

GAINES CHARTER

TOWNSHIP

PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

2024 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 2024 Planning & Zoning Department Annual Report provides the Planning Commission and Township Board with the following information:

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

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

The following statement serves as the Department’s vision:

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

Current Planning Division

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

Table 1 details the number of new dwelling units per year over the last 10 years from 2014 to 2024. This includes single-family dwellings as well as attached units and apartments/condos.

	Apartments/ Multi-Unit Condos	Duplexes	Single Family Homes/Condos/ Mobile Homes	Total Units
2024	244	0	61	305
2023	205	16	85	306
2022	48	4	192	244
2021	23	7	94	124
2020	10	2	77	89
2019	121	4	88	213
2018	61	0	94	161
2017	66	0	76	142
2016	154	0	82	236
2015	8	0	60	68
2014	11	1	42	54

TABLE 1

In lieu of upcoming changes to the Zoning Ordinance, staff finds that now is an appropriate time to reimagine how the Township tracks long-term housing supply data. **Table 2** arranges housing supply data using an updated method that provides more consistency with objectives outlined in the Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan.

Table 2: Building Permits Issued in 2024, New Categorizations

	Apartments	Single Family Attached	Single Family Detached	Mobile Homes	Total Units
2024	136	108	48	13	305

HOUSING APPROVALS

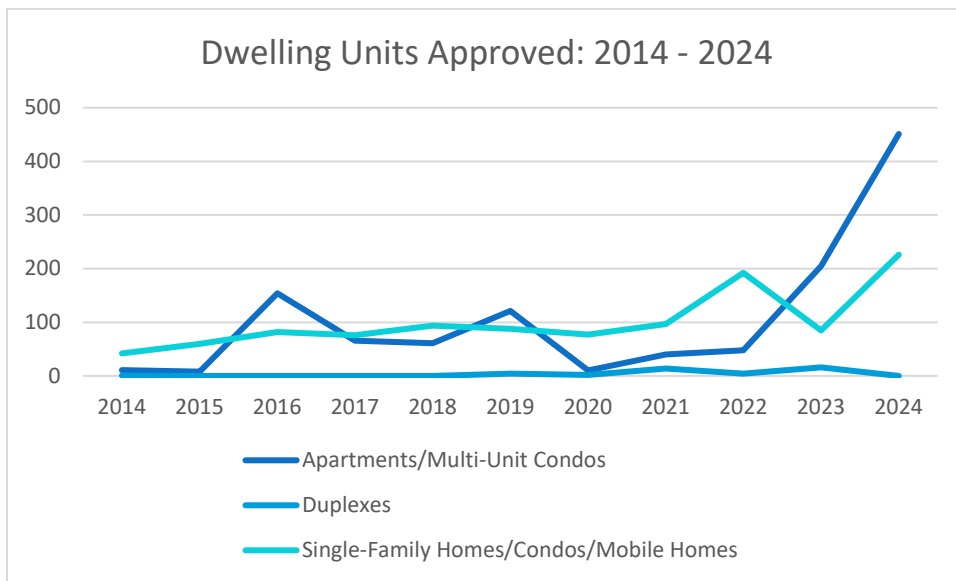


EXHIBIT 1

Similarly to data provided on building permits issued, staff has decided to additionally restructure the way in which dwelling unit approvals are tracked over time. The same categories from Table 2 have been applied to the housing approval data outlined in Exhibit 2. Since only one year worth of data is available using the new categorizations, a pie chart is used, however, in future years, the data will be presented using a line graph similarly to Exhibit 1.

