary of the variance requests in 2023.

Address	Variance Type	Description	Staff Recommendation	Action
1200 60th Street	Use	Variance for Signage	Approve with Condition	Approval
1200 60th Street	Dimensional	Variance for Signage	Deny	Denial
10664 Eastern Avenue	Dimensional	Front Setback for Accessory Building	Approve	Approval

ORDINANCE UPDATES

One text amendment to the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance was approved:

1. Zoning text amendment revised Sections 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2, 9.2, 19.9, 20.11, and 28.2 of the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance to allow for the use of child and adult daycares in the commercial and office zoning districts. Previously, daycares were not

permitted in the Neighborhood Commercial (C-1), General Commercial (C-2), or Office-Service (O-S) zoning districts.

2. Revisions to the Neighborhood and General Commercial zoning districts. Amended both to reflect Master Plan.

REZONINGS

Table 5 provides information on the six rezoning applications received in 2023. All were granted approval.

Development Name/Address	Description
34 Coleman	From R-3 to C-2
4149 & 4450 76 th St.	Steelcase rezoned from Ag/Rural-Res to Light Industrial
8190 Division	Brewer Park Apartments rezoned RL-10 & 14 to PUD
10287 Kalamazoo	Stoneco rezoned Ag/RR to PUD-Mineral Removal
25 Parcels	Rezoned 25 parcels along Division and in the Dutton area from General Commercial to Neighborhood Commercial.
1200 60 th Street	Conditionally Rezoned parcel from RL-10 to R-3 for Ashford Woods Project

Long-Range Planning Division

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A new Master Plan and Future Land Use Plan map was approved by the Township Board of Trustees in April. This new Master Plan integrated past area plans and introduced mixed use concepts that will help bring more flexibility and efficiency to land development. Several Village Center areas were identified; Dutton, 84th & Division, and the west side of Kalamazoo north of M-6. The recognition that the Township should be more efficient with housing led to the development of a Village Residential concept, which encourages smaller lots for single family homes and townhomes, sometimes integrated with neighborhood commercial.

Subsequently, a major effort was launched to “overhaul” the zoning ordinance, to bring it into alignment with the new Master Plan, bring it into concurrence with current law, eliminate redundancies, make it more user friendly, and to correct some conflicting language. Staff is hoping to have the ordinance updated by the spring of 2024.

Prior to the overall ordinance overhaul the Commercial zoning sections were updated independently, with some changes to Neighborhood Commercial to define it better as opposed to General Commercial, and bring in in line with the Master Plan.

Table 6 lists the proposed implementation tasks and their current status. Planning Department staff performed work on 4 of the 12 implementation steps laid out in the 2002 Master Plan.

Task	Status	Comments
Evaluate and Revise the Zoning Ordinance	Continued Action	Commercial zoning amended, overall ZO “overhaul” initiated.
Inventory Key Natural and Cultural Features	Approval	Board approved budget for a Natural Features Inventory to be carried out by Calvin College/Plaster Creek Stewards.
Develop A Program for Natural Buffers and Scenic Easements	No Action	
Develop Performance Standards for the PUD District	Continued Action	This will be part of the zoning ordinance overhaul
Prepare a Sub-Area Plan for the Dutton Village Area	Completed	This was accomplished as part of the 2008 Master Plan Update.
Prepare a Sub-Area Plan for the Cutlerville Village Center	Completed	The entire Division Corridor and Cutlerville area are subject to new zoning categories under the future land use plan and zoning ordinance update, creating opportunities for medium density housing, mixed-uses, and Neighborhood Commercial.
Prepare a Corridor Plan for Kalamazoo Avenue	Completed	The Kalamazoo Avenue/84 Street Subarea plan was passed by the Planning Commission in November 2015 and was approved by the Township Board in March 2016.
Establish Consistent Standards for Calculating Density	No Action	No formal action taken on this item. We have been consistent in measuring density using the net density approach, but with no formal standards.
Improve Public Understanding of Growth Management Benefits	No Action	The Department has not actively been pursuing this area.

