

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

2015 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 **2015 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 Master Plan implementation actions

The **Annual Report** is separated into the following categories:

1. **Current Planning Division**
2. **Long-Range Planning Division**
3. **Code Enforcement Division**
4. **Department Organization**
5. **Work Program Review**

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 general public. This information is further utilized by the Planning and Zoning Department in the preparation of a **Work Program** for the upcoming year. The work program will help guide the department's actions throughout the upcoming year and serve as a benchmark when preparing the following 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 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:

- Residential Building Permits
- Development Review (Site Plan Review, Special Land Uses, PUD Amendments, Plats, etc.)
- Variances
- Land Divisions

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

Chart 1 details the number of new dwelling units per year over a 25-year period from 1991 to 2015. This includes single-family dwellings as well as attached units and apartments/condos.

- For the 5-year period from 2002 – 2006, the Township averaged 283 new housing units per year. Single-family housing averaged 172 new units per year over this time period. This 5-year period of time represents a significant period of growth for the Township; however the current averages are lower than in previous years.
- The numbers of new home permits from 2007 – 2015 (58.22) are well below the average for 2002 – 2006 (283).
- 2010 was the **slowest year for new housing in Gaines Charter Township in the past 20 years** (28).
- 2011 and 2010 may represent a “bottom” to the housing market as Township saw a significant increase in building permits in 2013.
- 2015 saw an increase of 26% in new housing units from 2014.

Chart 1: Building Permits Total Units

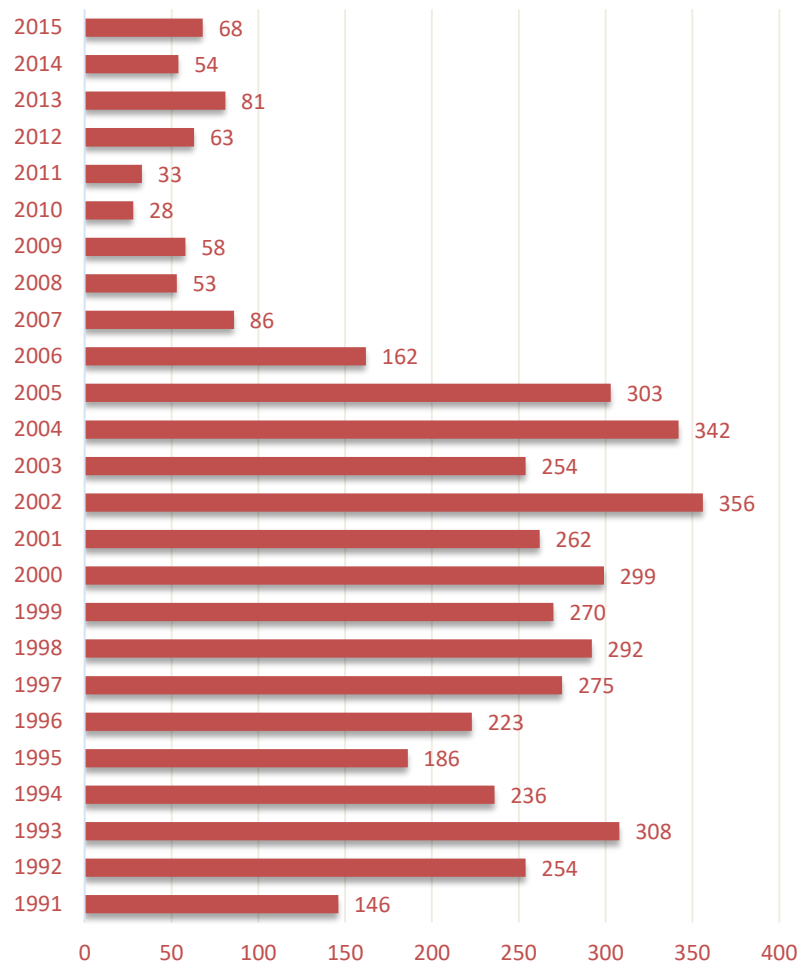
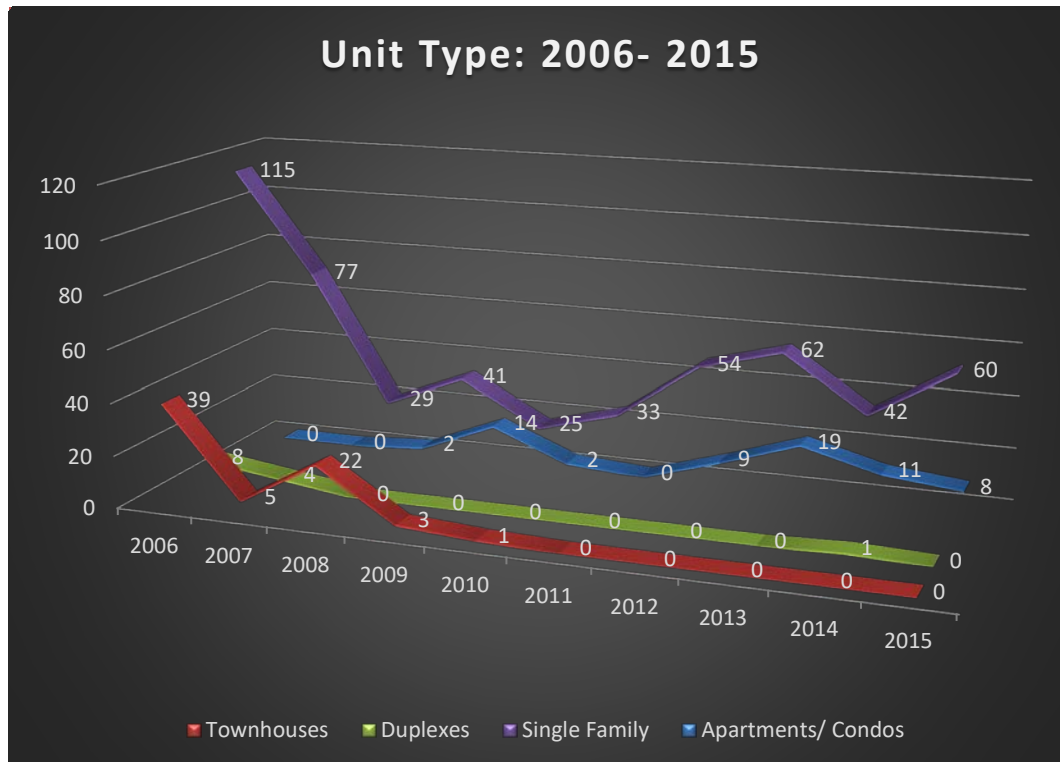


