

**GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
2016 ANNUAL REPORT**



Endorsed by the Planning Commission on March 23, 2017

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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 **2016 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 activities
- 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 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 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 1992 to 2016. This includes single-family dwellings as well as attached units and apartments/condos.

- From 1992 to 2006 Gaines Township averaged 266 building permits for new dwelling units per year.
- 2002 represented a high point in the creation of new dwelling units within the Township. (356)
- From 2007 to 2015 Gaines Township averaged only 58 building permits for new dwelling units per year. This decline in building permits can be attributed to the national recession that began in 2008. 2010 was the **slowest year for new housing in Gaines Charter Township in the past 20 years** (28).
- 2016 saw an increase of 247% in new housing units from 2015. This was the first year since 2006 that the Township added more than 150 new units within a single-year. The large increase can be attributed to the approval of building permits for nine, 12-unit apartment buildings in the long-stalled Fieldstone PUD. Additionally, 82 building permits were approved for single-family homes, which represented a 37% increase over the previous year and contributed to the large increase in building permits over 2015.

Chart 1- Building Permits for New Dwelling Units: 1992-2016

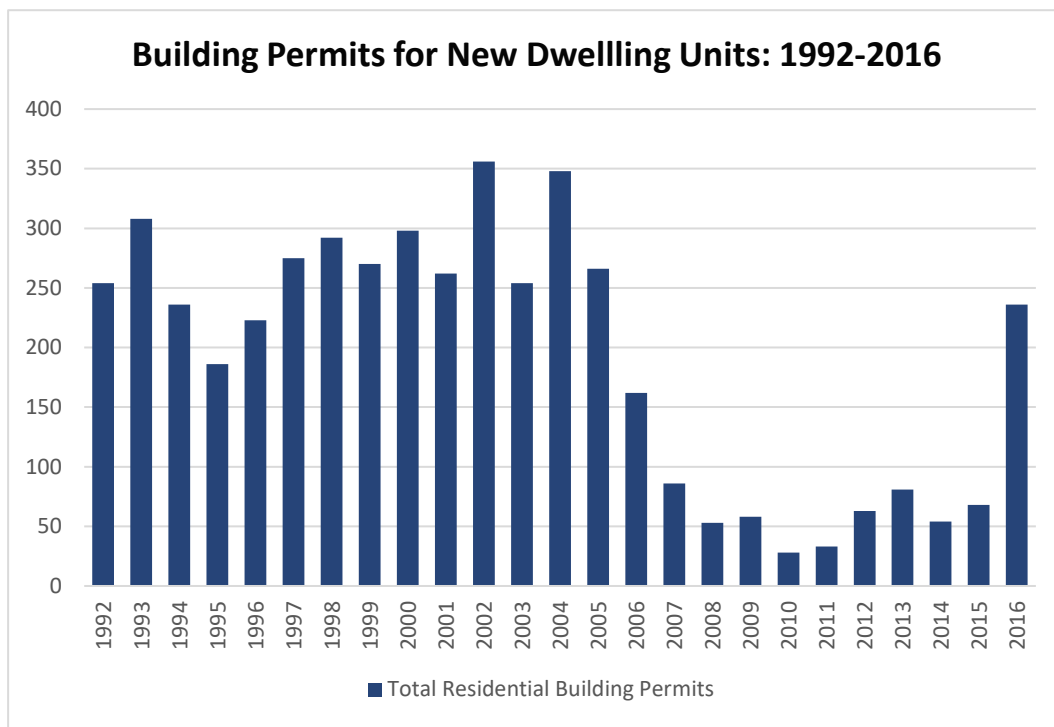
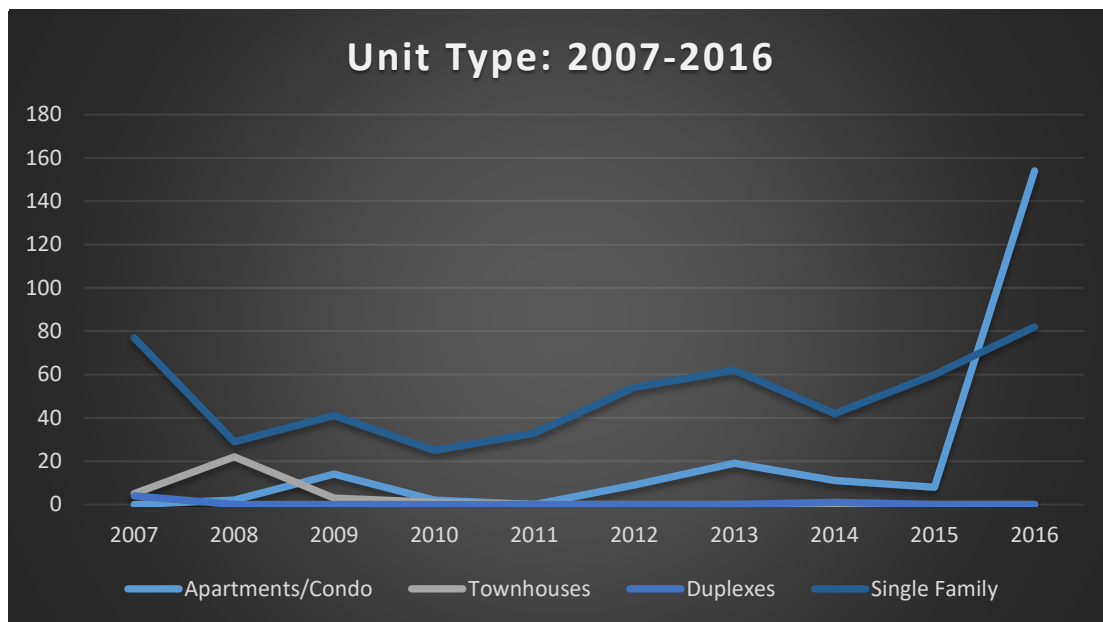


Table 1 and **Chart 2** Detail the specific types of housing constructed from 2003 - 2016

Table 1 – New Residential Building Permits – Total Units

	Townhouses	Duplexes	Apartments/ Multi-Unit Condos	Single Family Homes/Condos	Total Units
2016	0	0	154	82	236
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 2016 increased by 168 units from 2015. This large increase can be attributed to an increase in multi-unit building construction, a housing segment that hadn't seen much growth since the early 2000s. These units were constructed in existing apartment/condominium projects that were previously stalled. Nine, 12-unit buildings were approved for the Fieldstone Apartments complex. Brewer's Park Circle saw approval of 18 total new units (4 duplex, 2 triplex, & 1 quadplex). Cook's Crossing, Avalon Pointe, and Hammond Estates also saw approval of multi-unit buildings in 2016. More apartment construction will likely continue as a new 176-unit phase of the Woodfield Apartments begins construction in 2017.

