

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT  
2008 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 2008 Planning & Zoning Department Annual Report provides the Planning Commission and Township Board with the following information:

- An update of development activities within the Township
- The meeting activity of both the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals
- Code enforcement activities
- Internal Department actions
- A review of the 2008 Work Program

The Annual Report is separated into the following categories; Current Planning Division, Long-Range Planning Division, Code Enforcement Division, Department Organization and Work Program Review.

The Annual Report offers valuable information that may be relevant to the Planning Commission, Township Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Township staff and the general public. This information is further utilized by the Planning and Zoning Department in the preparation of a Work Program for the upcoming year, which will help guide the department’s actions throughout the upcoming year and serve as a measuring tool when preparing the following year’s Annual Report.

Staff has prepared the following statement 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 ultimate 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

The Current Planning Division is divided into the following sections: **Building Permits, Development Review (Site Plan Review, Special Land Uses, PUD Amendments, Plats, etc.), Variances, and Land Divisions.**

### BUILDING PERMITS

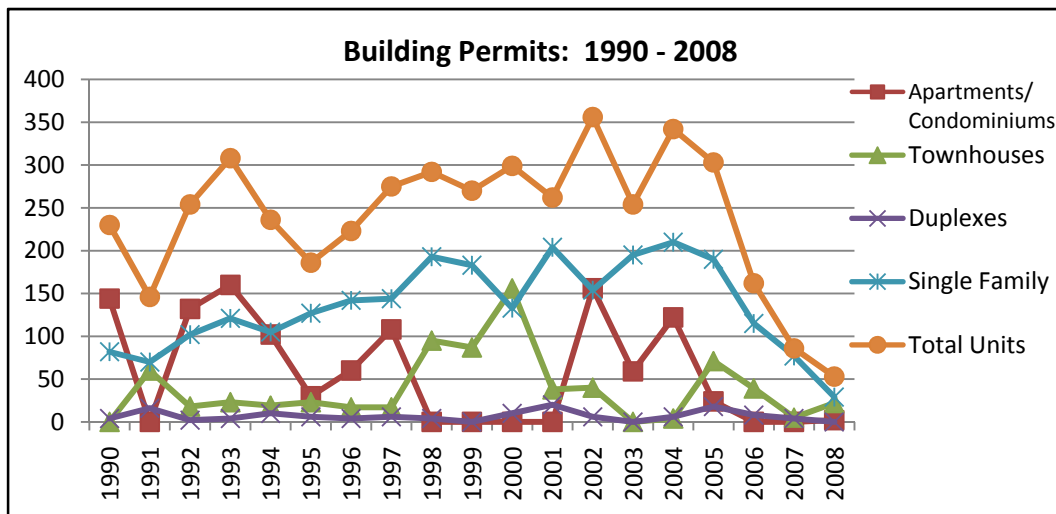
Table 1 and Figure 1 below shows the number of new dwelling units per year over a 10-year timeframe from 1999 to 2008. This includes single-family dwellings as well as attached units and apartments/condos. Staff would like to point out the following:

- For the 7-year period from 1999 - 2005, the Township averaged 298 new housing units per year.
- The actual numbers from 2006 - 2008 are well below this 7-year average with totals of 162, 86 and 53 respectively.
- For the 7-year period from 1999 - 2005, the Township averaged 181 new single-family housing starts.
- The actual numbers from 2006 - 2008 are well below this 7-year average with totals of 115, 77 and 29 respectively.

**Table 1 – Building Permits**

Building Permits					
	Apartments/ Condos	Townhouses	Duplexes	Single Family	Total Units
1999	0	87	0	183	270
2000	0	156	10	133	299
2001	0	38	20	204	262
2002	156	40	6	154	356
2003	59	0	0	195	254
2004	122	4	6	210	342
2005	24	71	18	190	303
2006	0	39	8	115	162
2007	0	5	4	77	86
2008	2	22	0	29	53

**Figure 1 – Building Permits**



The number of building permits issued for dwelling units during 2008 is the lowest 1-year total since this data has been recorded. The slowdown in residential construction is being mirrored nationwide as the country is in a recession, due largely in part to the housing and credit markets. Staff expects residential building activity in 2009 to be similar to the 2008 numbers.

In order to better understand the larger picture in terms of potential construction activity in the future, staff felt it was important to prepare an inventory of approved, but unbuilt, lots and units. These numbers will help guide the Township’s decision making process in terms of future residential development. In looking at data from the Planning Department and Building Department, staff has determined the following:

- There are 38 approved residential developments not yet built out.
- 2,056 total dwelling units were contained in these developments
- 611 lots were vacant and had not applied for building or zoning approval.
- 645 units were vacant and had not applied for building or zoning approval.
- 61% (1,256) of dwelling units/lots in these developments are unbuilt.
- At the 7-year (1999 - 2005) average of 298 units/year (see Page 3 above), it would take over 4 years to complete construction of these units/lots.

The last point is important as it shows that even at a relatively brisk building pace, the number of approved and available units and/or lots is sufficient to sustain residential growth for a number of years, possibly without any new residential developments being approved. That being said, future residential development may largely depend upon market demand for specific types of housing and at different pricing points.

Staff will be presenting more detailed information about the current housing situation, including foreclosure information and housing types, in a separate report later this year.

## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Table 2 contains a list of development reviews that were completed by the Planning Commission, Township Board, Township staff, or a combination of the three. The items are listed by request type, then alphabetical order.

