

GAINES CHARTER

TOWNSHIP

PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Endorsed by the Planning Commission on February 22, 2018

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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 **2017 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 1993 to 2017. This includes single-family dwellings as well as attached units and apartments/condos.

- From 1993 to 2007 Gaines Township averaged 255 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.
- 2017 saw a 40% decrease in residential building permits. The decrease is somewhat misleading however. The number of permits issued for single-family homes only decreased by 7%. The decrease in the total number of building permits issued can largely be attributed to the approval of building permits for nine, 12-unit apartment buildings in the long-stalled Fieldstone PUD in 2016.

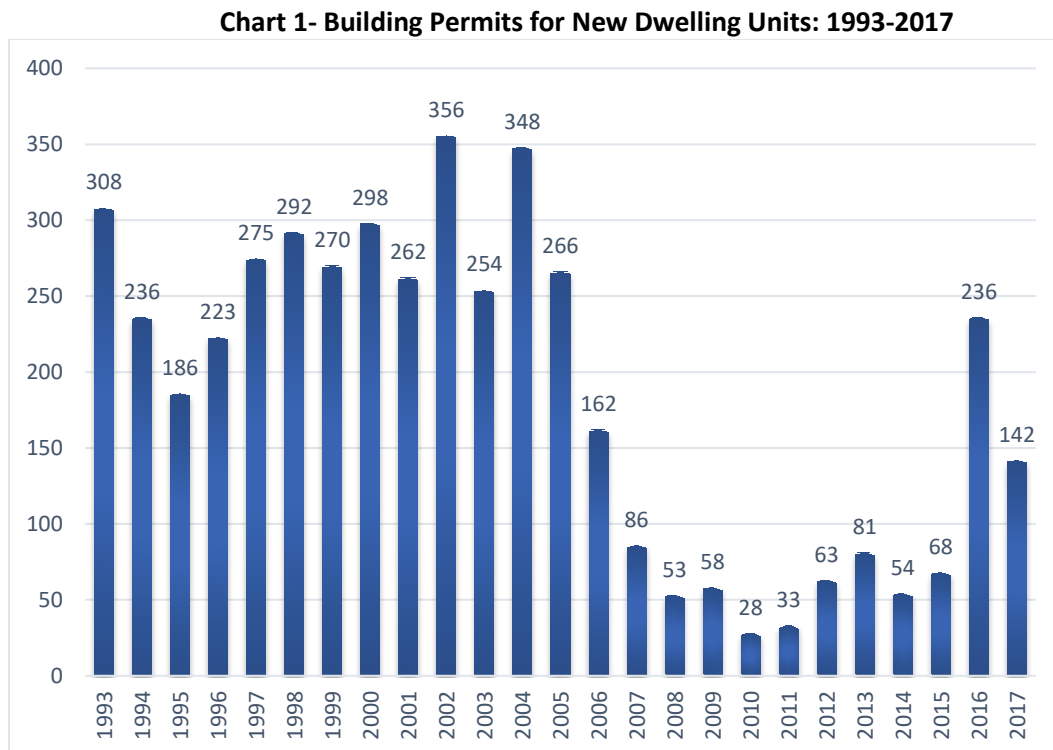
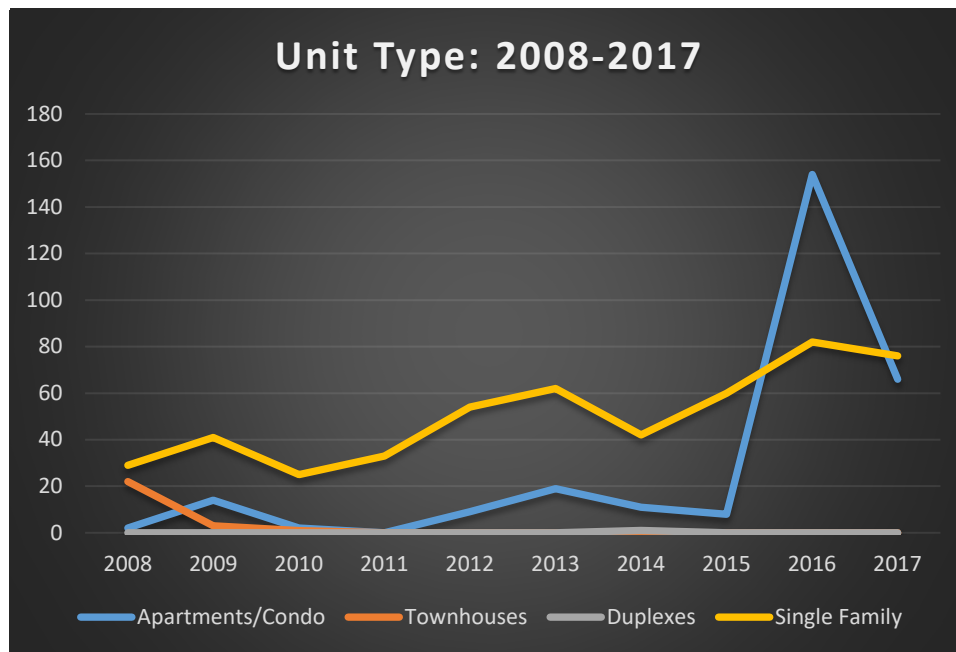


Table 1 and **Chart 2** Detail the specific types of housing constructed from 2003 – 2017

Table 1 – New Residential Building Permits – Total Units

	Townhouses	Duplexes	Apartments/ Multi-Unit Condos	Single Family Homes/Condos	Total Units
2017	0	0	66	76	142
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 decreased by 94 units from 2016. As discussed above, the decrease is largely due to the fact that 108 units were issued for the long-dormant Fieldstone Apartments development in 2016. The decline in the number of building permits issued between 2016 and 2017 is negligible once you control for the 108 building permits for the Fieldstone Apartments in 2016. The 142 building permits issued in 2017 are more than double the combined total from 2014 and 2015 (122) and signifies the continued resurgence of the housing market in Gaines Township following the great housing recession of the late 2000's.