Single-family home construction increased from 60 units in 2015 to 82 units in 2016. This is an increase of 37% percent. Seventy percent of this construction came from the South Creek (29 units) & Cook's Crossing (28 units) developments.

Townhouse and duplex construction outside of condominium developments has not been significant.

In order to better understand the larger picture in terms of potential for housing construction, the department has tracked the number of approved, but undeveloped, residential lots and units. These numbers will help guide the Township's decision making process in terms of future residential development and Master Plan updates. **Table 2** shows active development sites within the Township as of March 1, 2017. In looking at data from the Planning Department and Building Department, staff notes the following:

- There are currently 21 approved active residential developments within Gaines Township.
- There are 454 available lots within the approved developments.
- 2016 saw the approval of the Harmon Farms, Preservation Lakes, South Creek North, and Turning Creek residential developments. These developments account for 125 total units/lots.
- A new phase of the Woodfield Apartments were approved in 2016. This accounted for an addition of 176 total residential units. Construction is expected to begin on the project in 2017.

Table 2 – Active Development Projects in Gaines Township (As of 3/1/17)

	Total Approved		Amount Available	
	Units/Lots	Buildings	Units/Lots	Buildings
Byron Center Public Schools				
Capens Pointe Site Condominium Development	17		1	0
Cooks's Crossing - Ranch Condos	47	18	10	3
Brewer Park Condominiums	63	30	13	5
Cobblestone/Weathervane Phase 4	38		16	0
Creekside Duplex Condos	36	18	36	18
Caledonia Public Schools				
Fieldstone Apartments	396	33	84	7
Hammond Estates	27	9	12	5
Crystal Springs - The Village Phase 2	51		3	
Turning Creek	16		14	
Preservation Lake Estates - Phase 1	32		25	0
Harmony Cove	12		3	
Harmon Farms	20		19	
South Creek North	19		3	
Kentwood Public Schools				
Avalon Pointe Condominiums Phase 3	43	16	12	5
Summer Shores Condominiums	96	26	25	6
Crystal Downes	56		1	
Smith Farms	51		0	
Smith Farms No. 3	16		0	
Sweetgrass Ridge	42		1	
Woodfield Apartments (2016)	176	13	176	13
School District	Total	Unbuilt	% Available	
*Byron Center	201	76	38%	
*Caledonia	573	163	28%	
*Kentwood	480	215	45%	
Totals	1254	454	36%	

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Table 3 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 3 – Development/Work Items Summary - 2016

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
Harmon Farms	Final Plat Approval	Final Plat Approval for Harmon Farms.	N/A	Approved
Preservation Lakes	Final Plat Approval	Final Plat Approval for Preservation Lakes.	N/A	Approved
South Creek North	Final Plat Approval	Final Plat Approval for South Creek North.	N/A	Approved
Cook's Crossing/Weathervane Phase 4	Final Site Condominium Subdivision Plan Approval	Final Site Condominium Subdivision Plan Approval for Cook's Crossing/Weathervane Phase 4.	N/A	Approved
Turning Creek	Final Site Condominium Subdivision Plan Approval	Final Site Condominium Subdivision Approval for Turning Creek.	N/A	Approved
Chick-fil-A, 1545 Edgeknoll Drive	Major PUD Amendment	Major Amendment to Crossings PUD to allow a 4,800 SF restaurant	Approved	Approved
Hanna Lake Trails, 2945 68 th Street	Preliminary Site Condominium Review	Review of plans for development of a 52 unit (lot) single family "Site Condominium" subdivision utilizing open space preservation provisions of Section 6.4 (B) to allow for reduced minimum lot sizes on approximately 33.2 acres of land.	Approved	Approved
StoneCo, 900 100 th Street	PUD-MR Annual Operating Plan	Review of the 2016 Operating Plan for the StoneCo Mineral Removal Operation.	Approved	N/A
1876 Wedgefield Court	PUD Waiver	Waiver to Crystal Springs PUD to allow an enclosed porch with a 21 foot setback in an area where a 25 foot setback is required.	Approved	N/A
Save-A-Lot, 6718 S. Division Avenue	Rezoning & Site Plan Review	Request to rezone the property from RL-10 to C-1 in support of parking lot reconfiguration and construction of a truck dock.	Approved	Approved
Everett's Landscaping, 240 84 th Street	Rezoning & Special Use Permit	Request to rezone all or portions of the parcel that are presently zoned RL-14 to A-R. Concurrent Special Use Permit request to allow for the establishment of a "landscaping business" under the standards of Section 19.9(K).	Approved	Approved
Creekside Storage, 1115 68 th Street	Rezoning to PUD	Rezoning of 22.85 Acres from RL-10 to allow (1) a two-family residential development of 15 buildings (30 units) on 9.7 acres, and (2) a self-storage facility on 9.3 acres.	Approved	Approved

Table 3 – Development/Work Items Summary – 2016 (Continued)

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
Cascade Die Casting, 7750 S. Division Avenue	Site Plan Review	Review for an expansion to the Cascade Die Casting facility for a new employee entrance/locker room and shipping/receiving area.	Approved	N/A
Cook's Crossing/Weathervane 8175 Misty Meadow Court	Site Plan Review	Site Plan Review for Cook's Crossing Phase 5 and Weathervane Phase 5. Part of the Cook's Crossing/Cobblestone Corner's PUD.	Approved	N/A
Everett's Landscaping, 240 84 th Street	Site Plan Review	Site Plan Review for improvements to property located at 240 84 th Street to allow for the eventual construction of a landscaping operation.	Approved	N/A
McDonald Plumbing, 7791 Eastern Avenue	Site Plan Review	Site plan review for a 480 SF storage room addition to an existing 1600 square foot office building.	Approved	N/A
Reformed Church of America, 4560 60 th Street	Site Plan Review	Review for two additions totaling 11,694 SF to an existing office building to accommodate additional offices and a new conference room.	Approved	N/A
Siliconature, 4581 68 th Street	Site Plan Review	Review for a 137,000 square foot light industrial manufacturing and warehouse facility situated on 21 acres at 4581 68 th Street SE.	Approved	N/A
South Creek North, 1767 Sunny Glen Drive	Site Plan Review	Review for elements related to approval of request for Preliminary Plat Approval for South Creek North.	Approved	N/A
Swan Chiropractic, 1723 68 th Street	Site Plan Review	Review for a proposed 4,015 SF orthodontics office	Approved	N/A
Switch Data Center, 6100 East Paris Avenue	Site Plan Review	Review for a 382,000 square foot SuperNap data center to accompany their existing data storage operation currently being developed within the former Steelcase Pyramid facility.	Approved	N/A
Van Andel Center at Pine Rest, 300 68 th Street	Site Plan Review	Review for an addition to the Van Andel Center on the campus of Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services.	Approved	N/A
Woodfield Apartments, 6181 Eastern Avenue	Special Use Permit: 16-Unit Apartments	Request for 176 unit multi-family apartment complex utilizing 16 unit apartment buildings.	Approved	N/A
524 Fendale Street	Special Use Permit: Accessory Building	Request to allow for construction of a 576 SF detached accessory building in the RL-10 District.	Approved	N/A
6410 College Avenue	Special Use Permit: Accessory Building	Request to allow for construction of a 786 SF detached garage in a RL-10 District.	Approved	N/A
6608 College Avenue	Special Use Permit: Accessory Building	Request to allow for construction of detached accessory buildings with combined floor areas of 420 SF in the RL-10 District.	Approved	N/A