**Table 2 – Development Summary**

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Status	Township Board Action
Stoneco 100 <sup>th</sup> Street Operation	Annual Review	Annual Plan Review	Approved	N/A
Design 1 PUD	Major Amendment	Signage	Approved	Approved
Kentwood Public Schools PUD	Major Amendment	Billboard	Denial	Approved
Cook’s Crossing PUD	Major Amendment	Phase Reconfigure	Approved	Approved
Crystal Springs PUD	Major Amendment	Redevelopment	Approved	Approved
Clocktower PUD	Major Amendment	Family Fare Renovation	Approved	Approved
Steven’s Pointe PUD	Minor Amendment/ Staff Review	Single Lot Setback Change	Approved	N/A
Preservation Lakes PUD	Minor Amendment/ Staff Review	Site Plan Amendment	Approved	N/A
2540 Crystal Meadow	Special Land Use	Keeping of Chickens	Denied	N/A
30 Wavell	Special Land Use	Accessory Building	Withdrawn	N/A

Bultema Brothers Road Contractors, 7746 Division Avenue	Special Land Use	Concrete Recycling in I-2 Zoning	Withdrawn	N/A
6444 Eastern Avenue	Special Land Use	Cell Tower Extension	Approved	N/A
Custom Crushing & Recycling, 1551 108 <sup>th</sup> St.	Special Land Use	Storage Building	Approved	N/A
1706 - 68th St.	Special Land Use	Adult Foster Care Family Home	Approved	N/A
3245 - 84th St.	Special Land Use	Landscaping Business	Approved	N/A
2339 - 84th St.	Special Land Use	Kennel	Approved	N/A
Consumers Credit Union, 1673 68 <sup>th</sup> St.	Site Plan Review	Bank Construction	Approved	N/A
R&T of West Michigan, 6955 East Paris Industrial Ct.	Site Plan Review	Industrial Building	Approved	N/A
National City Bank, 6616 Crossings Drive	Site Plan Review	Bank Construction	Approved	N/A
Cornerstone United Methodist Church, 1765 84 <sup>th</sup> Street	Site Plan Review Special Land Use	Church	Approved	N/A
6150 Valley Lane	Staff Review	Colocation	Approved	N/A
8151 Kalamazoo Ave.	Staff Review	Colocation	Approved	N/A
6869 East Paris	Staff Review	Colocation	Approved	N/A
6444 Eastern Ave.	Staff Review	Colocation	Approved	N/A
2045 - 68th St. SE	Staff Review	Holiday Sales	Approved	N/A
Sandstone Condominium PUD	Time Extension	Construction Time Limit Extension	Approved	N/A

As with residential development, the Township has experienced an overall slowdown in non-residential construction and activity. Again, this trend is most likely due to the national and state economies, which have also begun to affect the commercial credit markets.

Another factor possibly influencing commercial construction in the Township is the decline of available commercial property within the immediate M-6/Kalamazoo Avenue interchange area. As the availability of commercial property continues to decline in this area, there will be increased pressure over time to convert more property in the Township to commercial use.

During 2008, the Planning Commission approved or denied 7 requests for special land uses, while 2 special use requests were withdrawn before the Planning Commission acted. The 7 special land use requests in 2008 represents a nearly 79% decrease from the high of 33 requests in 1999. Most of this decrease is due to requests involving accessory buildings. In 2008 there was only one request for an accessory building, and it was ultimately withdrawn.

Please see Table 3 and Table 4 on the following page for a 10-year history of special land use requests and detailed information regarding accessory building requests, respectively.

**Table 3 – Special Land Use Requests**

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
# of Decisions	33	20	27	29	29	29	23	18	13	7
Change from Previous Year	-8%	-39%	35%	7%	0%	0%	-21%	-22%	-28%	-46%
# of Staff Recommended Approvals	28	19	26	25	27	25	20	12	11	7
# Approved	32	19	27	28	28	27	21	13	11	6
% Approved	97%	95%	100%	97%	97%	93%	91%	93%	85%	86%
% Recommended by Staff for Approval	85%	95%	96%	86%	93%	86%	87%	86%	85%	100%

**Table 4 – Accessory Building Requests**

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
# of Requests	20	10	16	17	16	18	12	8	4	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-B"	2928	0	4392	2000	0	1733	1800	3248	0	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "AR"	2130	2980	2454	2452	2313	2845	1781	2749	9440	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-10"	1143	0	978	1020	1140	2221	0	0	863	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-14"	1482	1236	408	1666	732	586	1008	0	1200	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "R3"	0	484	2590	0	528	828	576	0	0	0

Although 2008 was the lowest year for accessory building requests during the 10-year timeframe from 1999 - 2008, the overall number of those requests has been falling considerably for the past four years.

Changes to the zoning ordinance were made in 2006 that doubled the amount of accessory building floor area allowed by right. Additionally, the economy may also be playing a role in the number of requests. It will take a few more years before we have enough data to discern if the recent changes to the zoning ordinance have resulted in fewer requests for larger accessory buildings, or if it is a combination of multiple factors.

Outside of the general decrease in the number of requests, staff has identified no trends based on the types of special land use requests made in 2008.

## VARIANCES

Table 5 shows a 10 year history of variance requests:

**Table 5 – Variance Requests**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Total Number of Variances Requested</b>	15	22	14	11	8	20	15	11	2	3
<b>% Change in Total from Last Year</b>	67%	47%	-36%	-21%	-27%	150%	-25%	-27%	-82%	50%
<b>Total Number Approved</b>	10	19	12	7	8	14	11	10	2	2
<b>% of Total Requests Approved</b>	67%	86%	86%	64%	100%	70%	73%	91%	100%	67%
<b>Number Recommended for Approval by Staff</b>	9	18	8	4	2	8	5	7	1	2
<b>% of Total Recommended for Approval by Staff</b>	60%	81%	57%	36%	25%	40%	33%	64%	50%	67%
<b>Number of Use Variances Requested</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Number of Use Variances Approved</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
<b>% of Total Requested as Use Variances</b>	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	6%	0%	0%	0%

The Zoning Board of Appeals decided only 3 requests in 2008, the second lowest amount in the last 10 years, after 2007's 2 requests. **The decrease in variance requests may in large part be due to the adoption of the new zoning ordinance in 2007.** However, a slowdown in the economy often translates into a slowdown in building activity, thus resulting in fewer requests. As with special use requests for accessory buildings, it will take a few more years of data to determine the actual cause of the decline in requests.