Promote the Purchase of Development Rights	No Action	The Department has not actively been pursuing this area.
Promote Transfer of Development Rights	No Action	The Department has not actively been pursuing this area.
Improve Non-Motorized Transportation Network	No Action	Staff intends to pursue an update to the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan in 2025

PARKS & RECREATION

The five-year Gaines Charter Township Parks & Trails Plan is completed and was approved by the Township Board of Trustees in January of 2023. The committee continues to focus on the management of Prairie Wolf Park. Staff intends to pursue DNR grants to develop Codys Mill Park, and to look for opportunities to purchase open space lands as they become available.

Planning staff also applied for a second round SPARK grant through DNR to build a pavilion and make parking lot improvements in Prairie Wolf Park, but the grant was not awarded.

Code Enforcement Division

The Planning Department continued to use BS&A software to register and track code enforcement cases in 2022. Filed cases are those where a complaint has been received and registered in the software, and staff has completed a physical inspection of the property and contacted the property owner regarding a potential violation. Warning letters are sent and followed up with a second letter or Sherriff's Deputy site visit. Complaints that have no corresponding enforceable ordinance are not included (e.g., high grass or weeds).

Table 7 is a summary of the enforcement cases undertaken by planning staff.

Address	Category	Date Filed	Status
7390 Hammond Ave	Rubbish	01/27/2021	Civil Infraction Issued
7213 Regal Ave	Rubbish	08/19/2021	Court Order
8474 Division Ct	Rubbish	11/17/2021	Civil Infraction Issued
6141 E Paris Ave	Rubbish	05/05/2022	Case Closed
6065 E Paris Ave	Zoning Violation	06/21/2022	Final Warning Issued
48 Kenton St	Temp Storage Unit	07/05/2022	Final Warning Issued
8475 Trailblazer Dr	Rubbish	08/22/2022	Complaint Filed
9300 E Paris	Illegal Building	10/24/2022	Insp. Scheduled
6522 Nearpoint Dr	Dumpster and Trailer	12/01/2022	Case Closed
9247 Kalamazoo Ave	Illegal Sign	01/23/2023	Case Closed
2730 60 th St	Nuisance Parking	01/23/2023	Case Closed
7740 Division Ave	Zoning Violation	02/07/2023	Warning Issued
89 Cameron St	Temporary Dwelling	02/28/2023	Case Closed

1501 100 th St	Rubbish	03/01/2023	Case Closed
6728 Kalamazoo Ave	Sign	03/01/2023	Case Closed
475 Sundale Ct	Rubbish	03/08/2023	Case Closed
6867 Dutton Ave	Rubbish	04/21/2023	Case Closed
7052 Hammond Ave	Keeping of Animals	04/24/2023	Case Closed
2297 68 th St	Rubbish/ Fence	05/17/2023	Warning Issued
109 Brownell St	Recreational Vehicle	05/22/2023	Case Closed
6818 Cornerstone Dr	Sign	06/20/2023	Case Closed
6105 E Paris Ave	Zoning Violation	06/21/2023	Case Closed
610 72 nd St	Recreational Vehicle	06/23/2023	Case Closed
7222 Jewelbrooke Dr	Rubbish	06/23/2023	Warning Issued
7180 Eastern Ave	Noise	06/28/2023	Case Closed
97 Roth St	Rubbish	07/11/2023	Warning Issued
146 Fontenelle St	Rubbish	08/01/2023	Case Closed
51 76 th St	Outdoor Storage	08/10/2023	Case Closed
1719 Crescent Pointe	Commercial Vehicle	08/15/2023	Case Closed
6944 Madison Ave	Keeping of Animals	08/15/2023	Case Closed
6816 Linden Ave	Nuisance Parking	08/16/2023	Warning Issued
6864 Aleda Ave	Recreational Vehicle	08/16/2023	Case Closed
7016 Madison Ave	Recreational Vehicle	08/16/2023	Case Closed
461 Fontenelle St	Rubbish	08/16/2023	Case Closed
6825 E Paris Ave	Zoning Violation	08/17/2023	Case Closed
455 76 th St	Nuisance Parking	08/24/2023	Warning Issued
7001 Dutton Ave	Rubbish	08/24/2023	Case Closed
6711 Madison Ave	Rubbish	08/25/2023	Warning Issued
6671 Madison Ave	Rubbish	08/25/2023	Warning Issued
149 Coleman St	Keeping of Animals	08/28/2023	Case Closed
7488 Emerald Woods Dr	Keeping of Animals	08/31/2023	Case Closed
6949 Kalamazoo Ave	Keeping of Animals	09/12/2023	Case Closed
2861 84 th St	Zoning Violation	09/13/2023	Case Closed
7226 Division Ave	Nuisance Parking	09/15/2023	Case Closed
904 60 th St	Zoning Violation	09/15/2023	Case Closed
7800 Division Ave	Zoning Violation	09/25/2023	Warning Issued
1691 Crescent Pointe Dr	Sidewalk Repair	10/16/2023	Case Closed
6720 Eastern Ave	Keeping of Animals	11/13/2023	Case Closed
4645 100 th St	Zoning Violation	11/16/2023	Case Closed