Table 3 – Development/Work Items Summary – 2016 (Continued)

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
6931 Cornerstone Drive	Special Use Permit: Accessory Building	Request to allow for construction of a 384 SF accessory building in the RL-10 District	Approved	N/A
692 92 nd Street	Special Use Permit: Ag-Rural Enterprise	Request to allow an existing barn & garden area to be used as a commercial event venue.	Approved	N/A
Heritage Baptist, 1570 60 th Street	Special Use Permit: Electronic Messaging Center	Request to allow an electronic changeable copy sign at Heritage Baptist Church in the R-3 Multiple Family District.	Approved	N/A
South Christian HS, 7895 Kalamazoo Avenue	Special User Permit: Electronic Messaging Center	Special Use Permit request to authorize the installation of electronic changeable copy signs on the property.	Approved	N/A
Trinity United Reformed Church, 7350 Kalamazoo Avenue	Special Use Permit: Electronic Messaging Center	Special Use Permit request to authorize the installation of electronic changeable copy signs on the property.	Approved	N/A
Pine Rest Rustic Market, 389 68 th Street	Special Use Permit: Outdoor Sales Tent	Request for an outdoor sales tent for the months of July, August, September, and October 2016.	Approved	N/A
South Christian HS, 7895 Kalamazoo Avenue	Special Use Permit: School in A-R District	Special Use Permit request to allow construction of an 110,000 SF high school with attached athletic facilities at 7895 Kalamazoo Avenue SE.	Approved	N/A
Cook's Crossing/Weathervane Phase 4	Streetlight Assessment District	Creation of a Special Assessment District for Cook's Crossing/Weathervane Phase 4.	N/A	Approved
Harmon Farms	Streetlight Assessment District	Creation of a Special Assessment District for Harmon Farms.	N/A	Approved
Preservation Lakes	Streetlight Assessment District	Creation of a Special Assessment District for Preservation Lakes.	N/A	Approved
South Creek Phase 2	Streetlight Assessment District	Creation of a Special Assessment District for South Creek Phase II for Streetlights.	N/A	Approved
Turning Creek	Streetlight Assessment District	Creation of a Special Assessment District for Turning Creek.	N/A	Approved

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REVIEW

The Township continued to experience development in its primary commercial corridors in 2016. Development activity is showing a *slight* increase compared to the period between 2008 and 2011, but has remained relatively low for several years. Available commercial land is limited in most of the commercial corridors in the Township.

Kalamazoo Avenue Commercial Corridor:

South of the M-6 Freeway, only one lot remains available on the east side (behind Southland Auto Wash). This lot is restricted by private deed for office use. There is also a large lot east of Target currently zoned as part of the Gaines Market Place PUD, which is difficult to develop due to wetland issues. 2016 saw approval for the final remaining commercial lots on the west side of Kalamazoo Avenue, when Chick-fil-A received a Major PUD Amendment. The restaurant opened in early 2017 to the north of the existing Bob Evans restaurant. It is noteworthy that there have been a number of recent inquiries regarding each of the remaining vacant parcels as well as toward redevelopment potential of the corner of the Meijer parking lot.

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. Approximately 17 acres of undeveloped land is located between the vacant Loeks property and 60th St. The property is still zoned RL-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, seven 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. This trend will likely continue in the short term. In the long term, it can be expected that the occupancy of the former Steelcase Pyramid by the Switch Data center should create spillover effects that will increase development in Dutton and 68th Street more generally. It will be important that any updates to the 2002 Master Plan take these changes into account.

In late 2016, Siliconature, an Italian firm specializing in the manufacture of siliconized and treated films, received site plan approval. The 137,000 square foot factory and warehouse facility is situated on 21 acres purchased from Steelcase. The sale of the Steelcase property emphasizes the fact that it is no longer expected to develop the entire Steelcase PUD area, which spans both sides of 68th Street east of Patterson. It is reasonable to expect that Steelcase will continue to sell properties within the PUD to outside companies.

Division Avenue Corridor:

The Division Avenue Corridor activity remains low with new construction. In 2016, the Planning Commission approved a rezoning of the parking lot of the Save-a-Lot property at 6718 South Division Avenue from RL-10 to C-1 in support of parking lot reconfiguration and construction of a truck dock for the grocery store.

SPECIAL LAND USE REQUESTS

During 2016, the Planning Commission handled 12 requests for special land uses. This was an 82% increase over the yearly average of 6.6 requests per year for the past 10 years. The increase can be attributed to several factors. In 2015, the Township updated the zoning ordinance to allow monument signs with LED messaging displays for institutional uses within residential areas by way of special use permit. This led to 3 requests for these type of signs in 2016.

Table 4 and **Table 5** shown below for a 10-year history of special land use requests and detailed information regarding accessory building requests, respectively.