The Zoning Board of Appeals received no requests for use variances or zoning ordinance interpretations, or an appeal of a decision made by the Zoning Administrator. Of the three dimensional variances decided in 2008, two dealt with accessory building setbacks and one dealt with mining operations within the required setback.

## LAND DIVISIONS

The creation of parcels based on the State Land Division Act also plays a role in the development of land in the Township. Therefore, it is important to identify any trends involving administrative land divisions. To that end, please see **Table 6** for a review of land divisions approved in 2008 that resulted in new parcels being created.

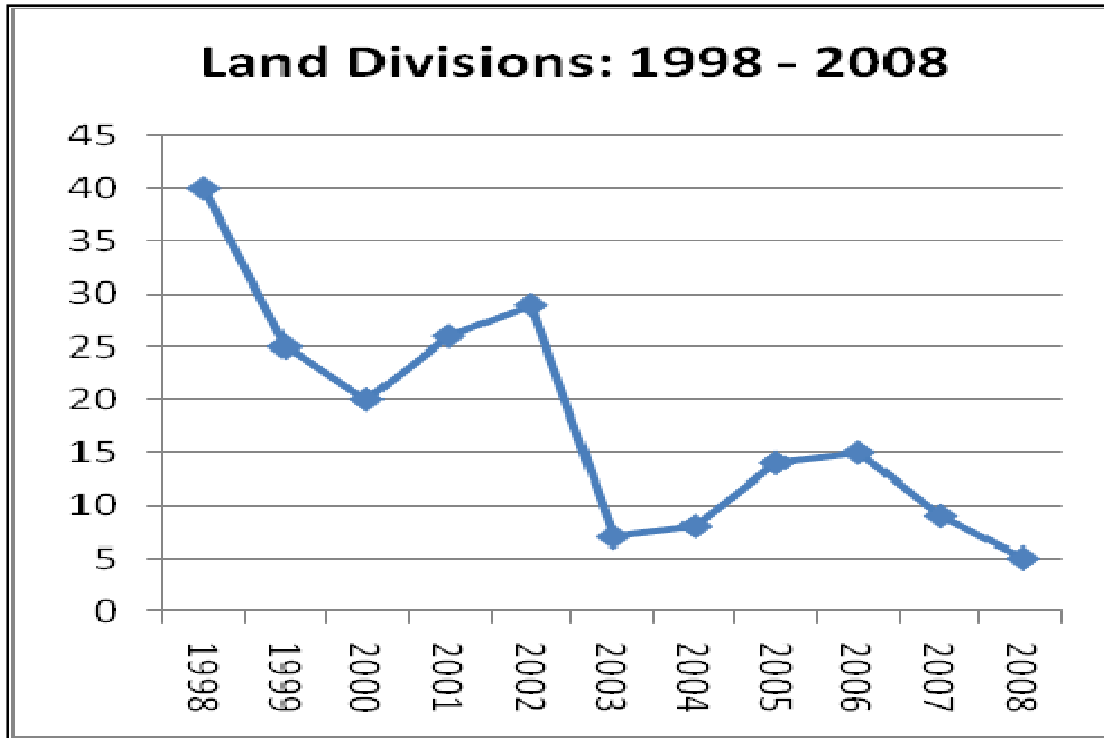
**Table 6 – Land Divisions**

Address	Section #	Size of Parent Parcel(s)	Size of Child Parcels	Comments
3300 - 60th St.	2	16.5	2.5, 14	
7200 Kalamazoo Ave.	8	47.753	41.534, 6.219	Crystal Springs Golf Course
7157 Kalamazoo Ave.	8	49.56	47.88, .63, 1.05	Crystal Spring Pro Shop
8253 Division Ave.	18	1.22	.61, .61	
1215 - 84th St. SE	17	69.983	43.934, 26.049	Cobblestone Corners

2008 was the slowest year in terms of administrative land divisions since 1998. **Figure 2** on the following page provides information on the number of land division applications since 1998. As you will notice, the overall number of land division applications has decreased

dramatically, from a high of around 40 in 1998 to 5 in 2008. Again, the decline in land division can most likely be attributed to the slowdown in the economy, particularly the new housing sector, as it is likely that a high majority of the new parcels being created were done so to allow for new house construction.

Figure 2 – Land Division Applications



## LONGE-RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

The Long-Range Planning Division is divided into the following categories; **Master Plan, Ordinance Updates, Rezoning, Economic Development, Grant Writing, Parks & Recreation and Public Education.**

### MASTER PLAN

In 2008 the Township completed the 2008 Master Plan Update, which updates, but does not replace, the existing 2002 Master Plan. As part of the Update, a Charrette was conducted in January of 2008 in order to garner public input related to the Dutton Subarea. In April of 2008, a joint Township Board-Planning Commission meeting was held to discuss the draft land use plans for the Dutton and 100<sup>th</sup> Street Subareas. After being released to neighboring jurisdictions for comment in August, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing in November and the document was officially adopted by the Township Board in December.