It was expected that the new phase of Woodfield Apartments would begin construction in 2017. Shortages in materials and labor on other projects caused the developer to delay construction and seek an extension for their special use permit/site plan approval for Woodfield Apartments in February 2017. Grading and utility installation began on the site in late 2017 and construction is expected to commence sometime in 2018.

Single-family home construction decreased slightly from 82 units in 2016 to 76 units in 2017. Cook's Crossing Phase 4 (18 units) was the most active residential development in 2017, followed by Preservation Lakes Phase 1 (17 units) & South Creek North (9 Units). Custom homes outside of platted subdivisions accounted for 13 additional housing units within the Township in 2017.

Townhouse and duplex construction outside of condominium developments has continued to be insignificant.



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 January 1, 2018. In looking at data from the Planning Department and Building Department, staff notes the following:

- There are currently 18 active residential developments within Gaines Township.
- There are 446 available lots within the approved developments.
- 2017 saw the final approval of the Hanna Lake Trails plat and Creekside Storage attached condominium developments. These developments contain a combined total of 80 dwelling units.

Table 2 – Active Development Projects in Gaines Township (As of 1/1/18)

	Total Approved		Amount Available	
	Units/Lots	Buildings	Units/Lots	Buildings
Byron Center Public Schools				
Capens Pointe Site Condominium Development	17	-	1	-
Cook's Crossing - Ranch Condos	47	18	10	3
Brewer Park Condominiums	63	30	5	2
Cobbblestone/Weathervane Phase 4	38	-	2	-
Cook's Crossing - Phase 5	33	0	33	0
Caledonia Public Schools				
Fieldstone Apartments	396	33	60	5
Hammond Estates	27	9	8	3
Crystal Springs- The Village Phase 2	51	-	1	-
Turning Creek	16	-	12	-
Preservation Lake Estates - Ph 1	32	-	9	0
Harmony Cove	12	-	3	-
Harmon Farms	20	-	13	-
Hanna Lake Trails	52	-	49	-
Kentwood Public Schools				
Summer Shores Condominiums	96	29	23	8
Crystal Downes	56	-	1	-
Sweetgrass Ridge	42	-	1	-
The Preserve at Woodfield	176	13	176	13
Creekside Duplex Condos	28	14	28	14
School District	Total	Unbuilt	% Available	
Byron Center	198	51	25.8%	
Caledonia	606	158	26.1%	
Kentwood	406	237	58.4%	
Totals	1210	446	36.9%	

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 - 2017

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
Hanna Lake Trails	Final Preliminary Plat Review	Approval of plans for development of a 52 unit (lot) single family platted 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.	Approval	Approval
Creekside Storage, 1115 68th Street	Major PUD Amendment	Request for an amendment to the Creekside Storage PUD &. Final site plan approval. The amendments pertain to a needed change to the layout of private road and the siting of the attached condominium buildings as a result of wetland avoidance. The amendment will result in a net reduction of 4 buildings and 8 dwelling units from the previous plan and the relocation of the roadway internal to the residential portion of the development.	Approval	N/A
Preservation Lakes	Major PUD Amendment	Amendment to the Preservation Lakes Planned Unit Development to incorporate detached and 2-Unit condominium phase in the southeast corner of the PUD.	Approval	Approval
Railtown Brewing Company-	Major PUD Amendment	Request for a major amendment to the Dutton Mill Village PUD to allow for construction of a 5,983 SF Microbrewery & Restaurant.	Approval	Approval
Stonewater-Crystal Springs PUD	Major PUD Amendment/PUD Rezoning	The applicants request zoning approval of a 7.2 acre PUD extending approximately 750 feet north of Crystal Springs Drive SE on Kalamazoo Ave SE. Proposed are a credit union, a medical office and a retail/ service building. A three acre back lot is also included and planned to support professional offices or similar low impact non-retail uses. The request will rezone part of the existing Crystal Springs PUD and part of parcel 41-22-09-151-006 from RL -10 Residential and create a new commercial PUD.	In Progress	In Progress
Chipotle, 6333 Kalamazoo Avenue	Minor PUD Amendment	Request for a Minor Amendment to the Crossings PUD to allow a Chipotle restaurant to replace 3 parking spaces with an outdoor seating area.	Approval	N/A
Fieldstone Apartments	Minor PUD Amendment	Request for an amendment to the Fieldstone Apartments PUD. The amendment pertains to the substitution of a dog park in place of the previously approved tennis courts on the property.	Approval	N/A

Table 3 – Development/Work Items Summary – 2017(Continued)