Table 4 – Special Land Use Requests

Year	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16
# of Requests	13	7	4	4	4	5	6	6	5	12
Change from Previous Year	-28%	-46%	-43%	0%	0%	125%	120%	0%	-17%	140%
# of Staff Recommended Approvals	11	7	3	3	4	5	5	6	3	12
% Recommended by Staff for Approval	85%	100%	75%	75%	100%	100%	80%	100%	60%	100%
# Approved	11	6	3	3	4	5	5	6	5	12
% Approved	85%	86%	75%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5 – Accessory Building Requests

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
# of Requests	4	0	0	0	1	5	3*	2	4
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-B"	0	0	0	0	5408	0	0	700	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-R"	9440	0	0	0	0	3,333	2816	0	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-10"	863	0	0	0	0	1000	3,780	0	542
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-14"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "R-3"	0	0	0	0	0	780	0	900	0

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

VARIANCES

Table 6 shows a 10 year history of variance requests:

Table 6 – Variance Requests

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
*Total Number of Variances Requested	2	3	8	1	7	9	5	4	6	4
% Change in Total from Last Year	-82%	50%	100%	-88%	600%	122%	-55%	-25%	50%	-33%
Total Number Approved	2	2	8	1	5	7	5	3	5	3
% of Total Requests Approved	100%	67%	100%	100%	400%	85.7%	100%	75%	83%	75%
Number Recommended for Approval by Staff	1	2	6	0	5	3	3	2	2	3
% of Total Recommended for Approval by Staff	50%	67%	63%	0%	71%	33.3%	40%	50%	33%	75%
Number of Use Variances Requested	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Number of Use Variances Approved	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
% of Total Requested as Use Variances	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	0	0	0	0%	0%

Table 7 provides a summary of the variance requests in 2016.

Table 7 – Variance Request Summary

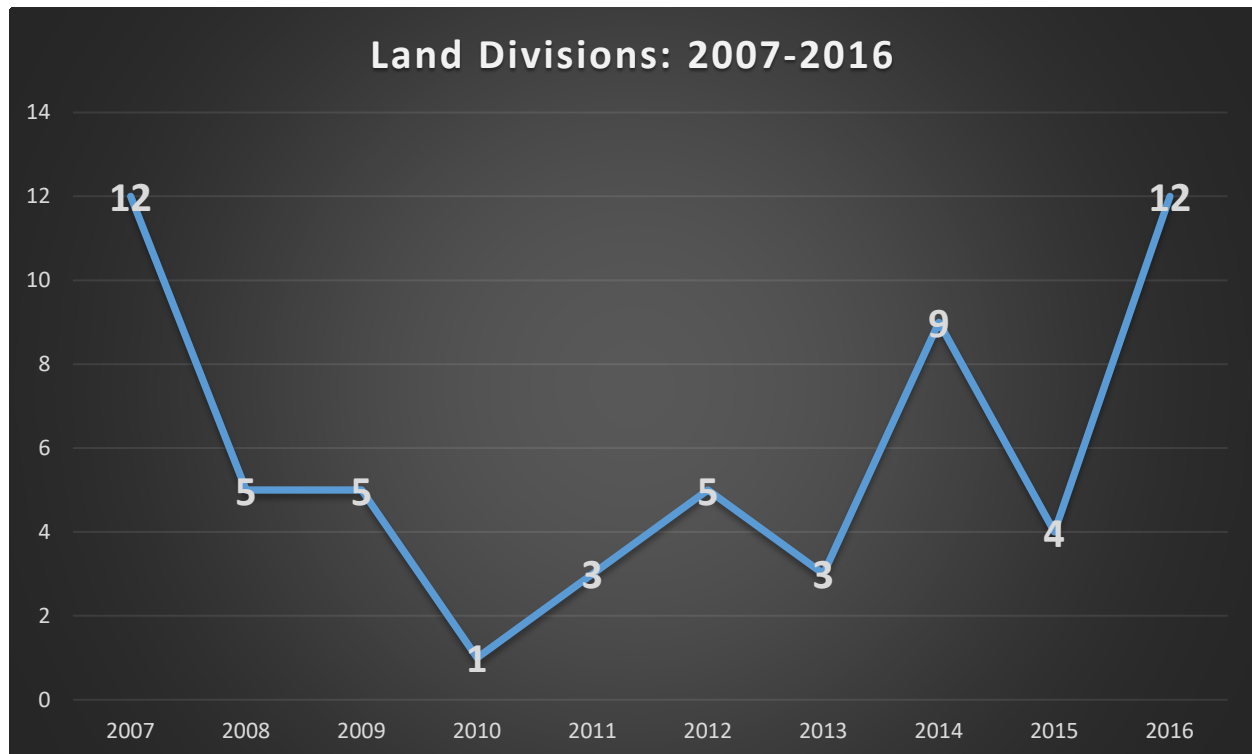
Address	Variance Type	Description	Staff Recommendation	Action
7610 Division	Dimensional	A variance from Section 9.3; for a side yard setback variance of 60 feet when the ordinance requires a 75 foot side yard setback for corner lots along primary arterial roads; to construct a 30 foot by 100 foot commercial personal storage unit building	Approval	Approval
Dutton Christian School, 6729 Hanna Lake Ave	Dimensional	A variance from Chapter 8, Section 8.3; for a side yard setback of 5 feet when the ordinance requires a 0 or 15 side yard setback. A dimensional variance is needed in order to avoid the creation of an illegal non-conforming building and to proceed with the property transfer as proposed by the applicant.	Approval	Approval
540 84 th Street	Dimensional	A variance to construct a 1600 square foot pole barn in the front yard of a home in a RL-14 Zoning District. Ref. Sec. 20.2 (C) & Sec 20.2 (D)	Denial	Denial
McDonald Plumbing, 7791 Eastern Ave	Use & Dimensional	Dimensional & Use Variance to allow for up to a 720 square foot expansion for storage and mechanical purposes in the office building associated with the existing plumbing business located in the RL-10 Low Density Residential district.	Approval	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 2016, Township staff approved 12 Land Divisions, 4 Land Combinations, and 9 Lot Line Adjustments.**

Chart 3 provides information on the number of land division applications since 2007. 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 increased modestly between 2012 and 2015. The Planning Department processed 12 Land Division applications in 2016, which represents a 200% increase from 2015 and the highest number since 2006. The increase in land division requests correlates with the increased in building permits for residential units issued in the Township in 2016.

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 IMPLEMENTATION

As a part of the 2002 Master Plan, an Implementation chapter was prepared to help guide future planning activities. **Table 8** lists the proposed implementation tasks and their current status. Planning Department staff performed work on 3 of the 12 implementation steps laid out in the 2002 Master Plan.

- Work began in 2016 to evaluate the current zoning ordinance and compile a list of potential updates. Formal changes to the ordinance are expected during 2017.
- The 84th Street and Kalamazoo Avenue Subarea Plan was formally adopted in 2016.
- In 2016, the Planning Department began the process of updating the 2010 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Surveys were mailed to 7000 residents to elicit responses about the future of trails, bike lanes, and sidewalks in the Township.