As a part of the 2002 Master Plan, an Implementation chapter was prepared to help guide future planning activities. Table 7 lists the proposed implementation tasks and their current status

**Table 7 – 2002 Master Plan Implementation**

Task	Status	Comments
Evaluate and Revise the Zoning Ordinance	Positive Action	Although the Township adopted a new Zoning Ordinance in 2007, it is continuously monitored for potential amendments.
Inventory Key Natural and Cultural Features	No Action	These tasks have been done on a case by case basis through PUDs, but not on a Township-wide, or Subarea basis. Staff does not anticipate taking action on either of these items in 2009.
Develop A Program for Natural Buffers and Scenic Easements	No Action	
Create A Residential Cluster Ordinance	Positive Action	This was completed by the adoption of Chapter 22 of the Zoning Ordinance, "Rural Open Space Community Developments.
Develop Performance Standards for the PUD District.	Mixed Results	The Zoning Ordinance contains general standards of review for the PUD rezoning process, but does not contain design, architectural, or other standards.
Broaden Sewer and Water Policy To Facilitate Development	Positive Action	The Township has created a High Pressure Water District.
Prepare A Sub-Area Plan for the Dutton Village Area	Positive Action	This was accomplished as part of the 2008 Master Plan Update
Prepare a Sub-Area Plan for the Cutlerville Village Center	No Action	This may be included as part of future planning for the Division Avenue Corridor Improvement

		Authority.
Prepare a Corridor Plan for Kalamazoo Avenue	No Action	No action has been taken on this item.
Establish Consistent Standards for Calculating Density	Mixed Results	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	Mixed Results	This is always an ongoing task. With a revised website, the Department has been making staff reports available online. Staff will also be utilizing the website to post "public education pieces" on various planning-related topics.
Promote the Purchase of Development Rights	No Action	It is currently the Township's policy to support the county PDR program, but to not utilize local dollars.
Promote Transfer of Development Rights	No Action	Recent changes to the Zoning Enabling Act may allow for limited TDR opportunities.
Improve Non-Motorized Transportation Network	Positive Action	This has been done on a case-by-case basis (Cobblestone Corners, Cooks Crossing, and Prairie Wolf Park). Staff will be discussing the possibility of preparing a Master Street and Nonmotorized Transportation Plan beginning in 2009.

Table 8 below provides a small statistical analysis of the action taken on the 2002 Master Plan implementation strategies.

**Table 8 – 2002 Master Plan**

	# of Actions	# of Positive Actions	% of Positive Actions	# of Positive Actions and Mixed Results	% of Positive Actions and Mixed Results
<b>2002 Master Plan Implementation Tasks</b>	14	5	36%	8	57%

The 2002 Master Plan is nearly 7 years old and staff finds that adequate progress is being made on the implementation strategies, especially considering the document projects 20-30 years into the future.

As the implementation strategies of the 2008 Master Plan Update begin to roll-out, staff will also monitor that progress on an annual basis.

In addition to activities related to the Master Plan, staff also participated on the project team that organized and conducted the Fisher's Station Charrette in October of 2008. The purpose of the charrette was to produce a new vision and plan for development of lands near two future stations of the Bus Rapids Transit service around the areas of Division Avenue, 54<sup>th</sup> Street and 60<sup>th</sup> Street. A final report regarding the outcomes of the charrette can be expected from the Grand Valley Metro Council at some point in 2009.

### ORDINANCE UPDATES

2008 was the first full year of having the new zoning ordinance in place. In 2008, the Township adopted 2 text amendments that helped clarify specific sections of the ordinance:

- Section 17.9 was revised to allow portable freestanding signs.
- A new Section 4.14 was created which contains regulations for wind turbines.

New or revised regulations involving the following areas of the zoning ordinance were also begun in 2008, with completion expected in 2009:

- The keeping of non-household animals
- Bed & Breakfasts
- Nonprofit organization in residential zoning districts
- A complete overhaul of the sign chapter

Planning Department staff, in cooperation with the Township Supervisor and Township Clerk, completed the codification of nearly all of the Township's ordinances into one "Code of Ordinances". The new Code is available in hard copy at the Township Offices and is also hosted online at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com). As updates to the Code are made, MuniCode makes the appropriate changes to their website and then forwards us supplemental pages for our hard copies.

Because of the frequency with which they are amended, the Zoning Ordinance and Water and Sewer Ordinance were not included in the new Code. However the new code does include many ordinances that are enforced through the Planning & Zoning Department.

### REZONINGS

A single application for a rezoning was submitted in 2008. A developer submitted a request for a commercial PUD, anchored by a Kohl's department store, on the site of Heritage Baptist Church near 60<sup>th</sup> Street and Kalamazoo Avenue. However, the developer then asked that the review of the request be postponed. Recently, the developer asked staff to formally withdraw the application. Because of the economy, they do not expect any movement by Kohl's or another anchor tenant in the near term.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2008, the Township decided to amend its industrial tax abatement policies related to Public Act 198. In cooperation with the Assessing Department and Supervisor's Office, staff took the lead in working with the IFT Committee and developing the revised policies. The Planning & Zoning Department will also be processing tax abatement requests in the future.

## GRANT WRITING

The Planning & Zoning Department, in partnership with the Dutton Fire Department, pursued a grant opportunity in 2008. A \$10,000 request was submitted to the "My Hometown Helper" Grant Program to assist with the purchase of a new \$12,000 thermal imaging camera. Unfortunately, the request did not receive funding.

The grant writing database has continued to grow throughout 2008 and now holds application information for over 100 grant opportunities. The Township may not be eligible for many of the grants at this time, as many of them require matching funds and/or partnership with a 501(C)3 entity. However, in 2009 staff will more thoroughly explore the possibilities of partnering with such entities to expand our grant opportunities.