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
Huntington Bank, 6333 Kalamazoo Avenue	Minor PUD Amendment	Request for a Minor Amendment to the Crossings PUD to allow for the installation of a standalone drive-up automatic teller machine in the northeast corner of the Crossings Retail Center parking lot.	Approval	N/A
Summer Shores PUD	Minor PUD Amendment	Site Plan Review & Minor Amendment to the Summer Shores PUD to change the configuration and layout of Phase 3 from the originally approved four 4-Unit and one 3-Unit attached condominium buildings to four 2-Unit, one 3-Unit, and two 4-Unit attached condominiums.	Approval	N/A
Stone Co	PUD-MR Annual Operating Review	Annual review of the operating plan for the StoneCo Mineral Removal Operation.	Approval	N/A
765 68th Street	Rezoning	Request to rezone property located at 765 68th Street SE from C-1 Neighborhood Commercial to RL-10 Low-Density Residential. The purpose of the requested zone is to enable development of one duplex.	Approval	Approval
7900 Kalamazoo Avenue	Rezoning	Request to rezone 7900 Kalamazoo Avenue from A-R Agricultural-Rural Residential to RL-10 Low-Density Residential.	Denial	Withdrawn
7900 Kalamazoo Avenue	Rezoning	Request to rezone property located at 7900 Kalamazoo Avenue from A-R Agricultural-Rural Residential to RL-14 Low-Density Residential. The purpose of the requested zone is to enable development of up to three lots for single-family homes.	Approval	Approval
6630 Kalamazoo Avenue	Site Plan Review	Approval of Outdoor seating area for Irie restaurant.	Approval	N/A
Dutton Christian Middle School, 6729 Hanna Lake Avenue	Site Plan Review	Site Plan Review for a 14,336 addition to the north side of Dutton Christian Middle School at 6729 Hanna Lake Avenue.	Approval	N/A
Hillside Community Church, 1440 68th Street SE	Site Plan Review	Hillside Community Church is requesting site plan approval for two expansions to the church located at 1440 68th Street. The church is located in the RL-10 Residential District where churches are classified as “Uses Permitted by Right.”	Approval	N/A
Siliconature, 4501 68th Street	Site Plan Review	Site Plan Review for a 152,300 square foot light industrial manufacturing and warehouse facility situated on 22.14 acres at 4581 68th Street SE.	Approval	N/A

Table 3 – Development/Work Items Summary – 2017 (Continued)

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
Southland Autowash, 6700 Kalamazoo Avenue SE	Site Plan Review	Amendment to a site plan condition from February 2013 to allow Southland Autowash to extend the hours of operation to 9pm Monday thru Saturday.	Approval	N/A
Swan Orthodontics 1723 68th Street	Site Plan Review	Request for site plan approval for a 5,633 SF two-suite office building at 1723 68th Street.	Approval	N/A
Pine Rest Rustic Market, 389 68th Street	Special Use Permit	Request for a Special Use Permit to allow for a 50' x 20' Tent to be located on the property for a "Tent Sale" for a period of 4 months: July 5 to October 31.	Approval	N/A
610 Sunmeadow Drive	Special Use Permit: Accessory Building	Special Use Permit Request to allow an accessory building with a floor area of 576 square feet, exceeding the maximum square footage (392 SF) allowed by right in the RL-10 District.	Approval	N/A
7743 Eastern Avenue	Special Use Permit: Accessory Building	Special Use Permit Request to allow for construction of an accessory building with a floor area of 896 square feet, exceeding the maximum square footage (443 SF) allowed by right on this property in the RL-10 District.	Approval	N/A
99 Coleman Street	Special Use Permit: Accessory Building	Special Use Permit Request to allow for construction of an accessory building with a floor area of 576 square feet, exceeding the maximum square footage (200 SF) allowed by right in the R-3 District.	Approval	N/A
434 100th Street SE	Special Use Permit: Group Child Day Care	Special use permit request to expand an existing Family Child Day Care Home (1-6 children) to a Group Child Day Care Home (7-12 children).	Approval	N/A
7471 Sunview Drive	Special Use Permit: Group Child Day Care	Special Use Permit Request to allow a single-family residence to be used as a Group Child Day Care Home (7-12 children).	Approval	N/A
7921 Eastern Avenue SE	Special Use Permit: Group Child Day Care	Special use permit request to expand an existing Family Child Day Care Home (1-6 children) to a Group Child Day Care Home (7-12 children).	Approval	N/A
Explorer Estates	Tentative Preliminary Plat Approval	Approval of the tentative preliminary plat of Explorer Estates, an 8 lot single-family platted subdivision along Peerpoint Drive SE.	Approval	Approval
Hash Tag Acres, 7717 Eastern Avenue	Tentative Preliminary Plat Approval	Approval of the tentative preliminary plat of Hash Tag Acres, a 27 lot single-family platted subdivision.	Denial	Denial
Preservation Lakes Phase 2	Tentative Preliminary Plat Approval	Approval of the preliminary plat of Preservation Lakes Estates Phase 2. Proposed development is a 30 lot single-family platted subdivision, having received prior conceptual approval within the Preservation Lakes PUD.	Approval	Approval

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REVIEW

The Township continued to experience a decline in development in its primary commercial corridors in 2017. Development activity 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. 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 the fall of 2017, the Township Board approved an amendment to the Dutton Mill Village PUD to allow Railtown Brewing Company to construct a new brewery and restaurant at the corner of East Mill Run and 68th Street in Dutton. This will be the first major development within Dutton subsequent to the 2008 subarea plan. It can be expected that the Switch Data center and other nearby developments should create spillover effects that will increase development in Dutton and 68th Street more generally.

Division Avenue Corridor:

The Division Avenue Corridor activity remains low with new construction. There were no significant new commercial developments along Division Avenue in 2017.