Table 8 – 2002 Master Plan Implementations

Task	Status	Comments
Evaluate and Revise the Zoning Ordinance	Mixed Results	Began to compile list of potential ordinance updates.
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 8 – 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	Began work on an update to the 2010 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Also began initial planning on the Dutton Spur of the Paul Henry Trail.

The original 2002 Master Plan is 15 years old and has undergone two major amendments addressing the subareas of Dutton, the 84th St /Kalamazoo Avenue Corridor and 100 Street Southwest area. The Planning Department will begin to change its focus from implementation of the 2002 Master Plan to the completion of a comprehensively revised Master Plan within the next two years. The plan will combine the 2008 and 2016 subarea plans with an updated general plan. This cohesive document will guide development in the Township in the coming decades.

The Township is committed to an efficient and cost-effective master plan update. In support of that goal, Township Staff is aiming to compile a majority of the data necessary for a master plan update prior to hiring consultants to facilitate public engagement. In 2016, staff began to research recently adopted master plans in surrounding areas to glean what types of information might need to be assembled to update the Gaines Township Plan. And in early 2017 began renewed Township participation in the four corners organization involving the City of Kentwood and Cascade, Caledonia, and Gaines Townships. In 2017, the Planning Department intends to continue gathering information and progressing toward an update of the 2002 Master Plan.

ORDINANCE UPDATES

There were no text amendments to the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance in 2016. Township Staff has studied the ordinance and has compiled a list potential changes that are likely to be considered in 2017.

REZONINGS

Table 9 provides information on the three rezoning applications received in 2016.

Table 9 – 2016 Rezoning Requests

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Status	Township Board Action
Save-A-Lot, 6718 S. Division Avenue	Rezoning & Site Plan Review	Request to rezone the property from RL-10 to C-1 in support of parking lot reconfiguration and construction of a truck dock.	Approved	Approved
Everett's Landscaping, 240 84 th Street	Rezoning & Special Use Permit	Request to rezone all or portions of the parcel that are presently zoned RL-14 to A-R. Concurrent Special Use Permit request to allow for the establishment of a "landscaping business" under the standards of Section 19. 9(K).	Approved	Approved
Creekside Storage, 1115 68th Street	Rezoning to PUD	Rezoning of 22.85 Acres from RL-10 to allow (1) a two-family residential development of 15 buildings (30 units) on 9.7acres, and (2) a self-storage facility on 9.3 acres.	Approved	Approved

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The most significant economic development in 2016 pertained to Switch Data Center moving into the former Steelcase Pyramid at the corner of East Paris Avenue and 60th Street. In the summer of 2016 the Kent County Board of Commissioners, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and Gaines Township board approved \$1.1 million in annual tax breaks to finalize the arrangement. Work began in early 2016 on modifications to the existing pyramid building. In the fall of 2016, Switch received approval to commence construction on a 382,000 square foot SuperNap data center along East Paris Avenue. Switch has promised to create 1,000 permanent jobs over a 10-year period, and estimates have placed the number of spin-off jobs created at as much as 5,000.

GRANT WRITING

Township staff did not seek grant funding for any activities or projects in 2016. 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

In 2016 Township Planning Staff in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Committee began work on an update to the Gaines Charter Township Parks & Recreation Plan. As part of this effort, a survey was sent to 7000 residents with the summer tax bills in 2016. The Township received 136 responses. It is the goal of the Department to complete the update in 2017.

CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

The Planning Department continued to use BS&A software to register and track code enforcement cases in 2016. 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 10 lists the number of complaints received by Township staff through each month and compares it with the numbers for the past 10 years. **Chart 4** graphs the 2016 numbers over a 10-Year averages. The increase in staffing levels for the Planning Department led to an increase in the amount of code enforcement actions that could be investigated. The 101 code enforcement actions in 2016 is the highest level since 2011, which was the last year that the Planning Department was fully staffed.

Table 10 – Annual Cases by Month

Month	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	10-Year Average	
January	2	17	7	5	2	1	0	3	0	3	4	3.72%
February	8	12	6	7	26	0	0	1	0	0	6	5.59%
March	23	13	25	23	8	3	4	2	2	13	11.6	10.80%
April	8	21	21	19	5	4	2	9	9	8	10.6	9.87%
May	11	16	22	14	10	24	9	11	11	4	13.2	12.29%
June	16	28	12	18	15	9	7	16	10	15	14.6	13.59%
July	17	24	18	18	10	4	2	12	9	16	13	12.10%
August	33	3	17	18	12	5	5	5	3	9	11	10.24%
September	10	15	11	11	6	4	4	3	5	15	8.4	7.82%
October	11	8	11	9	11	2	4	1	2	14	7.3	6.80%
November	10	1	12	5	6	3	2	1	2	4	4.6	4.28%
December	11	2	6	1	1	3	3	0	4	0	3.1	2.89%
Annual Total	160	160	168	148	112	62	42	64	57	101	107.4	