## PARKS & RECREATION

Planning Department staff continued in its role as staff support to the Parks and Recreation Committee. In 2008, the Committee and Township Board continued to focus efforts on infrastructure improvements within Prairie Wolf Park and elsewhere. These improvements included the following:

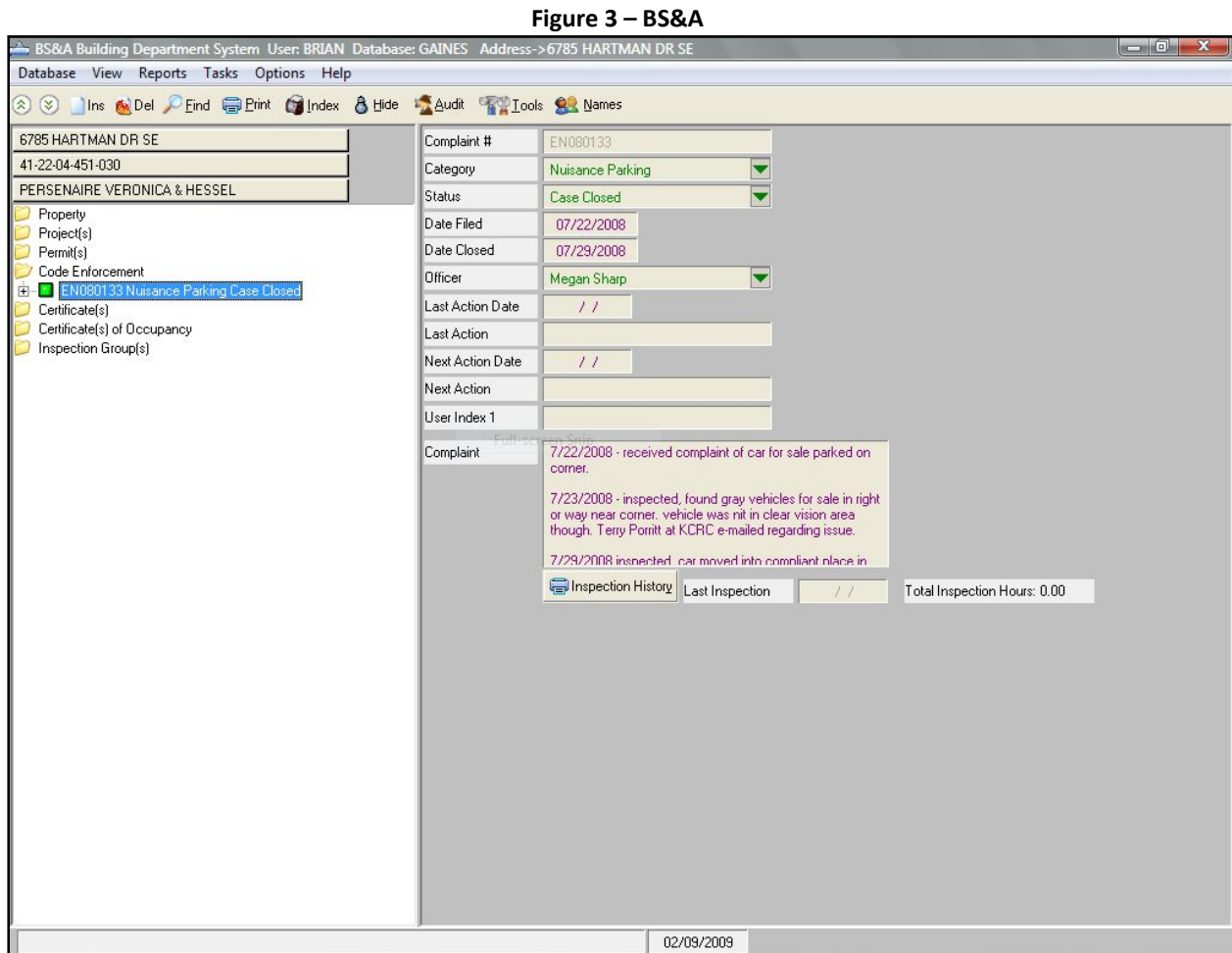
- Beginning construction of the overlook in Prairie Wolf Park.
- Completion of the M-6 Trail from US-131 to Wing Avenue.
- Completion of the Brewer Park Trail to the Steven's Pointe Development.
- Planting of trees in various sections of the Park.

In May, the Committee also held a ribbon-cutting ceremony and other events to celebrate the commencement of the improvements to Prairie Wolf Park. The intent is to turn the May activities into an annual event.

## CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Throughout 2008, the Planning Department continued to utilize BS&A software to register and track code enforcement cases. 160 cases were filed in 2008, the same amount as in 2007. Filed cases are those where a complaint has been received and registered in the software, and staff has either completed a physical inspection of the property and/or contacted the property owner via mail or telephone.

Figure 3 below is a screen shot of the BS&A software:



The Department also handles walk-in or telephone complaints that are not registered in the software and no formal action is taken. These include instances where there is no applicable local ordinance or a different public agency is responsible for enforcement.

Of the 160 cases filed in 2008, staff broke them down into the following categories:

- 130 - Brought into compliance and closed.
- 10 - Received civil infraction citations.
- 19 - No violation found at inspection.
- 1 - Open at the time of this report.

Figure 4 provides a breakdown of the types of enforcement cases that were processed in 2008, while Figure 5 provides information regarding what Sections of the Township have generated the most cases.