Table 1 and Chart 2 Detail the specific types of housing constructed from 2002 - 2015

Table 1 – New Residential Building Permits – Total Units

	Townhouses	Duplexes	Apartments/ Condos	Single Family	Total Units
2015	0	0	8	60	68
2014	0	1	11	42	54
2013	0	0	19	62	81
2012	0	0	9	54	63
2011	0	0	0	33	33
2010	1	0	2	25	28
2009	3	0	14	41	58
2008	22	0	2	29	53
2007	5	4	0	77	86
2006	39	8	0	115	162
2005	71	18	24	190	303
2004	4	6	122	210	342
2003	0	0	59	195	254

Chart 2 – New Residential Building Permits – By Type



RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

The number of building permits issued for new housing units during 2015 increased by 14 units from 2014. This modest increase is in line with area population estimates, which indicate that Gaines Charter Township has increased its population size by 1% in the five years since the last Census.

Multi-unit building construction, while still low, has begun to rise in the past five years. The units being constructed are in existing condominium projects which stalled during the economic downturn. Avalon Pointe saw 1 duplex, 1 quad, and 3 triplex condominiums completed. Brewer Park had 3 duplex condominiums completed. Cook's Crossing saw the completion of one triplex condominium.

Both instances of increase are a positive sign in the housing market as compared to five years ago. Finally, the Township has seen renewed interest in idle housing projects. Preservation Lakes Estates Planned Unit Development, which was taken over by Eastbrook Homes in 2014, was given an "Early Start" permit enabling them to begin work on several homes ahead of the plat finalization process.

In order to better understand the larger picture in terms of potential housing construction, this department has tracked the number of approved, but undeveloped, residential lots and units. These numbers help guide the Township's decision making process in terms of future residential development and Master Plan updates. In looking at data from the Planning Department and Building Department, staff notes the following:

- There are 23 approved residential developments of approval and development. 180 total lots are available for residential construction within these approved developments.
- Turning Creek received final approved in 2015 and is the only new development to come fully on line with 16 lots.
- Preservation Lakes Phase I, Harmon Farms and South Creek North are in the process of plat approval, each receiving tentative approval in late 2014 and 2015. Each is expected to receive final plat approval in the summer of 2016. Their approvals will bring an additional 109 lots are expected to come on line in the summer of 2016.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Table 2 contains a list of development reviews 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/Work Items Summary - 2015

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Status	Township Board Action
Hammond Estates PUD	Major PUD Amendment	Amend PUD plan to alter the types of units provided and reduce the total amount of parking spaces and living units.	Approved	Approved
St. Anne Medical Center	Major PUD Amendment	Request to permit an Emergency Medical Center within a Commercial PUD	Approved	Approved
84th Street & Kalamazoo Avenue Subarea Plan	Master Plan Amendment	Update to 2002 Master Plan to provide in depth development plan for 84th Street/Kalamazoo Avenue subarea	Approved	Approved March 2016
Terry Stevens- 7005 Fairway Vista	Minor PUD Amendment	Request to install a 3 season room on existing rear deck, creating a rear yard setback of 7 feet	Approved	N/A
Harmon Farms (Olthouse Property)	Tentative Preliminary Plat Review	Creation of a Platted Residential Development for 20 New Residential Lots	Approved	Approved
South Creek North	Final Preliminary Plat Review	Request for plat approval for the northern portion of the South Creek Residential Development.	Approved	Approved March 2016
Stoneco	PUD-MR Annual Review	Review of 2015 StoneCo Operating Plan	Approved	N/A
Ralph Siegel- 6610 Division Avenue	Rezoning Request	Request to rezone 6610 Division from C-1 to C-2 and 31 Manila Street from R-3 to C-2.	Approved	Approved
Pyramid PUD	Rezoning to PUD	Request to rezone Steelcase Pyramid site from I-1 to PUD to allow for an educational facility to be installed in the building	Withdrawn	N/A
Stone Co. PUD-MR Rezoning	Rezoning to PUD	Request to rezone 10175 Kalamazoo Avenue & 1560 100th Street from A-R to PUD-MR.	Approved	Approved
Ace Hi-Crane	Site Plan Review	Storage Building/Office at 6240 S Division Avenue	Approved	N/A
Ada Bible Church	Site Plan Review	Parking Lot expansion for an additional 32 spaces	Approved	N/A

Table 2 – Development/Work Items Summary – 2015 (Continued)