SPECIAL LAND USE REQUESTS

During 2017, the Planning Commission handled 7 requests for special land uses. This was consistent with the average of 6 requests per year for the past 10 years. There were 3 requests for accessory buildings exceeding the maximum gross floor area allowed by right in low-density residential districts and 3 requests to allow Group Child Day Care Homes (6-12 children) in residential districts. The final request was the yearly special use permit for the Pine Rest Rustic Market outdoor sales tent.

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	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17
# of Requests	7	4	4	4	5	6	6	5	12	7
Change from Previous Year	-46%	-43%	0%	0%	125%	120%	0%	-17%	140%	-42%
# of Staff Recommended Approvals	7	3	3	4	5	5	6	3	12	7
% Recommended by Staff for Approval	100%	75%	75%	100%	100%	80%	100%	60%	100%	100%
# Approved	6	3	3	4	5	5	6	5	12	7
% Approved	86%	75%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5 – Accessory Building Requests

Year	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
# of Requests	0	0	0	1	5	3*	2	4	3
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-B"	0	0	0	5408	0	0	700	0	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-R"	0	0	0	0	3,333	2816	0	0	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-10"	0	0	0	0	1000	3,780	0	542	736
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	780	0	900	0	576

**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

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
*Total Number of Variances Requested	3	8	1	7	9	5	4	6	4	13
% Change in Total from Last Year	50%	100%	-88%	600%	122%	-55%	-25%	50%	-33%	225%
Total Number Approved	2	8	1	5	7	5	3	4	3	10
% of Total Requests Approved	67%	100%	100%	400%	85.7%	100%	75%	66%	75%	77%
Number Recommended for Approval by Staff	2	6	0	5	3	3	2	2	3	7
% of Total Recommended for Approval by Staff	67%	63%	0%	71%	33.3%	40%	50%	33%	75%	58%
Number of Use Variances Requested	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
Number of Use Variances Approved	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
% of Total Requested as Use Variances	0%	0%	0%	29%	0	0	0	0%	25%	8%

Table 7 provides a summary of the variance requests in 2017.

Table 7 – Variance Request Summary

Address	Variance Type	Description	Staff Recommendation	Action
South Christian High School 8150 Kalamazoo Avenue	Dimensional	Height variance for a monument sign: 8 feet tall where only 6 feet is allowed.	Denial	Denial
	Dimensional	Variance for the percentage of sign face as electronic message display area on a monument sign permitted only by special use permit: 45 % versus 40 % permitted.	Denial	Approval
	Dimensional	Variance allowing a second monument sign on street frontage where only one monument sign is permitted for each street frontage.	Approval	Approval

Table 7 – Variance Request Summary (Continued)

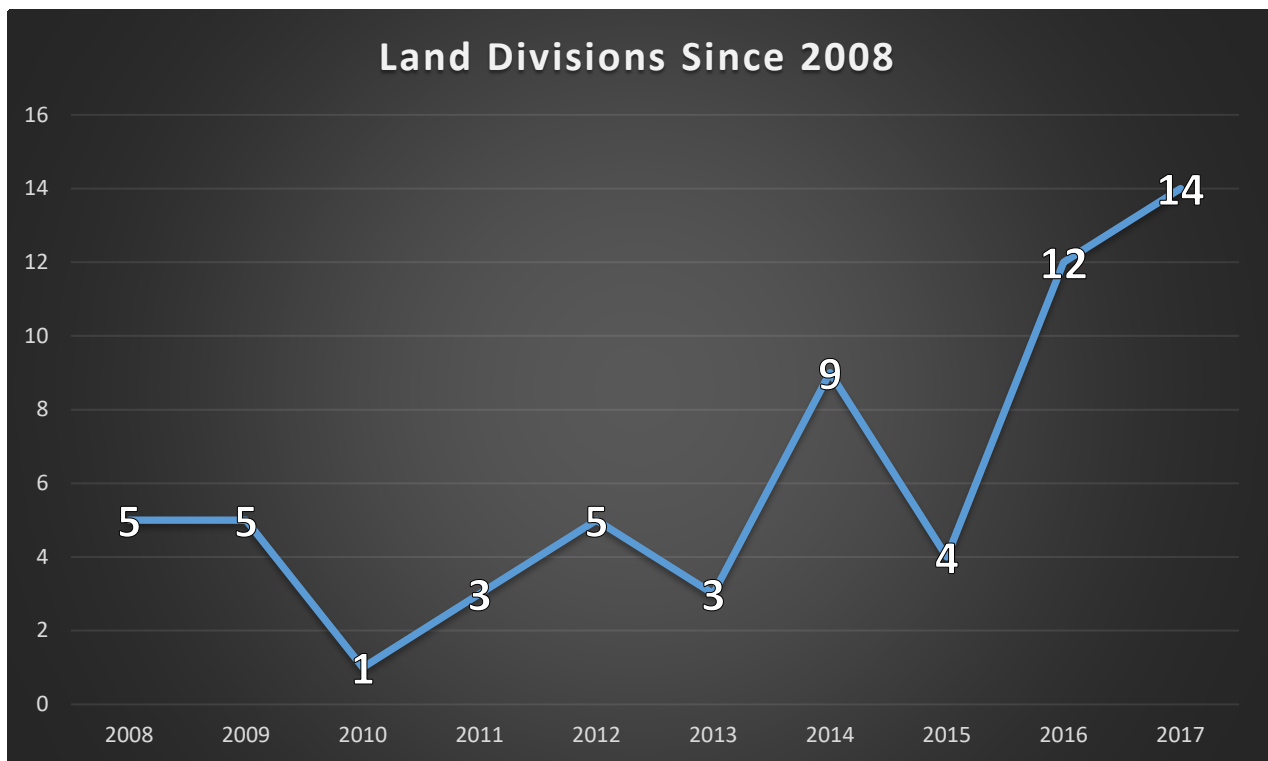
Address	Variance Type	Description	Staff Recommendation	Action
South Christian High School 8150 Kalamazoo Avenue	Use	A variance to allow the second monument to be an electronic message center having electronic message display area and secondary dimensional variances allowing the height to be essentially the same as the first permitted monument sign	Approval	Approval
South Christian High School 8150 Kalamazoo Avenue	Dimensional	A dimensional variance to allow the second monument sign to feature an LED message center with the same percentage of sign face as the first	Denial	Approval
South Christian High School 8150 Kalamazoo Avenue	Dimensional	A variance to allow the square footage of the permitted address sign to exceed 5 square feet.	Approval	Approval
Dutton Christian Middle School, 6729 Hanna Lake Avenue SE	Dimensional	Dimensional variance for a 17 foot rear yard setback where a 50 foot rear yard setback is required for a proposed addition to the west side of Dutton Christian School.	Denial	Approval
6150 Hanna Lake Avenue	Dimensional	Dimensional variance to allow an in-ground pool in front yard.	Approval	Approval
7241 Brooklyn Avenue	Dimensional	Dimensional variance from Section 2.3 (C) (2) for a 16ft side yard setback where a 35ft setback is required to allow for an expansion to the north side of an existing garage.	Approval	Approval
Alliance Beverage- 4490 60th Street	Dimensional	Variance from Section 17.11 (A) to allow for the installation of a 467 square foot wall sign in a location where wall signs are not normally permitted.	Approval	Approval
695 66th Street SE	Dimensional	Dimensional variance for a 3ft side yard setback where an 8ft setback is required to allow for the addition of a two-stall garage.	Approval	Approval
10097 Mariedale Drive	Dimensional	Dimensional variance from Section 5.4 to allow an accessory building that was constructed within a private driveway easement to remain in its current location.	Denial	Denial
8115 Hanna Lake Avenue SE	Dimensional	Dimensional variance from Section 2.3 (C) (2) & Section 5.4 to allow for construction of a home with a 16 foot setback from a private driveway easement where a 60 foot setback is normally required.	Denial	Denial