Figure 4 – Enforcement Case Types

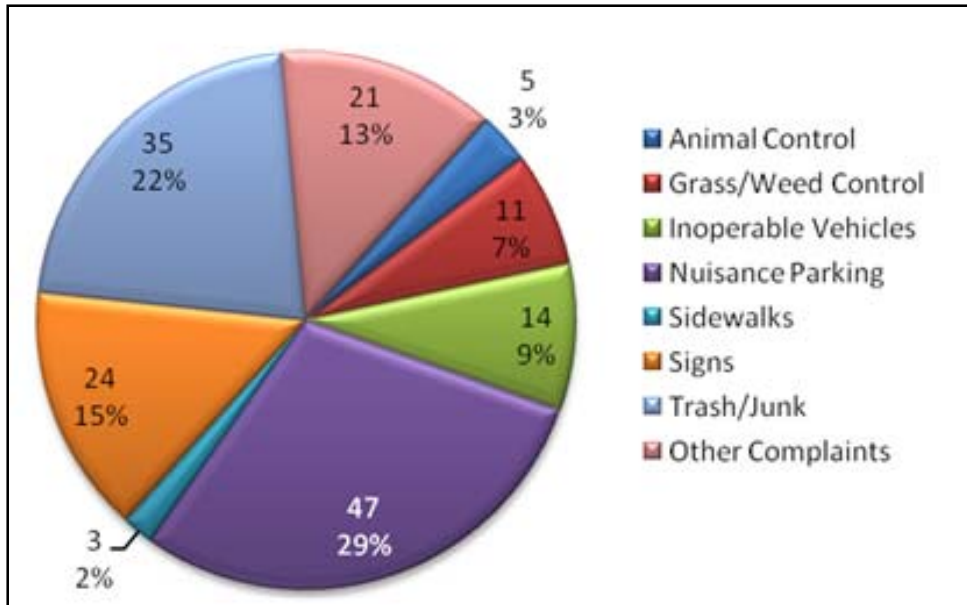


Figure 5 – Enforcement Cases by Section

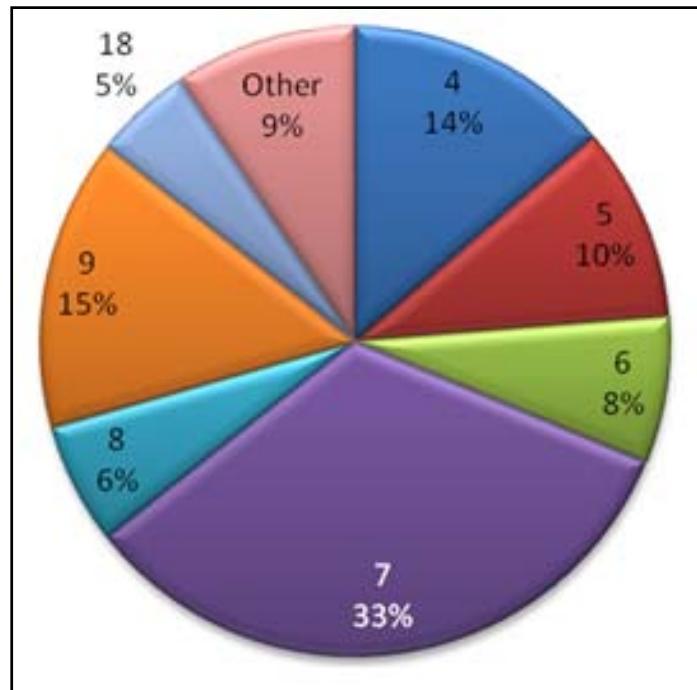


Table 9 and Table 10 provide comparisons between those cases filed in 2007 and those filed in 2008. Although the same number of complaints was filed in these years, the location and types of cases changed.

**Table 9 – Case Type Comparison**

Case Type	2007	2008	Difference
Animal Control	6	5	-1
Grass/Weed Control	4	11	7
Inoperable Vehicles	24	14	-10
Noise	2	0	-2
Nuisance Parking	42	47	5
Sidewalks	17	3	-14
Signs	0	24	24
Trash/Junk	39	35	-4
Other Complaints	26	21	-5
<b>TOTAL</b>	160	160	

**Table 10 – Case Number Comparison**

Section	2007	2008	Difference
4	8	22	14
5	7	16	9
6	29	12	-17
7	54	53	-1
8	15	10	-5
9	11	24	13
10	7	0	-7
18	12	8	-4
Other	17	15	-2
<b>TOTAL</b>	160	160	

**Increases.** 2008 saw a significant increase in sign cases. The majority of the cases involved real estate signs or signs located in a street right-of-way. Some of this may be due to the inability of homeowners to sell properties, resulting in an abundance of real estate signs. Although staff still handles cases involving portable freestanding signs, the new permit and tracking system established in 2008 has reduced the overall amount of the signs, as well as increased staff's success in resolving the cases that are filed.

Sections 4 and 9 of the Township saw the largest increase in the number of cases filed from 2007 to 2008. According to Assessing Department data, these sections also had the highest numbers of foreclosures during 2008. Section 7 also had a large percentage of foreclosures, but its case amount remained steady.

Foreclosures most likely affected the increase in grass/weed control complaints, as many of the cases filed involved properties that were bank-owned or undergoing the foreclosure process.

**Decreases.** 2008 saw decreases in inoperable vehicle and sidewalk complaints. In 2008 the Township began contracting with a private company to clear snow from the sidewalks along the most prominent primary arterial street sections. This has most likely influenced the amount of requests involving keeping sidewalks clear of snow.

Section 6 saw a decrease in cases from 29 in 2007 to 12 in 2008. Most of the 2007 cases involved snow-covered sidewalks along Division Avenue.

**Table 11** provides a summary of those cases that resulted in civil infraction citations being administered. The Township began utilizing the municipal civil infraction process in 2007.