Chart 4 – Annual Cases by Month

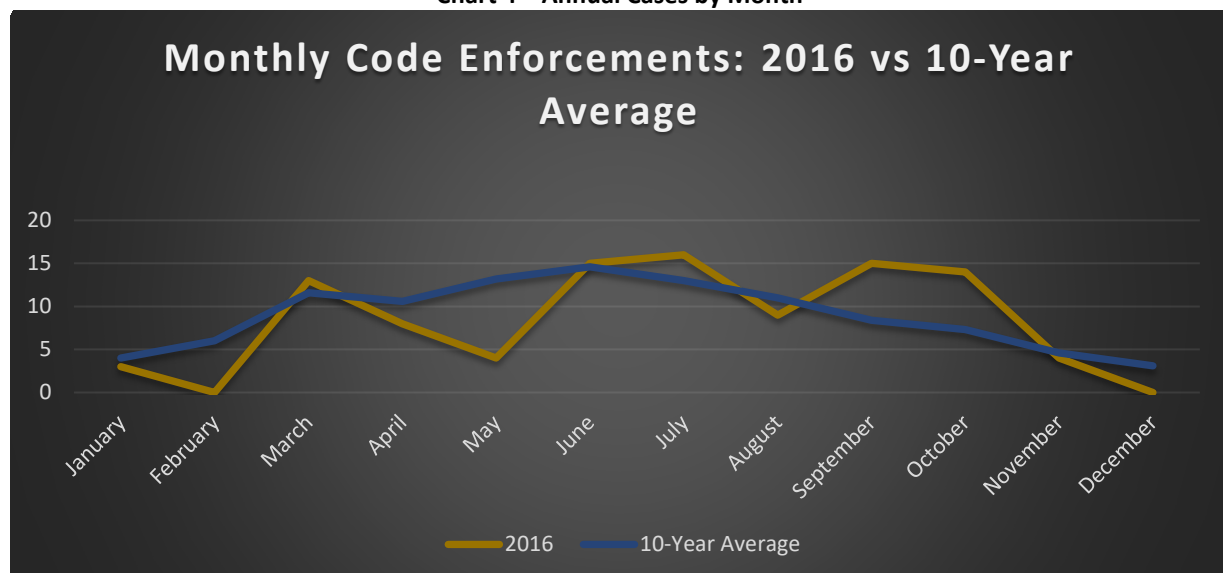


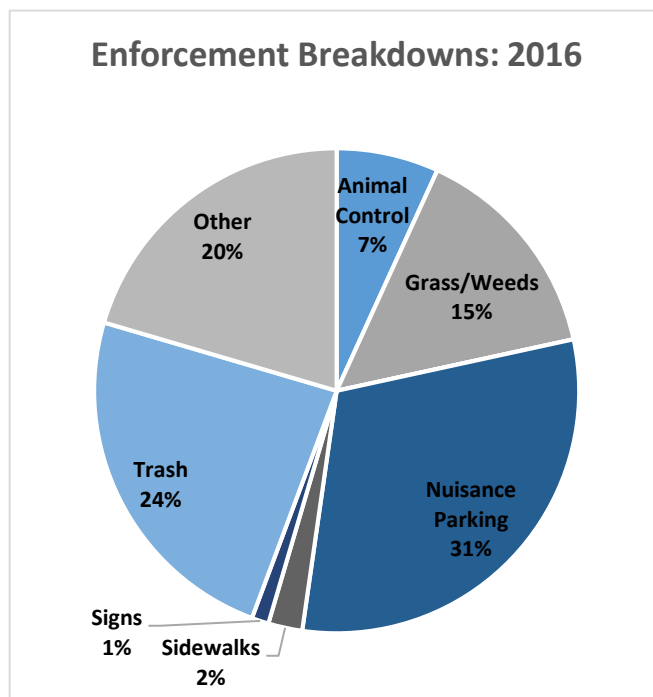
Table 11 shows the categories of each enforcement case and its 10-Year average.

Chart 5 provides a percentage breakdown by type of enforcement case processed in 2016.

Table 11 – Annual Case Types

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	10-Year Average	
Animal Control	6	5	3	12	5	2	5	5	4	6	5.3	5.0%
Grass/Weeds	4	11	9	14	9	3	1	9	5	13	7.8	7.4%
Noise	2	0	1	1	0	5	0	1	1	0	1.1	1.0%
Nuisance Parking	66	61	52	57	38	15	11	12	17	27	35.6	33.8%
Sidewalks	17	3	5	1	25	0	1	1	3	2	5.8	5.5%
Signs	0	24	6	11	3	27	4	2	1	1	7.9	7.5%
Trash	39	35	39	32	20	8	10	15	11	21	23	21.8%
Other	26	21	33	20	12	1	11	19	15	18	17.6	16.7%
TOTALS	160	160	148	148	112	62	42	64	57	101	105.4	

Chart 5 – Enforcement Percentages



Nuisance parking complaints represented the largest percentage of code enforcement actions in 2016. The bulk of these complaints centered on RVs parked in the front yard of homes.

Trash/junk accumulation was the second highest complaint received by the Planning Department in 2016. Most complaints fell into one of two categories garbage/refuse and property maintenance. The instances of improperly kept garbage/waste were able to be enforced while the property maintenance cases were unable to be enforced due to lack of relevant ordinances.

Unkempt grass and weeds continued to be a common complaint in the Township in 2016. Of the 13 official complaints only 5 cases were able to be successfully enforced due to the Township's lack of property maintenance so most of these complaints were unable to be enforced.

The "other" category contains complaints that are not readily classified under other classifications. A large number of these complaints were in regards to unsafe homes and structures. Code enforcement staff coordinated with the Building Department to investigate these complaints. Another common complaint in this category had to do with the height or orientation of fences in residential areas.

The animal control category was the fifth most common complaint category in 2016. The majority of these cases were related to barking dogs. Complaints about feral cats and the presence of chickens in residential neighborhoods were also common.

Chart 6 – 2016 Section Comparison

Chart 6 provides an overview of Code activity cases for select Sections by percentage, while **Table 12** provides cases per Section comparisons between 2007 and 2016. The chart shows that fully 91% of enforcement activity is occurring in Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 18. These Sections include the area south between 60th Street to 76th Street and west between Hanna Lake and Division Avenue. These sections are the most densely populated areas of the Township and the data shows a correlation between housing density, single family detached housing stock, and code enforcement actions. This data could prove useful should the Township pursue a more proactive code enforcement policy, instead of performing inspections solely on a complaint basis.