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 2017, Township staff approved 15 Land Divisions, 4 Land Combinations, and 10 Lot Line Adjustments.**

Chart 3 provides information on the number of land division applications since 2008. 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 number of Land Division applications processed by the Township began to increase significantly in 2016 with 12 approved applications. That trend continued into 2017 as the Township approved 15 applications, which is the highest number since 2006.

Chart 3 – Applications for Land Divisions



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 4 of the 12 implementation steps laid out in the 2002 Master Plan.

Table 8 – 2002 Master Plan Implementations

Task	Status	Comments
Evaluate and Revise the Zoning Ordinance	Mixed Results	Began work on a private roads ordinance.
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.
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.

Table 8 – 2002 Master Plan Implementations Continued

Task	Status	Comments
Promote the Purchase of Development Rights	Positive Action	Township Staff has been participating in discussions on methods/strategies to empower Kent County to have a more robust PDR program.
Promote Transfer of Development Rights	No Action	The 2009 Planning Department Intern conducted research on TDR programs.
Improve Non-Motorized Transportation Network	Positive Action	Continued work on an update to the 2010 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Also began initial planning on the Dutton Spur of the Paul Henry Trail.

In 2017, Gaines Township formally began the process of updating the 2002 Master Plan. The original Master Plan is now 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 updated plan will combine the 2008 and 2016 subarea plans with revisions to the general plan. This cohesive document will guide development in the Township in the coming decades.

The following topics among many others will need to be addressed by the Master Plan Update:

Redevelopment options for the Division Avenue Corridor.

Land use alternatives for the area currently designated as planned for “Office-Service” uses near Hanna Lake Avenue on 60th Street.

Potential development options for properties owned by Steelcase in the northeast corner of the Township.

Reassessment of the Dutton Subarea Plan in light of new developments such as the occupation of the former Steelcase Pyramid by Switch Data Center.

Future land use alternatives and zoning options for intensive home occupations such as McDonald Plumbing and Everett’s Landscape Management along Eastern Avenue.

A discussion of issues pertaining to the 84th Street Subarea plan, specifically the peripheral land use implications of sewer and water extension on the 92nd Street corridor.

A revaluation of Township farmland preservation policy.

ORDINANCE UPDATES

There were no text amendments to the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance in 2017. Township Staff began work on an ordinance pertaining to standards for private roads in late 2017.

REZONINGS

Table 9 provides information on the three rezoning applications received in 2017

Table 9 – 2017 Rezoning Requests

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Status	Township Board Action
765 68th Street	Rezoning from C-1 to RL-10	Request to rezone property located at 765 68th Street SE from C-1 Neighborhood Commercial to RL-10 Low-Density Residential. The purpose of the requested zone is to enable development of one duplex.	Approved	Approved
7900 Kalamazoo Avenue	Rezoning from A-R to RL-10	Request to rezone 7900 Kalamazoo Avenue from A-R Agricultural-Rural Residential to RL-10 Low-Density Residential.	Denied	Withdrawn
7900 Kalamazoo Avenue	Rezoning from A-R to RL-10	Request to rezone property located at 7900 Kalamazoo Avenue from A-R Agricultural-Rural Residential to RL-14 Low-Density Residential. The purpose of the requested zone is to enable development of up to three lots for single-family homes.	Approved	Approved

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Township lacks a formal economic development department. As such, the Township relies on partnerships with private organizations to promote economic development within the Township. In 2017 the Planning Department continued to collaborate with organizations such as the Right Place and the Cutlerville-Gaines Chamber of Commerce on issues related to economic development.