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Status	Township Board Action
Kalamazoo Avenue Retail Inc.	Site Plan Review	Request for a one story, four suite 6,080 square foot retail facility at 6755 Kalamazoo Avenue	Approved	N/A
Kwast/iChiro Chiropractic Office	Site Plan Review	Review of a two story, two-suite 7,424 square foot office building.	Approved	N/A
O'Callaghan Dentist Office & Suites	Site Plan Review	Review for a 3,925.97 square foot two suite office building with a 1,500 square foot basement	Approved	N/A
Option 1 Credit Union	Site Plan Review	Review for the construction of an Option 1 Credit Union at 6672 Crossings Drive.	Approved	N/A
Turning Creek	Site Plan Review	Review of a 16 unit single family site condominium development	Approved	N/A
Sandra Good- 7610 Division	Special Use Permit	Request to construct a personal storage building in an I-2 district	Approved January 2016	N/A
7985 Eastern Avenue	Special Use Permit- Accessory Building	Request for a 900 square foot accessory building on 1.8 Acres	Approved	N/A
9526 Meadow Valley Drive	Special Use Permit- Accessory Building	Request for a 700 foot accessory building on 15.7 Acres	Approved	N/A
Pine Rest Rustic Market	Special Use Permit- Outdoor Sales Tent	Request for an outdoor sales tent for the months of August, September, and October	Approved	N/A
Jack's Landscaping	Special Use Permit- Landscaping Business	Request for a 12,000 square foot shop for a landscaping business	Approved	N/A

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REVIEW

The Township continued to experience an increase in development in its primary commercial corridors in 2015. Development activity is showing a *slight* increase compared to the period between 2008 and 2011, but has remained low for the past four years.

Kalamazoo Avenue Commercial Corridor:

Available commercial land is limited in most of the commercial corridors in the Township. Along Kalamazoo Avenue, South of the M-6 Freeway, only one lot remains available on the east side (behind of Southland Auto Wash)..That lot is restricted by private deed to office use. Additionally, there is also a large lot east of Target currently zoned as part of the Gaines Market Place PUD. On the west side of Kalamazoo, 2015 saw approval for development of all but one remaining commercial lots. Option 1 Credit Union and a two-suite office building (iChiro) were approved for the two remaining vacant lots along Crossings Drive. Additionally a 6000 square foot retail facility was approved for the lot south of the existing Bell Tire. The final available lot on the west side of Kalamazoo is the empty lot north of Bob Evans. This site is currently being reviewed by the Planning Commission as the potential site of a Chick-fil-A restaurant.

North of the M-6 Freeway, only three lots remain available and all are on the west side of Kalamazoo Avenue, off Eastport. One is between Peppino's Restaurant and Bank One. The others are west of Peppino's, north of Celebration Theaters where Loeks Entertainment still owns two developable parcels totaling 4.08 acres. These parcels are presently under consideration by a private developer for hotel use. Approximately 17 acres of undeveloped land is located between the vacant Loeks property and 60th St., Its still zoned R-10, is owned by Heritage Baptist Church and is planned for Public Quasi Public use. The long term use and development potential of this property should be closely re-evaluated in the relatively near future as part of the Township's Future Land Use Plan update.

68th Street Corridor (Dutton):

In 2013, 7 properties on the south side of 68th Street in Dutton were rezoned from RL-10 Low Density Residential to C-2 General Commercial. Currently most of those properties continue to be used as single family residences. Staff finds that this trend will likely continue in the short term. However, with the pending occupancy of the nearby Pyramid building with a data center, the 68th Street corridor may undergo a transformation. Additional planning efforts might be warranted to assess the Township's strategy moving forward in the Dutton/68th Street corridor.

Division Avenue Corridor:

The Division Avenue Corridor activity remains low with new construction. In 2015, the Planning Commission approved an office/warehouse on the vacant property located at 6240 South Division, pending a lot line adjustment. The southern portion of the property will remain vacant in the short term, with the potential to be developed for retail commercial.

In early 2016 the Township approved an expansion to a mini-self serve storage facility and also rezoned several small platted lots associated with the Save-a-lot Store at 6718 South Division. The lots have historically been used for parking lot purposed but were zoned for residential. The new C-1 designation enabled Save-A-Lot to achieve site plan approval and to proceed with site improvements to the store and bring the block into better conformity with intent of the C-1 District and the master Plan.

84th Street and Kalamazoo Avenue Sub-Area Plan:

In November 2015, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the 84th Street & Kalamazoo Avenue Sub-Area Plan. The plan was adopted at the March 2016 meeting of the Township Board.

SPECIAL LAND USE REQUESTS

During 2015, the Planning Commission handled 5 requests for special land uses (This includes a request for a personal storage building that was first heard at the December meeting and eventually approved in January 2016). The yearly average from 2008 – 2015 is 5.1. Staff finds that the amount of special use requests has decreased significantly since the zoning ordinance was updated in 2008 addressing Accessory Buildings.

Table 3 and **Table 4** shown below 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	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15
# of Requests	18	13	7	4	4	4	5	6	6	5
Change from Previous Year	-22%	-28%	-46%	-43%	0%	0%	125%	120%	0%	-17%
# of Staff Recommended Approvals	12	11	7	3	3	4	5	5	6	3
% Recommended by Staff for Approval	86%	85%	100%	75%	75%	100%	100%	80%	100%	60%
# Approved	13	11	6	3	3	4	5	5	6	5
% Approved	93%	85%	86%	75%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%

Table 4 – Accessory Building Requests

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015
# of Requests	8	4	0	0	0	1	5	3*	2
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-B"	3248	0	0	0	0	5408	0	0	700
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-R"	2749	9440	0	0	0	0	3,333	2816	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-10"	0	863	0	0	0	0	1000	3,780	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-14"	1008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "R-3"	576	0	0	0	0	0	780	0	900

**One Special Use permit occurred in the C-2 Zoning District*

Changes to the Zoning Ordinance were made in 2006 that doubled the amount of accessory building floor area allowed by right, making this type of request simpler for most property owners. The “by right” square footage allowed has provided a greatly reduced level of special use requests related to accessory buildings. This continues to be evident in 2015 and this change in the Zoning Ordinance can be viewed as a success.