Department Administration

PLANNING COMMISSION

Table 8 lists the members of the Planning Commission during 2023.

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Connie Giarmo	December 2024	2008 (1991 – 2000)	Chairperson
Ronnie Rober	December 2026	2002	Vice-Chairperson
Lani Thomas	December 2025	2006	Secretary
Tim Haagsma	Township Trustee	2002, 1992- 1997	Member
Ryan Wiersema	December 2024	2022	Member
Talimma Billips	December 2025	2017	Member
Brad Waayenberg	December 2026	2018	Member

Table 9 illustrates the attendance at Planning Commission Meetings in 2023.

2023 Meeting Attendance							
	Billips	Wiersema	Haagsma	Giarmo	Rober	Thomas	Waayenberg
January	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
February	Present	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Present
March	Absent	Present	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present
April 13	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
April 27	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
May	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
June	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
July 24	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Present
July 27	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Absent
August	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Present	Present
September	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
October	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present
November	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
December	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present
Absences	4	1	2	3	1	2	1

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals met on two occasions in 2023.

Table 10 lists the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2023.

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Tom Werkema	December 2026	2012	Chair
Ruth Ringnald	December 2024	2002	Vice Chair
Matt Kooiman	December 2026	2022	Member
James Peacock	December 2026	2018	Alternate
Don Hilton	December 2025	2018	Secretary
Ryan Wiersema	December 2025	2022	Member (PC Liaison)

Table 11 lists the meeting dates of the ZBA in 2023.

2023 Meeting Attendance						
	Werkema	Ringnald	Kooiman	Hilton	Peacock	Wiersema
February	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Present
April	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
No. of Absences	0	0	1	0	1	0

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

Community Development Director Dan Wells has led planning efforts for the Township since taking office in March 2020. Natalie Davenport left the position of Assistant Planner in October, and the Planning Department hired Dakota Swan as the new Assistant Planner in December.

David Jirousek (Horizon Community Planning) continues to serve as the planning consultant that assists with plan reviews and is preparing an overhaul of the zoning ordinance which will be completed in spring of 2024. Jeff Gritter of Vriesman & Korhorn Civil Engineering continued to provide support and guidance to the Planning Department.

BUDGET

The Department is committed to providing work in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. The following Tables represent information related to recent and historical Department budgets.

Table 12 lists the adopted budgets for the Planning and Zoning Department for fiscal years 2018-2023 and also shows the Department's Budget as a percentage of the overall General Fund Budget.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
P/Z Budget	\$222,837	\$219,223	\$236,439	\$219,031	\$339,256	\$416,706
% of Gen. Fund	5.9%	5.2%	4.5%	4.4%	7.2%	12.0%

Table 13 presents the actual dollar amount spent in the fiscal years 2018 – 2023 and is also expressed as a percentage of the approved Planning and Zoning Department's Budget.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Actual Expenditures	\$189,710	\$204,153	\$198,665	\$156,395	\$261,558	\$280,388
% of Budget	85.1%	93.1%	84%	71.4%	77.1%	67.3%