GRANT WRITING

Township staff did not seek grant funding for any activities or projects in 2017. 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 2017 Township Planning Staff in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Committee continued work on an update to the Gaines Charter Township Parks & Recreation Plan. As part of this effort, a phone survey was conducted of 300 randomly selected residents. It is the goal of the Department to complete the Parks & Recreation plan update in 2018.

CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

The Planning Department continued to use BS&A software to register and track code enforcement cases in 2017. 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 2017 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 106 code enforcement actions in 2017 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	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	10-Year Average	
January	17	7	5	2	1	0	3	0	3	3	4	3.9%
February	12	6	7	26	0	0	1	0	0	4	6	5.9%
March	13	25	23	8	3	4	2	2	13	8	11.6	11.4%
April	21	21	19	5	4	2	9	9	8	8	10.6	10.4%
May	16	22	14	10	24	9	11	11	4	10	13.2	12.9%
June	28	12	18	15	9	7	16	10	15	13	14.6	14.3%
July	24	18	18	10	4	2	12	9	16	13	13	12.7%
August	3	17	18	12	5	5	5	3	9	13	11	10.8%
September	15	11	11	6	4	4	3	5	15	8	8.4	8.2%
October	8	11	9	11	2	4	1	2	14	9	7.3	7.2%
November	1	12	5	6	3	2	1	2	4	10	4.6	4.5%
December	2	6	1	1	3	3	0	4	0	7	3.1	3.0%
Annual Total	160	168	148	112	62	42	64	57	101	106	102	

Chart 4 – Annual Cases by Month

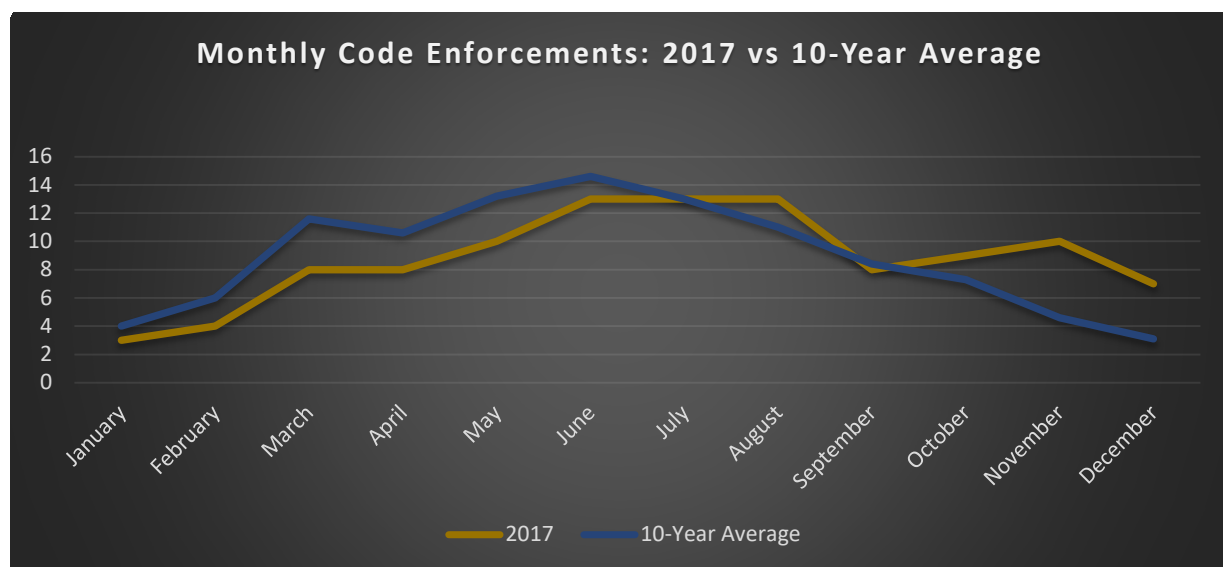


Table 11 shows the categories of each enforcement case and its 10-Year average.

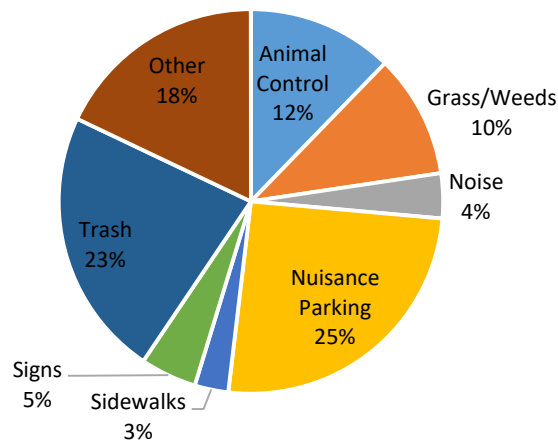
Chart 5 provides a percentage breakdown by type of enforcement case processed in 2017.