VARIANCES

Table 5 shows an 10 year history of variance requests:

Table 5 – Variance Request

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
*Total Number of Variances Requested	11	2	3	8	1	7	9	5	4	6
% Change in Total from Last Year	-27%	-82%	50%	100%	-88%	600%	122%	-55%	-25%	50%
Total Number Approved	10	2	2	8	1	5	7	5	3	5
% of Total Requests Approved	91%	100%	67%	100%	100%	400%	85.7%	100%	75%	83%
Number Recommended for Approval by Staff	7	1	2	6	0	5	3	3	2	2
% of Total Recommended for Approval by Staff	64%	50%	67%	63%	0%	71%	33.3%	40%	50%	33%
Number of Use Variances Requested	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Number of Use Variances Approved	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
% of Total Requested as Use Variances	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	0	0	0	0%

**The adoption of a new zoning ordinance at the end of 2007 has played a large role in the overall declining number of variance requests.*

Table 6 provides a summary of the variance requests in 2015.

Table 6 – Variance Request Summary

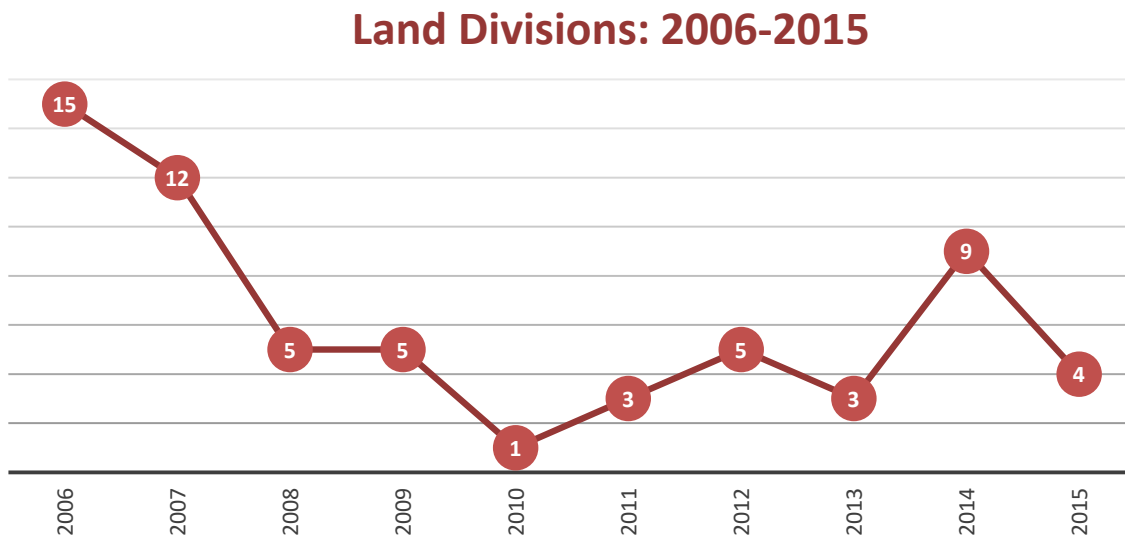
Address	Variance Type	Description	Staff Recommendation	Action
7750 South Division	Dimensional	A variance request from the I-2 front yard setback requirement of 75 ft. to 20 ft. for a proposed building addition.	Denial	Denial
1787 92nd Street	Dimensional	A variance request from the A-R rear yard setback requirement of 100 ft to 50ft for a proposed principle residential structure.	Denial	Application Withdrawn
139 Cameron Street	Dimensional	A variance request from the RL-10 Front Yard Setback Standards for a detached accessory building.	Approval	Approval
731 66th Street	Dimensional	A variance request from the RL-10 side Yard Setback Standards of 8 feet to 3 feet for an extension to the attached garage.	Approval	Approval
10648 Eastern Ave	Dimensional	A variance request from the A-R front yard setback standard of 60 feet to allow for a front yard setback of 40 feet for a detached accessory building.	Denial	Approval
7750 South Division	Dimensional	A revised variance request from I-2 front yard setback requirements in response to Denial of initial request by ZBA in March 2015.	Denial	Approval

LAND DIVISIONS, COMBINATIONS, ADJUSTMENTS

The creation and alteration 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 parcel alterations. **In 2015, Township staff approved 7 Land Combinations, 5 Lot Line Adjustments, and 4 Land Divisions.**

Chart 3 provides information on the number of land division applications since 2006. As you will notice, the overall number of applications for land divisions decreased significantly from 2008 to 2011 as a result of a national recession. The number of land division applications processed by the Township have increased modestly since 2012. In 2015, the number of Land Division applications declined 56% from 2014. While land division applications decreased by 56% in 2015, the overall trend suggests an upward trajectory in the desire to create new buildable lots.

Chart 3 – Property Line Adjustment Applications



LONG-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

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. Staff has not made any updates to Master Plan Implementation activities documented in Table 8 and Table 9 at the time of this writing. In March of 2013, Township staff and the Planning Commission began the five year review process of the Master Plan. During that time it was decided that a demographic update would be performed internally. In 2014 it was decided that due to development outside of the Township borders, that the 84th and Kalamazoo Avenue intersection should be studied for future development potential. The culmination of this process is the 84th Street & Kalamazoo Avenue Subarea plan, which was adopted by the Township Board in March 2016.

Table 7 – 2002 Master Plan Implementations

Task	Status	Comments
Evaluate and Revise the Zoning Ordinance	Mixed Action	In 2015, the Township made alterations to Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 17, 19, and 28.
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.
Develop A Program for Natural Buffers and Scenic Easements	No Action	
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.
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	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	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.