**Table 11 – Civil Infraction Cases**

Civil Infraction Citation	2007	2008	Two-Year Total
Grass/Weed Control	0	1	1
Nuisance Parking	2	3	5
Inoperable Vehicle	1	0	1
Trash/Junk	3	6	9
Other Complaints	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>

The 2008 number for citations includes 2 cases where the violators brought the property into compliance prior to staff’s requested hearing, and the Township dismissed the citation. The remaining eight citations resulted in the recipient accepting responsibility and paying the citation, a default judgment from the magistrate, or an informal hearing found in favor of the Township.

Although 4 more civil infraction citations were administered in 2008 than in 2007, staff believes that civil infraction citations deter ongoing and repeat violations. However, as this process is so new, more data over the course of the next few years will be needed to identify any trends.

## DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION

Department Administration is divided into the following sections; Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Department Personnel.

### PLANNING COMMISSION

Table 12 lists the members of the Planning Commission during 2008.

**Table 12- Planning Commission Members**

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Rob DeWard	December 31, 2009	1990	Chairperson
Tim Haagsma	Township Trustee	2002 (1992 - 1997)	Vice-Chairperson
Louis Waayenberg	December 31, 2008	1997	Secretary
Tim Zandbergen	December 31, 2010	1993 (Resigned)	
Ted Essenburg	December 31, 2009	2001 (1981 - 1990)	
Ronnie Rober	December 31, 2008	2002	
Lani Thomas	December 31, 2010	2006	
Connie Giarmo	December 31, 2010	2008 (1991 - 2000)	

During 2008, The Planning Commission held 11 regular meetings and 1 special meeting. For the regular meetings, the average starting time was 7:03 p.m. and the average end time was 8:47 p.m., for an average meeting time of 1 hour and 44 minutes. The attendance for all meetings is shown in Table 13.

**Table 13 – 2008 Attendance**

Meeting Attendance							
	DeWard	Essenburg	Haagsma	Rober	Waayenberg	Thomas	Zandbergen/Giarmo
Jan	x	x	x	x	x	x	Absent
Feb	Absent	Absent	x	x	Absent	x	x
Mar	x	x	x	x	Absent	x	x
Apr	x	x	Absent	Absent	x	x	x
May	x	x	Absent	x	x	x	x
Jun	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Jul	x	x	x	x	Absent	x	x
Aug	x	Absent	x	Absent	x	x	x
Sep	x	x	x	x	x	X	No Commissioner
Oct	Cancelled						
Nov	x	x	Absent	x	x	x	No Commissioner
Dec	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Special Meeting Attendance							
Oct	x	x	x	x	x	x	No Commissioner

## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Table 14 lists the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2008:

**Table 14 – ZBA Members**

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Don Drenth	December 31, 2009	1979	Chairperson
Ted Essenburg	December 31, 2010	1996	Vice-Chairperson
Dick Steigenga	December 31, 2009	1990	Secretary
Dan Fryling	Township Trustee	2000	
Gayle McCrath	December 31, 2010	2002	
Ruth Ringnalda	December 31, 2010	2008	Alternate

In 2008, the Zoning Board of Appeals held two regular meetings. The average length of time for the regular meetings was 18 minutes. The average beginning time was 7:03 p.m. and the average end time was 7:21p.m. The attendance for these meetings is shown in Table 15.

**Table 15 – ZBA Attendance**

Meeting Attendance						
	Drenth	Essenburg	Steigenga	Fryling	McCrath	Ringnalda
Jan	No meeting - Lack of Quorum					
Feb	No meeting - Lack of Quorum					
Mar	ABSENT	X	ABSENT	X	X	X
April	ABSENT	X	X	X	X	X
May	No Meeting					
Jun	No meeting					
Jul	No meeting					
Aug	No meeting					
Sept	No meeting					
Oct	No meeting					
Nov	No meeting					
Dec	No meeting					

## DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

Planning Director

**Brian Tingley**

Hired: May 2005 as Assistant Planner

Promoted to Planning Director in July 2006

Assistant Planner

**Megan Sharp**

Hired: October 2005 as Clerical Assistant

Promoted to Assistant Planner in January 2007

Planning and Zoning Clerical Assistant

**Jennifer Lamb**

Hired: May 2007

The job responsibilities within the Planning and Zoning Department are divided between the Planning Director, Assistant Planner, and the Planning and Zoning Clerical Assistant. Both the Planning Director and Assistant Planner are full time positions and fulfill the role of Zoning Administrator, while the Planning and Zoning Clerical Assistant is a part-time position. In general, the Planning Director is responsible for overseeing staff and the functioning of the department as a whole and is primarily involved in the Long-Range Planning and Department Administration efforts. The Assistant Planner is primarily involved in the Current Planning and Code Enforcement efforts, while the Planning and Zoning Clerical Assistant provides administrative support within the department. However, there is overlap among all tasks within the department.

The only personnel change in 2008 is that the Clerical Assistant position became vacant at the end of the year as Jenni Lamb moved to the Executive Office full-time in anticipation of the Township Superintendent/Manager being hired. At this time, the part-time Clerical Assistant position will not be filled. However, Jenni Lamb will continue to record the minutes at Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings.

## WORK PROGRAM REVIEW

This review lists the action items that were identified in the 2008 Work Program and assigns one of the following “rankings” to each of the action items:

- No Action.
- Positive Action.
- Mixed Results.

At the end of the review staff provides statistical data regarding how well the Department achieved completion of the 2008 Work Program.