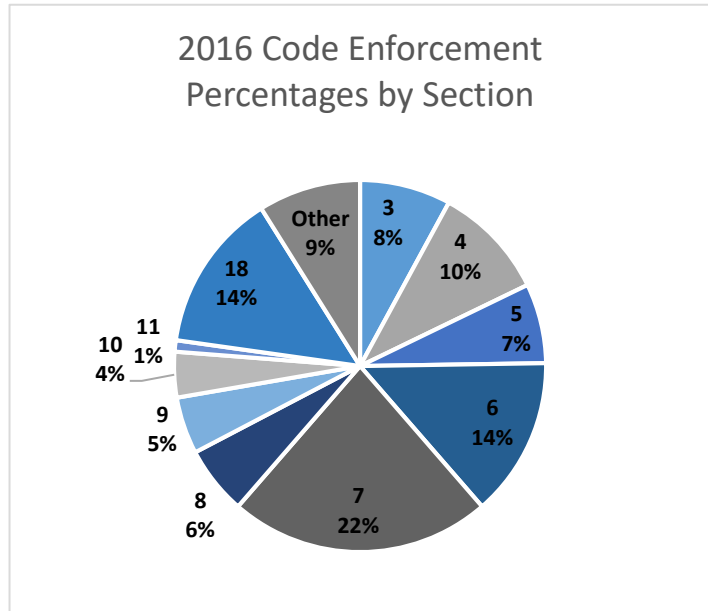
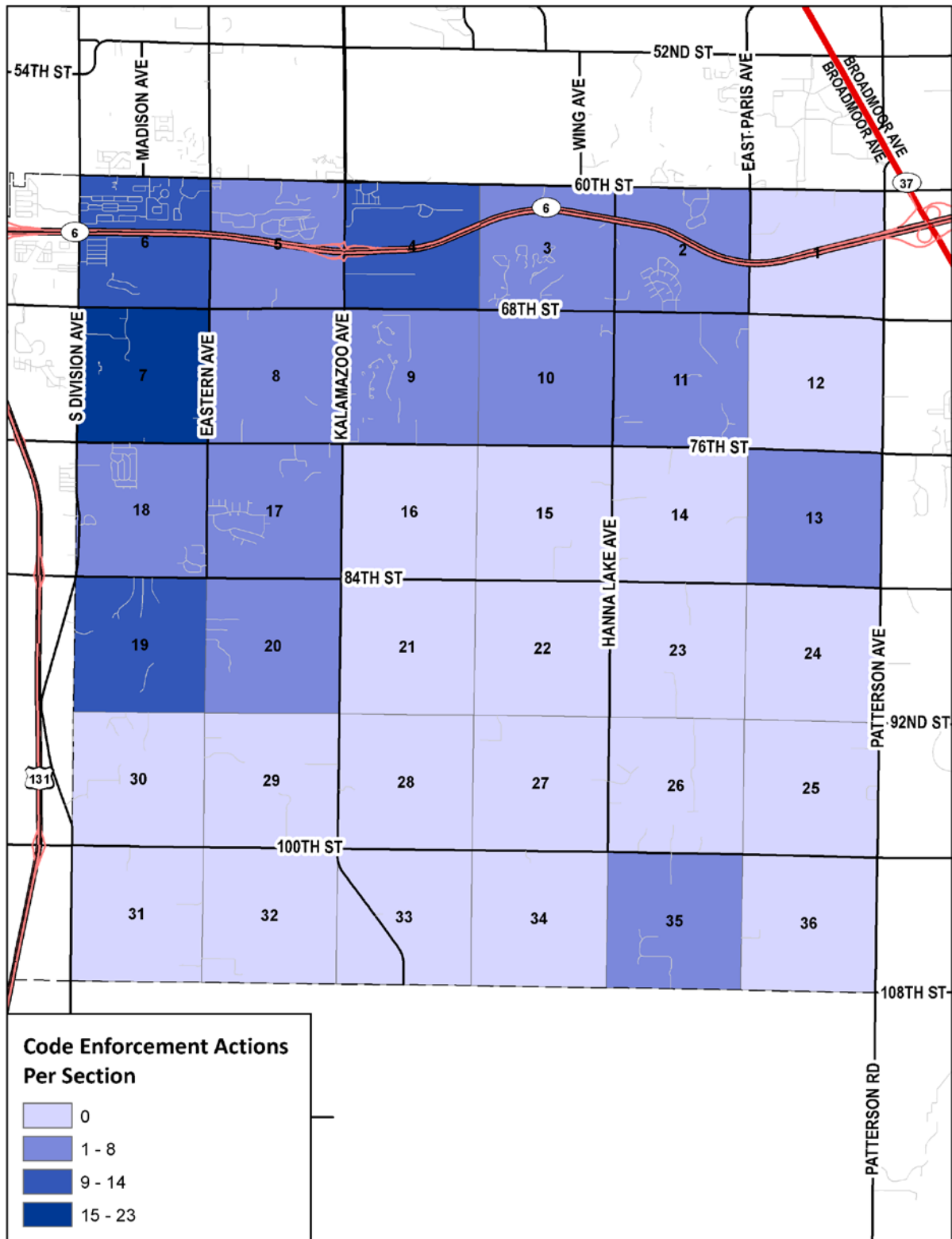


Table 12 – Annual Cases by Section

Section	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	10-Year Average	
3	3	3	6	4	6	1	0	3	2	8	3.6	3.25
4	11	22	19	19	17	19	4	4	9	10	13.4	14
5	7	16	14	10	5	13	4	1	3	7	8	8.75
6	13	12	18	19	22	4	4	13	5	14	12.4	15.12
7	26	53	41	34	15	9	11	26	14	23	25.2	30.37
8	2	10	12	20	8	1	6	2	5	6	7.2	9.25
9	9	24	29	12	18	4	2	9	9	5	12.1	13.62
10	2	0	5	3	2	1	0	2	4	4	2.3	2.5
11	0	0	8	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	1.4	1.75
18	1	8	4	9	4	2	2	1	2	14	4.7	5.25
Other	4	15	13	15	15	9	8	4	4	9	9.6	11.62
	78	163	169	149	112	63	42	65	57	101		

Map 1 – Code Enforcement Actions per Section



DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION

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

PLANNING COMMISSION

During 2016, The Planning Commission held 12 regular meetings and 1 special meeting. **Table 13** lists the members of the Planning Commission during 2015. **Table 14** illustrates the attendance at Planning Commission Meetings in 2015.

Table 13 - 2016 Planning Commission Members

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Rob DeWard*	December 31, 2018	1990	Chairperson
Connie Giarmo	December 31, 2016	2008 (1991 – 2000)	Vice-Chairperson
Lani Thomas	December 31, 2016	2006	Secretary
Louis Waayenberg	December 31, 2017	1997	
Tim Haagsma	Township Trustee	2002 (1992 – 1997)	
Ronnie Rober	December 31, 2017	2002	
Brad Burns	December 31, 2018	2014	
Talimma Billips*	December 31, 2019	2016	

*Talimma Billips was appointed to replace Chair Rob DeWard who was elected Township Supervisor

Table 14 – 2016 Attendance by Planning Commission Members

2016 Meeting Attendance								
	Billips	Burns	DeWard	Haagsma	Giarmo	Rober	Thomas	Waayenberg
Jan		X	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Feb		X	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Mar		X	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Apr		X	X	Absent	X	Absent	X	X
May		X	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Jun (Special)		X	X	Absent	X	X	X	X
Jun		Absent	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jul		X	X	X	Absent	X	X	X
Aug		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sep		X	X	X	Absent	X	X	Absent
Oct		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nov		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dec	X	X		X	X	X	X	Absent
No. of Absences	0	1	0	2	2	1	0	6
Attendance Percentage	100%	92%	100%	85%	85%	92%	100%	54%

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals met on 3 Occasions in 2016. **Table 15** lists the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2016. **Table 16** lists the meeting dates of the ZBA in 2016. **Chart 7** illustrates the number of annual meetings of the ZBA in the past 10 years.