Table 7 – 2002 Master Plan Implementations Continued

Task	Status	Comments
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	No Action	The Department has not actively been pursuing this area.
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	The 2009 Planning Department Intern conducted research on TDR programs.
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). The Township has also played a major role in the development of the Fred Meijer M-6 Trail and Paul Henry Thornapple Trail

The original 2002 Master Plan is 14 years old and has undergone two major amendments that address the subareas of Dutton, the 84th St Kalamazoo Avenue Corridor and 100 St. Southwest area. Good progress has been made on the implementation strategies, considering the Master Plans typically project at least 10 years into the future. However staff finds that the plan is becoming increasingly dated and should be replaced with a new Master Plan in the near future.

ORDINANCE UPDATES

The Planning Commission approved several amendments to the Zoning Ordinance in 2015. In May, the Commission approved amendments to Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 19, and 28. These amendments removed typographical errors, clarified language on setbacks and accessory buildings, and updated charts to make the document more user friendly. In July, the Planning Commission approved amendments to Chapter 17, which provided more regulations on Electronic Messaging Centers in the Township. The amendments were approved by the Township Board in June and August respectively.

REZONINGS

Table 8 provides information on the three rezoning applications received in 2015.

Table 8 – 2015 Rezoning Requests

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Status	Township Board Action
Ralph Siegel- 6610 Division Avenue	Rezoning Request	Request to rezone 6610 Division from C-1 to C-2 and 31 Manila Street from R-3 to C-2.	Approved	Approved
Pyramid PUD	Rezoning to PUD	Request to rezone Steelcase Pyramid site from I-1 to PUD to allow for an educational facility to be installed in the building	Withdrawn	N/A
Stone Co. PUD-MR Rezoning	Rezoning to PUD	Request to rezone 10175 Kalamazoo Avenue & 1560 100th Street from A-R to PUD-MR.	Approved	Approved

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2014 Township staff met with members of The Right Place and created a list of all existing industrial businesses within the Township and also available industrial lands. The list was intended to help the Right Place program identify the needs of the Township's industrial sector as they continue to grow their businesses.

In 2015, these efforts resulted in the announcement that the former Steelcase Pyramid building would be retrofitted into a regional data center owned and operated by the Switch Corporation now based in Nevada. The development is estimated to bring \$5 Billion in investment and 1000 jobs to the West Michigan area. At this time, activity on-site has been limited to structural and mechanical improvements to the interior of the building. A higher level of interaction with this corporation is expected in 2016 as the company begins to formally unveil its short and long term development plans for the site and its vicinity.

GRANT WRITING

Township staff did not seek grant funding for any activities or projects in 2015. The Township is either not eligible or not interested in most of the development related grants at this time. Many require matching funds and/or partnership with a 501(C)3 entity, and many are specific to cities, villages or counties.

PARKS & RECREATION

Due to changes in personnel, the Township was unable to update the Township's Parks and Recreation plan expired in 2015. Township Staff is presently working with the Parks and Recreation committee to create an updated plan in 2016. Once completed the Township will once again be eligible to apply for parks and recreation grants administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Throughout 2015, the Planning Department continued to utilize BS&A software to register and track code enforcement cases. 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 or contacted the property owner regarding a potential violation.

Table 9 lists the number of complaints received by Township staff through each month and compares it with past numbers from 2009. **Chart 4** graphs the 2015 numbers over a 7-Year Average. Staff finds that the drop in Code Enforcement cases from 2010 onward is most likely a reflection of a reduction in Staff levels. In 2016, the Township Planning Department will once again be staffed with two members and that should lead to an increase in the amount of time devoted to code enforcement issues.

Table 9 – Annual Cases by Month

Month	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	7-Year Average
January	7	5	2	1	0	3	0	2.6
February	6	7	26	0	0	1	0	5.7
March	25	23	8	3	4	2	2	9.6
April	21	19	5	4	2	9	9	9.9
May	22	14	10	24	9	11	11	14.4
June	12	18	15	9	7	16	10	12.4
July	18	18	10	4	2	12	9	10.4
August	17	18	12	5	5	5	3	9.3
September	11	11	6	4	4	3	5	6.3
October	11	9	11	2	4	1	2	5.7
November	12	5	6	3	2	1	2	4.4
December	6	1	1	3	3	0	4	2.6
Annual Total	168	148	112	62	42	64	57	93.0