### Long Range Planning Division

#### Master Plan

- Complete Master Plan Update for Sub-Areas 1, 2 and 3. **Positive Action.** The Township completed the 2008 Master Plan Update, which contains subarea plans for the Dutton and 100<sup>th</sup> Street Subareas (Subareas 1 and 3).
- Prepare a formal Township Policy on how residential density is calculated. **Mixed Results.** In early 2008 staff and the Planning Commission discussed the use of gross density versus net density for development review. However, no formal action was taken.
- Education of Public. **Mixed Results.** Staff began preparing “public education pieces” about different planning concepts, but these have yet to be posted to the website. Staff also started making staff reports available via the website with the hope that having access to these will help to educate the public.
- Prepare a report on Transfer of Development Rights utilization. **No Action.**
- Cooperate with area stakeholders on the potential application of LEED - Neighborhood Development through the region. **Positive Action.** Planning Director Tingley is active in the United States Green Building Council - West Michigan Chapter. He is currently the Coordinator/Facilitator of the Chapter's LEED-ND Member Circle, which meets on a monthly basis to discuss the potential application of LEED-ND in the West Michigan region.

#### Ordinance Updates

- Monitor the new zoning ordinance for necessary changes. **Positive Action.**
- Research and prepare wind energy facility regulations. **Positive Action.** “Section 4.14 - Wind Energy” of the Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2008.
- Research and present possible amendments for billboard regulations. **Mixed Results.** This was completed as part of a comprehensive review of the sign chapter of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Research and begin drafting a “land development ordinance” that includes subdivision, land division, site condominium, and private road regulations. **Positive Action.** A committee was appointed by the Planning Commission to begin this work. The committee met twice.
- Continue to work with Township Officials on the codification of Township Ordinances. **Positive Action.** This was completed in 2008.
- Revisit temporary signage regulations. **Positive Action.** New portable freestanding sign regulations were adopted, including a permitting system.
- Review and present possible amendments to the Sign Chapter of the Zoning Ordinance. **Positive Action.** This item was worked on during the second half of 2008. Adoption is expected in early 2009.

## Grant Writing

- Continue to build the grant writing database. **Positive Action.** The database now holds information on over 100 grants opportunities.
- Identify and prepare at least two grant requests. **Mixed Action.** In partnership with the Dutton Fire Department, staff submitted a grant request to the “My Hometown Helper” program for \$10,000 for a new thermal imaging camera. We did not receive the grant.

## Parks and Recreation

- Continue to provide staff support as a non-voting member of the Parks and Recreation Committee. **Positive Action.** Staff attended all Park and Recreation Committee meetings in 2008.

### Code Enforcement Division

- Improve staff’s understanding of the BS&A Software. **Positive Action.** Staff progressed in utilizing the BS&S software to file complaints, comprise reports, and research property histories. This is an ongoing item as new features and updates are made to the software and staff becomes more experienced.
- Improve staff’s knowledge of the municipal civil infraction citation process. **Positive Action.** Staff administered ten civil infraction citations in 2008 for five different types of violations. Through citation processing and informal hearings in front of the magistrate, staff has gained more knowledge.
- Monitor portable freestanding signs in the commercial and industrial zoning districts. **Positive Action.** Twenty Portable freestanding sign permits were approved and monitored in 2008, using the new permitting system.
- Identify potential amendments to the new zoning ordinance and other Township Ordinances that would improve enforcement efforts. **Positive Action.**

### Department Administration

- Complete the reorganizing of the department filing system. **Mixed Results.** Much progress was made in the reorganization of the filing system in 2008. Major categories of files have been completed, but miscellaneous and smaller documents are still in need of organization.
- Research possibility to use BS&A Software to track department items. **No Action.** Although staff uses BS&A software to track code enforcement cases, staff has not researched or attempted to track other items with it.
- In cooperation with REGIS, finalize updates and have printed, various Townships maps including the zoning map. **Mixed Results.** Staff worked with REGIS to finalize a Street Map and a new Zoning Map. No printing has been done.
- Evaluate department applications for possible improvements. **Positive Action.** In 2008 a new Portable Freestanding Sign Permit was created
- Provide Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals members with appropriate training opportunities. **Positive Action.** Seminar and workshop information for planning, zoning, and land use issues is forwarded to all Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals members on a regular basis. The Planning Commission was invited to attend various functions involving the Fisher’s Station Charrette.

- In cooperation with the Township Board, prepare a Code of Ethics/Code of Conduct for elected officials, REGIS, finalize updates and have printed, various Townships maps including the zoning map. **No Action.**
- Have staff attend appropriate training opportunities. **Positive Action.** In 2008 staff attended the following:
  - 2008 Michigan Association of Planning Annual Conference (Planning Director Tingley participated in a session titled “LEED-ND: Is Your Community Ready?”)
  - 2008 Grand Valley Metro Council - Growing Communities Conference
  - West Michigan Strategic Alliance - 2008 Natural Connections Summit
  - SEMCOG: Low Impact Development Manual Workshop
  - Kent/MSU Extension - Wind Energy Workshop
  - Michigan DNR - Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Workshop
  - Mika Myers Beckett and Jones - Local Government Seminar
- Expand staff’s understanding and utilization of REGIS. **Positive Action.** Staff attended training opportunities, as well as increased our understanding of REGIS as we cooperated during the creation of the Street and Zoning Maps.
- Create flow-charts for various department review processes. **Mixed Results.** Staff began this item but nothing has been finalized.

Table 16 provides a small statistical analysis of the progress made on the 2008 Work Program action items.

**Table 16 – 2008 Work Program Action Items**

	<b># of Actions</b>	<b># of Positive Actions</b>	<b>% of Positive Actions</b>	<b># of Positive Actions and Mixed Results</b>	<b>% of Positive Actions and Mixed Results</b>
<b>Long Range Planning</b>	15	10	67%	14	93%
<b>Code Enforcement</b>	4	4	100%	4	100%
<b>Department Administration</b>	9	4	44%	7	78%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>89%</b>

By staff’s findings, 89% of the 2008 action items received either Positive Action or Mixed Results. We find this to be an acceptable level of performance, especially considering the overall slowdown in Current Planning items such as variance requests, special use requests, and other development review.