Table 11 – Annual Case Types

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	10-Year Average	
Animal Control	5	3	12	5	2	5	5	4	6	13	6.0	5.9%
Grass/Weeds	11	9	14	9	3	1	9	5	13	11	8.5	8.3%
Noise	0	1	1	0	5	0	1	1	0	4	1.3	1.3%
Nuisance Parking	61	52	57	38	15	11	12	17	37	27	31.7	32.1%
Sidewalks	3	5	1	25	0	1	1	3	2	3	4.4	4.3%
Signs	24	6	11	3	27	4	2	1	1	5	8.4	8.2%
Trash	35	39	32	20	8	10	15	11	21	24	21.5	21.1%
Other	21	33	20	12	1	11	19	15	21	19	16.9	16.9%
TOTALS	160	148	148	112	62	42	64	57	101	106	102.0	

Chart 5 – Enforcement Percentages

Enforcement Breakdowns: 2017



Nuisance parking complaints represented the largest percentage of code enforcement actions in 2017. 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 2017. 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.

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 water runoff onto neighboring properties.

The animal control category was the fourth most common complaint category in 2017. 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.

Unkempt grass and weeds continued to be a common complaint in the Township in 2017. Of the 11 official complaints only 2 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.

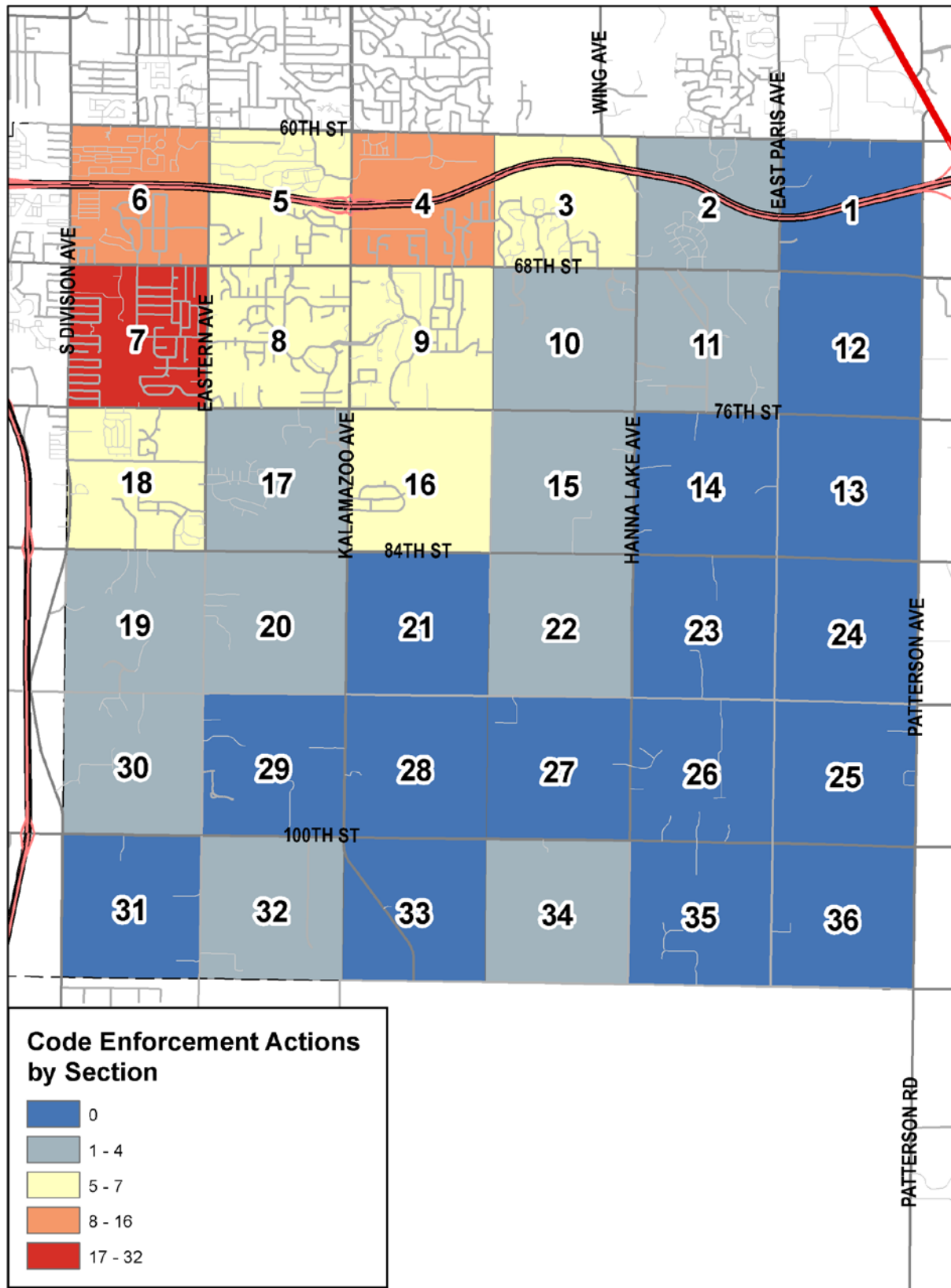
Chart 6 – 2017 Section Comparison

Chart 6 provides an overview of Code activity cases for select Sections by percentage, while **Table 12** provides cases per Section comparisons between 2008 and 2017. The chart shows that fully 89% of enforcement activity is occurring in Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 18. These Sections cover 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 Section2

Section	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	10-Year Average	
3	3	6	4	6	1	0	3	2	8	5	3.8	3.7%
4	22	19	19	17	19	4	4	9	10	12	13.5	13.2%
5	16	14	10	5	13	4	1	3	7	7	8	7.8%
6	12	18	19	22	4	4	13	5	14	16	12.7	12.5%
7	53	41	34	15	9	11	26	14	23	23	24.9	24.4%
8	10	12	20	8	1	6	2	5	6	7	7.7	7.5%
9	24	29	12	18	4	2	9	9	5	6	11.8	11.6%
10	0	5	3	2	1	0	2	4	4	3	2.4	2.4%
11	0	8	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	1.7	1.7%
18	8	4	9	4	2	2	1	2	14	7	5.3	5.2%
Other	15	13	15	15	9	8	4	4	9	17	10.9	10.7%
	163	169	149	112	63	42	65	57	101	106		

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 2017, The Planning Commission held 12 regular meetings. **Table 13** lists the members of the Planning Commission during 2017. **Table 14** illustrates the attendance at Planning Commission Meetings in 2017.