Chart 4 – Annual Cases by Month

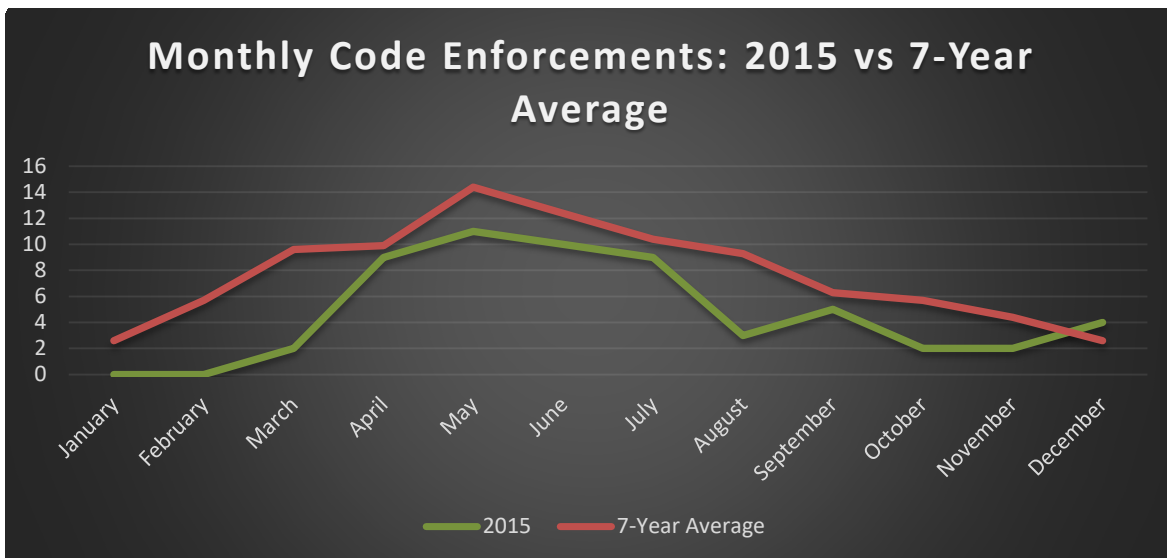


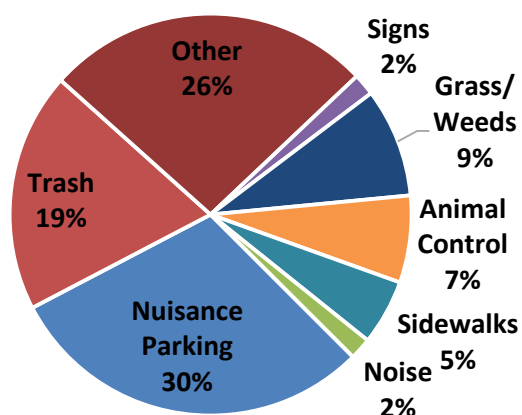
Table 10 shows the categories of each enforcement case and its 7-Year Average. **Chart 5** provides a percentage breakdown by type of enforcement case processed in 2014. Instances of Trash in yards has risen over the past two years, however many types of decreased. Instances of Grass/Weeds complaints have gone up over the past three years, but it still below the high of 14 in 2011.

Table 10 – Annual Case Types

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	7-Year Average		2015– 2014 Differentials
Animal Control	3	12	5	2	5	5	4		5.1%	Animal Control
Grass/Weeds	9	14	9	3	1	9	5	8.3	7.9%	Grass/Weeds
Noise	1	1	0	5	0	1	1	1.1	1.1%	Noise
Nuisance Parking	52	57	38	15	11	12	17	35.7	34.1%	Nuisance Parking
Sidewalks	5	1	25	0	1	1	3	5.1	4.9%	Sidewalks
Signs	6	11	3	27	4	2	1	8.5	8.1%	Signs
Trash	39	32	20	8	10	15	11	22.7	21.7%	Trash
Other	33	20	12	1	11	19	15	18	17.2%	Other
TOTALS	148	148	112	62	42	64	57	104.7	100.0%	TOTALS

Chart 5 – Enforcement Percentages

Enforcement Breakdowns: 2015



The total number of cases is down significantly from previous years. This may be indicative of a stabilizing economy, or it may be that past enforcement activity has finally increased awareness on the part of residents and educated them to be good neighbors by fulfilling their responsibilities as homeowners. There is however, no way of drawing a direct correlation for either hypothesis.

Chart 6 shows that the “Nuisance Parking” category is the largest category in 2015.

Chart 6 – 2014 Section Comparison

Chart 6 provides an overview of Code activity cases for select Sections by percentage, while Table 13 provides cases per Section comparisons between 2007 and 2015. It shows that fully 90% of enforcement activity is occurring in those select areas. This data could prove useful should the Township pursue a more proactive code enforcement policy, instead of performing inspections solely on a complaint basis.

**2015 Code Enforcements
Section Percentages**

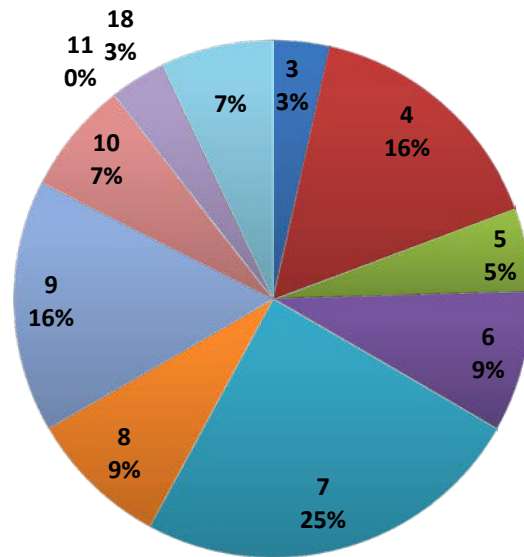


Table 11 – Annual Cases by Section

Section	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	Total	%	AVG
3	2	3	0	1	6	4	6	3	26	2.82%	3.25
4	9	4	4	19	17	19	19	22	112	12.13%	14
5	3	1	4	13	5	10	14	16	70	7.58%	8.75
6	5	13	4	4	22	19	18	12	121	13.11%	15.12
7	14	26	11	9	15	34	41	53	243	26.33%	30.37
8	5	2	6	1	8	20	12	10	74	8.02%	9.25
9	9	9	2	4	18	12	29	24	109	11.81%	13.62
10	4	2	0	1	2	3	5	0	20	2.17%	2.5
11	0	0	1	0	0	4	8	0	14	1.52%	1.75
18	2	1	2	2	4	9	4	8	42	4.55%	5.25
Other	4	4	8	9	15	15	13	15	93	10.08%	11.62
	57	64	42	63	112	149	169	163	923	100.00%	

Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 include the area south from between 60th Street to 76th Street and west from between Hanna Lake and Division Avenue. These sections are the most densely populated areas of the Township and the data tend to show a correlation between housing density, single family detached housing stock, and code enforcement actions.

DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION

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

PLANNING COMMISSION

During 2015, The Planning Commission held 12 regular meetings and 1 special meeting. **Table 12** lists the members of the Planning Commission during 2015. **Table 13** illustrates the attendance at Planning Commission Meetings in 2015.