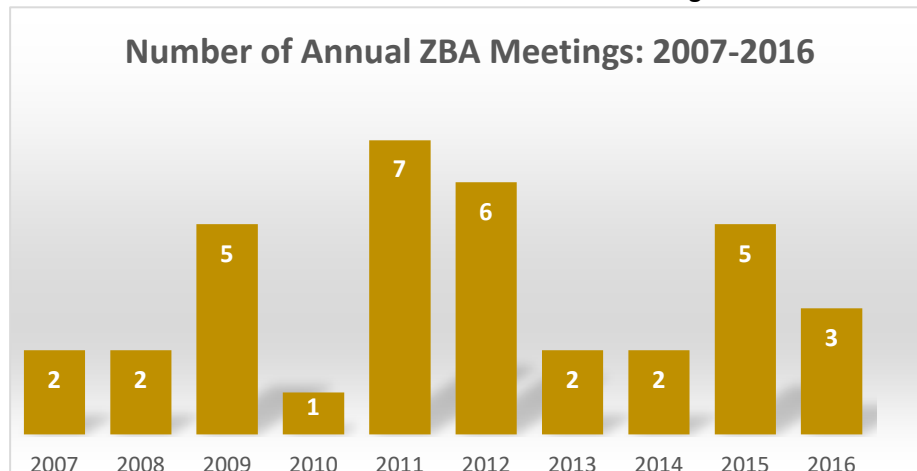
Table 15 – 2016 ZBA Members

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Tom Werkema	December 31, 2018	2013	Chair
Ruth Ringnalda	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	December 31, 2018	2015	Alternate

Table 16- Zoning Board of Appeals – 2016

Meeting Attendance						
	Werkema	Fryling	Wolffis	Ringnalda	Giarmo	Brew
Jan	X	X	X	X	X	X
Feb	Meeting Canceled					
Feb	Meeting Canceled					
Mar	Meeting Canceled					
Apr	Meeting Canceled					
May	Meeting Canceled					
Jun	X		X	X	X	X
Apr	Meeting Canceled					
May	Meeting Canceled					
Jun	Meeting Canceled					
Jul	Meeting Canceled					
Aug	Meeting Canceled					
Sep	X		X	X	X	X
Oct	Meeting Canceled					
Nov	Meeting Canceled					
Dec	Meeting Canceled					
No. of Absences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attendance %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Chart 7 – Annual Number of ZBA Meetings



DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

Township Planner
Mark Sisson, AICP
Since: December 2015

Assistant Planner
Matt McKernan
Since: May 2015

The Township Planner and Township Assistant Planner 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. Jeff Gritter of Vriesman & Korhorn Civil Engineering will continue to provide support and guidance to the Planning Department.

In 2009 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 turn the position was not offered in 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
- 2017 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. 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 17 lists the adopted budgets for the Planning and Zoning Department for fiscal years 2008-2016 and also shows the Department's Budget as a percentage of the overall General Fund Budget.

Table 17

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
P/Z Budget	\$166,413	\$160,833	\$182,862	\$173,956	\$163,816	\$209,274	\$209,815
% of General Fund Budget	6.00%	4.96%	5.00%	4.8%	4.9%	5.7%	5.9%

The average budget over the last 7-years is \$180,996. The 2017 budget of \$209,815 is a minute increase over the 2016 budget. The proposed budget continues the trend away from the progressively declining budgets that occurred between 2008 and 2015. This is a direct reflection of the Department once again being fully staffed. The approved budgets remain less than department budgets in the early 2000s, when the department had similar staffing levels and workloads.

The Planning Departments budget remains approximately 6% of the Total Township Budget. 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 18 presents the actual dollar amount spent in the fiscal years 2011 – 2016 and is also expressed as a percentage of the approved Planning and Zoning Department's Budget.

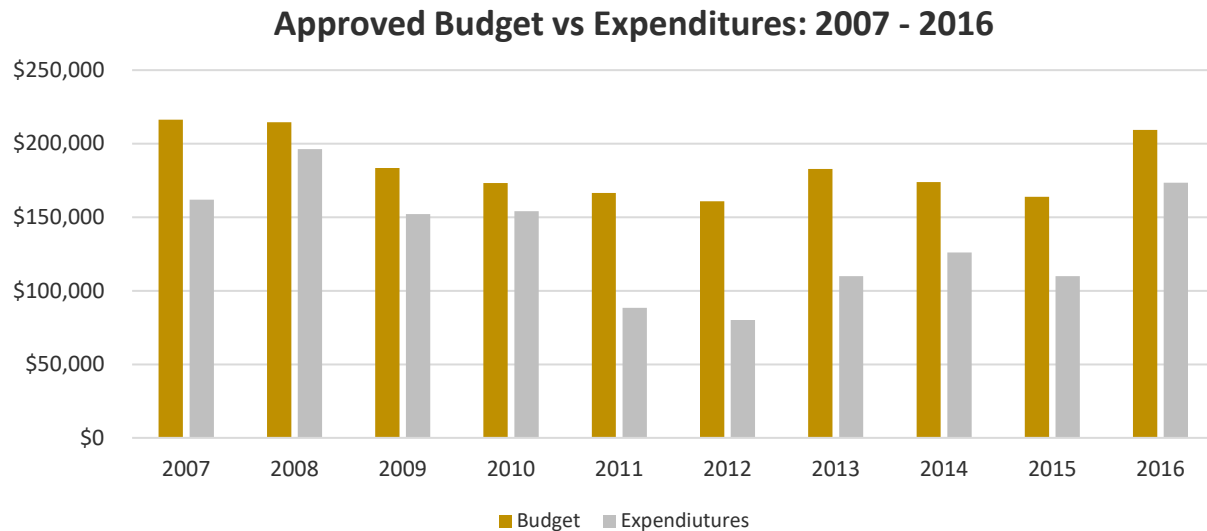
Table 18

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Actual Expenditures	\$88,446	\$80,130	\$109,986	\$126,029	\$109,962	\$173,548.35
% of Budget	53.15%	49.82%	60.14%	72.45%	67.13%	82.71 %

The increase in spending in 2016 can largely be attributed to two factors. 2016 was the first year since 2011 that the department was staffed with two full-time planners. This added approximately \$55,000 to spending over the previous year. The other factor leading to an increase in spending was the Township transitioning from having a staff engineer to contracting an outside firm for engineering services. This led to over \$17,000 in additional spending over 2015.

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 72.37% of its approved budget.

Chart 7 shows all monies allocated to the department and all yearly expenditures from 2007 – 2016.



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.