Table 13 - 2017 Planning Commission Members

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Connie Giarmo	December 31, 2019	2008 (1991 – 2000)	Chairperson
Ronnie Rober	December 31, 2020	2002	Vice-Chairperson
Lani Thomas	December 31, 2019	2006	Secretary
Louis Waayenberg	December 31, 2017	1997	
Tim Haagsma	Township Trustee	2002 (1992 – 1997)	
Brad Burns	December 31, 2018	2014	
Talimma Billips	December 31, 2019	2017	

Table 14 – 2017 Attendance by Planning Commission Members

2017 Meeting Attendance							
	Billips	Burns	Haagsma	Giarmo	Rober	Thomas	Waayenberg
Jan	X	X	X	X	X	Absent	Absent
Feb	X	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Mar	X	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Apr	X	X	X	X	Absent	X	X
May	X	Absent	X	Absent	X	Absent	X
Jun	Absent	X	X	Absent	X	X	Absent
Jul	X	Absent	X	X	X	X	X
Aug	X	X	Absent	X	Absent	X	X
Sep	X	X	Absent	X		X	X
Oct	X	X	Absent	X	X	X	X
Nov	Absent	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dec	Absent	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
No. of Absences	3	2	3	2	2	2	5
Attendance Percentage	X	X	X	X	X	Absent	Absent

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals met on 6 Occasions in 2017. **Table 15** lists the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2017. **Table 16** lists the meeting dates of the ZBA in 2017. **Chart 7** illustrates the number of annual meetings of the ZBA in the past 10 years.

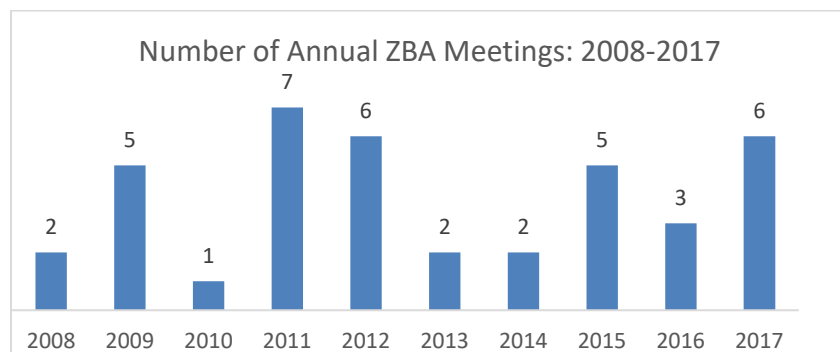
Table 15 – 2017 ZBA Members

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Tom Werkema	December 31, 2018	2013	Chair
Ruth Ringnalda	December 31, 2019	2002	Vice Chair
Michael Brew	December 31, 2018	2015	Secretary
Connie Giarmo	December 31, 2019	2014	
Don Hilton	December 31, 2020	2018	
Phil Tietz	December 31, 2020	2018	Alternate

Table 16- Zoning Board of Appeals – 2017

	Brew	Giarmo	Hilton	Ringnalda	Tietz	Werkema
Jan	X	X	X	X	X	X
Feb	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Mar	Meeting Cancelled					
Apr	X	X	X	X	Absent	X
May	Meeting Cancelled					
Jun	Meeting Cancelled					
Jul	X	X	X	X	X	X
Aug	Meeting Cancelled					
Sep	X	Absent	X	X	X	X
Oct	X	Absent	X	X	X	X
Nov	Meeting Cancelled					
Dec	Meeting Cancelled					
No. of Absences	0	2	0	0	1	1
Attendance %	100%	67%	100%	100%	83%	83%

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 2017.

The Planning 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
- 2018 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)



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 2012-2018 and also shows the Department's Budget as a percentage of the overall General Fund Budget.

Table 17

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
P/Z Budget	\$160,833	\$182,862	\$173,956	\$163,816	\$209,274	\$209,815	\$222,837
% of General Fund Budget	4.96%	5.00%	4.8%	4.9%	5.7%	5.9%	5.9%

The average budget over the last 7-years is \$189,057. The 2018 budget of \$222,837 is a 6% 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 2012 – 2016 and is also expressed as a percentage of the approved Planning and Zoning Department's Budget.

Table 18

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Actual Expenditures	\$80,130	\$109,986	\$126,029	\$109,962	\$173,548.35	\$174,994.82
% of Budget	49.8%	60.1%	72.5%	67.1%	82.7 %	83.4%

Department expenditures increased only slightly from 2016 to 2017. Higher Planning Department expenditures continue to be driven by the fact that the Department is fully staffed and now has to pay for contracted engineering services.

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 2008, the department has, on average, spent 73.2% of its approved budget.

Chart 7 shows all monies allocated to the department and all yearly expenditures from 2008 – 2017.