Table 12 - 2015 Planning Commission Members

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Rob DeWard	December 31, 2018	1990	Chairperson
Tim Haagsma	Township Trustee	2002 (1992 – 1997)	Vice-Chairperson
Louis Waayenberg	December 31, 2017	1997	Secretary
Brad Burns	December 31, 2015	2014	
Ronnie Rober	December 31, 2017	2002	
Lani Thomas	December 31, 2016	2006	
Connie Giarmo	December 31, 2016	2008 (1991 – 2000)	

Table 13 – 2015 Attendance

Meeting Attendance							
	DeWard	Haagsma	Rober	Waayenberg	Thomas	Giarmo	Burns
Jan	X	X	X	Absent	X	Absent	X
Jan (Special)	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	X
Feb	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	X
Mar	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	X
Apr	X	X	Absent	X	X	X	X
May	X	X	X	X	Absent	X	X
Jun	Absent	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Jul	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	X
Aug	X	Absent	X	X	X	X	X
Sep	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oct	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	X
Nov	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dec	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	X
No. of Absences	1	1	1	7	1	1	1
Percentage	8%	8%	8%	54%	8%	8%	8%

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals met on 5 Occasions in 2015. **Table 14** lists the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2015:

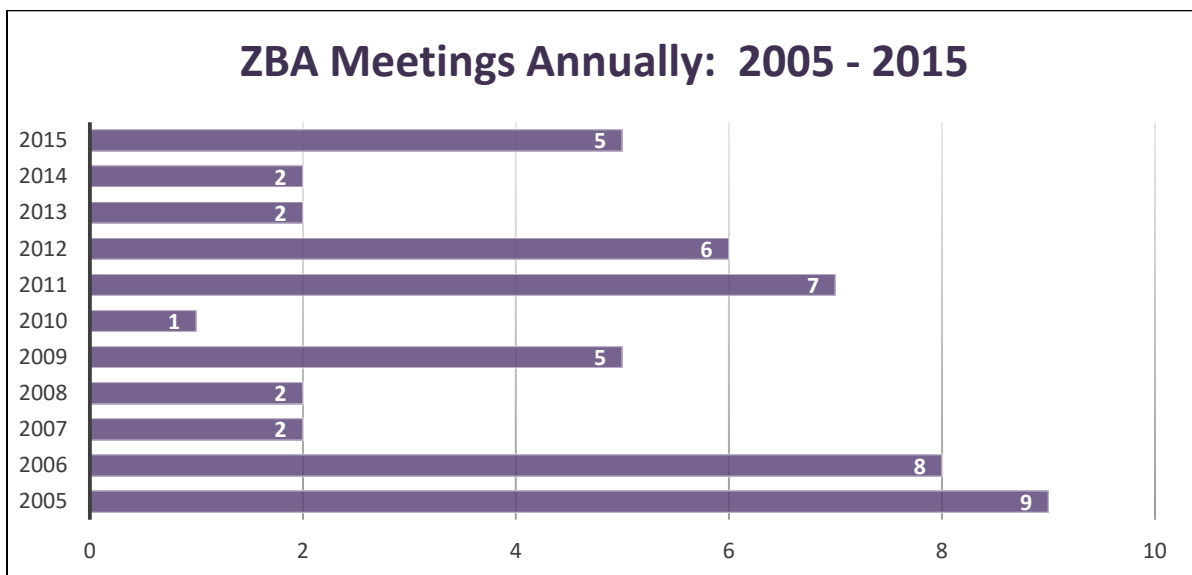
Table 14 – 2015 ZBA Members

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Tom Werkema	December 31, 2015	2013	Chair
Ruth Ringnald	December 31, 2016	2002	Vice Chair
Tom Wolffis	December 31, 2017	2014	Secretary
Dan Fryling	Township Trustee	2000	
Connie Giarmo	December 31, 2016	2014	
Michael Brew	N/A	2015	Alternate

Table 15- Zoning Board of Appeals – 2015

Meeting Attendance						
	Werkema	Fryling	Wolffis	Ringnald	Giarmo	Brew (Alternate)
Jan	Meeting Canceled					
Feb	Meeting Canceled					
Mar	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Apr	Meeting Canceled					
May	Meeting Canceled					
Jun	Meeting Canceled					
Jul	Absent	X	X	X	X	X
Aug	X	X	X	X	Absent	X
Sep	Meeting Canceled					
Oct	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Nov	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dec	Meeting Canceled					

Chart 7 – Meetings Annually



DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

Township Planner
Mark Sisson, AICP
Since: December 2015

Assistant Planner
Matt McKernan
Since: May 2015

Planning and Zoning Clerical Assistant (*Shared Position*)
Sandra Wiltzer
Since: 2012

2015 was a transitional year for the Gaines Township Planning and Zoning Department. In May 2015, Matt McKernan was hired as the Planning and Zoning Department intern to help finalize work on the 84th Street & Kalamazoo Avenue Subarea Plan. In September 2015, David Waligora left his position as Township Planner. Soon thereafter Township Engineer Jeff Gritter transitioned from his role with the township to a position with a private Civil Engineering firm. From September to November, with support and guidance from Jeff Gritter, the department was managed part-time by Planning Intern Matt McKernan. In November Mark Sisson, AICP was hired to succeed David Waligora as Township Planner. In December the Township Board retained Matt McKernan as a full time employee in the role of Assistant Planner.

The Township Planner and Township Assistant Planner will fulfill the role of Zoning Administrator. The Township Planner oversees the majority of Long-Term Planning, while the Assistant Planner is primarily responsible in the Current Planning and Code Enforcement efforts. The Department Assistant provides administrative support within the department. Jeff Gritter will continue to provide support and guidance to the Planning Department.

In the past, the Department established a Summer Internship Program in 2009 to assist with projects within the Department. In 2011-2014, this position went unfilled and unfunded in reflection of budget constraints faced by the Township. In 2015 the position was filled by Matt McKernan from May until the end of the year 2015. As the department is now fully staffed, an in tern position is not programmed for 2016.

As housing construction and overall development activity has remained relatively low over the course of the last 4-5 years, the Department has continually sought new ways in which to provide services to the Township and its residents. Future areas of increased involvement will/could include:

- Township Master Plan Update
- 2016 Parks and Recreation Plan
- Seeking grant opportunities for capital improvement projects
- GIS support for the Parks and Recreation Committee and other Township Departments
- Increased economic development efforts, including PA 198 requests (Tax Abatement)

These potential commitments will need to be balanced with the established role of the Planning and Zoning Department with careful evaluation of each commitment will need to be considered.

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 116 lists the adopted budgets for the Planning and Zoning Department for fiscal years 2008-2016 and also shows the Departments Budget as a percentage of the overall General Fund Budget.

Table 16

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
P/Z Budget	\$183,444	\$173,335	\$166,413	\$160,833	\$182,862	\$173,956	\$163,816	\$209,274
% of General Fund Budget	6.51%	6.33%	6.00%	4.96%	5.00%	4.8%	4.9%	5.7%

The average budget over the last 8-years is \$176,741. The 2016 budget is now higher than for any of the previous 7 years and reverses the downward trend that existed through the 2015 budget year. This is a direct reflection of the Department once again being fully staffed. (or 16.2%) going to Contracted Services, for the Kalamazoo Avenue and 84th Street Sub-Area Plan.

Current staffing has brought the Departments budget as a percentage of the Total Township Budget back to the approximately 6% range. As future budgets are prepared, this percentage of the General Budget would appear to be a reasonable measure or yardstick and for a “normal” working year for the Planning Department staffed at current levels. As economic activity and development activity increases or decreases, the Department will need to be prepared to adjust staffing levels accordingly in order to respond cost effectively and in a timely manner to all requests. At this time, current staffing levels appear to adequately match productivity demands.

Table 17 presents the actual dollar amount spent in the fiscal years 2009 – 2015 and is also expressed as a percentage of the approved Planning and Zoning Department’s Budget.

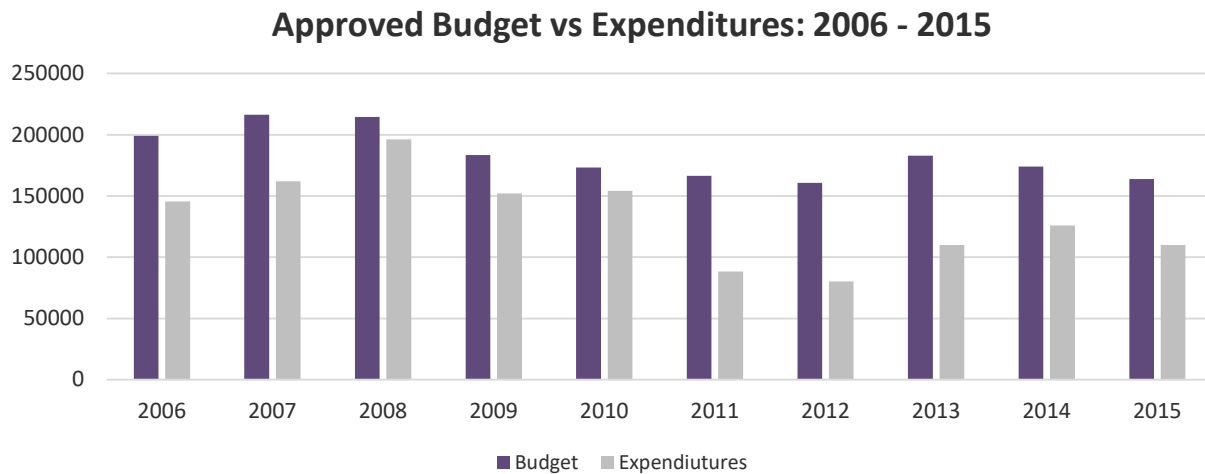
Table 17

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Actual Expenditures	\$152,098	\$154,082	\$88,446	\$80,130	\$109,986	\$126,029	\$109,962
% of Budget	82.91%	88.89%	53.15%	49.82%	60.14%	72.45%	67.13%

The 2011 and 2014 are low years due to the lack of full-time staff in the Planning Department, and do not reflect a fully functioning department with at least one full-time staff member. Similarly, a decrease in expenditures in 2015 can be due in some part to the volatility in staff levels during the final quarter of the year, following the departure of Planner Waligora in September and the arrival of Planner Sisson in December. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the unspent monies (70 to 80 %) were attributed to budgeted but unspent fees for outside consulting and legal services. Both are positive outcomes. Given a more stable economic forecast, the current staffing levels (and its makeup) it is expected that for the 2016 fiscal year budget forecasts and actual expenditures are likely to be in more close proximity.

The Department continues to be fiscally responsible and spends less than budgeted monies for all Department activities. Township Staff members have always attempted to provide the highest level of professional service while keeping budget figures reasonable and under control. Since 2005, the department has, on average, spent only 73.56% of its approved budget.

Chart 7 shows all monies allocated to the department and all yearly expenditures from 2006 – 2015.



As the Township continues to work towards the vision laid out by the 2002 Master Plan and the 2008 and 2016 Master Plan Updates, the Planning and Zoning Department staff is committed to providing professional planning, zoning and code enforcement service to the public and the development community and to seek out new ways to provide meaningful, helpful and efficient service to the Township and its residents.