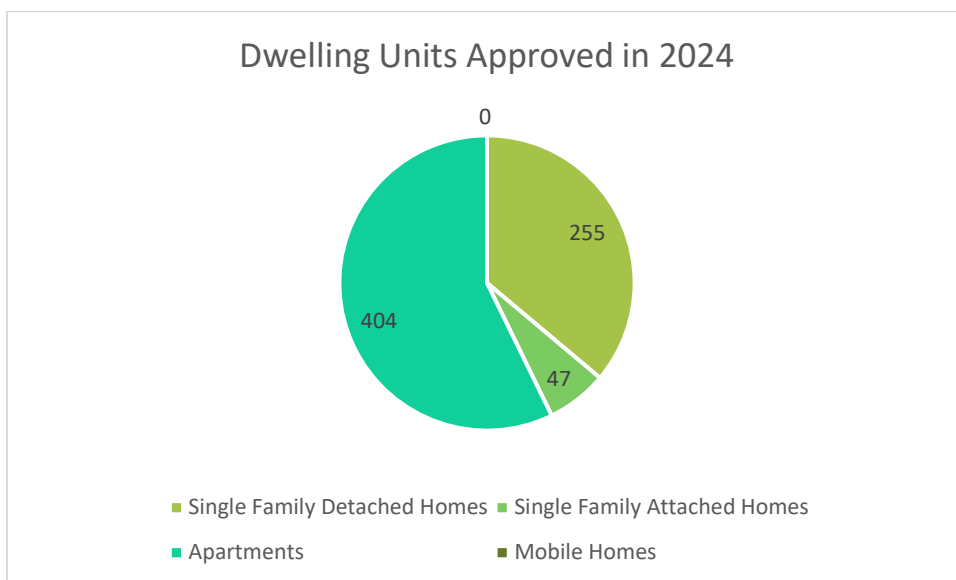


EXHIBIT 2

POPULATION DATA

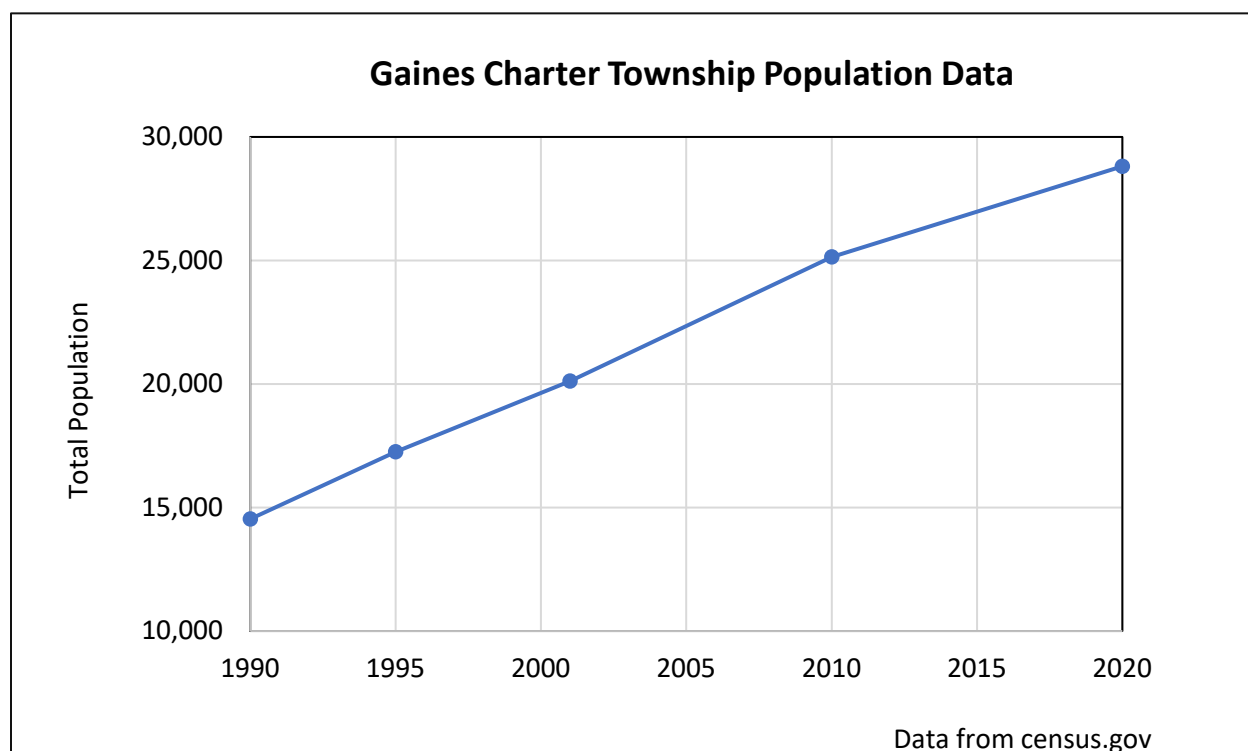


EXHIBIT 3

PROJECT REVIEWS

Table 3.

Summary of 41 application reviews completed by the Planning Commission, and subsequent Township Board action if applicable. The items are listed by the order in which they were considered.

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
7610 Division	Rezone	Rezone from I-2 (Heavy Industrial) to NC (Neighborhood Commercial)	Approved	Approved
2096 76th Street	Special Use Permit	To allow operation of a landscaping business in the A-R zoning district.	Denial	N/A
8808 Eastern Avenue	Special Use Permit	To allow a operation of a landscaping business in the A-R zoning district; SUP to allow for a 4,040 SF accessory building.	Approved	N/A

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
9889 East Paris Avenue	Special Use Permit	To allow a 3,410 SF accessory building in the A-B zoning district.	Approved	N/A
8269 Kalamazoo Ave	Land Division	4:1 Ratio Wavier Request	Approved	Approved
1856 100 th Street	Stoneco Annual Review	2023 Annual Review for the Stoneco Barnaby parcel.	Approved	N/A
44 Brownell Street	Special Use Permit	To allow a microbrewery in the NC zoning district.	Approved	N/A
163 68 th Street	Special Use Permit	To allow a 900 SF accessory building and a 300 SF roofed porch; total of 1,200 SF of accessory buildings in the RL-10 zoning district.	Approved; Two public hearings	N/A
820 92 nd Street	Special Use Permit	To allow a 1,536 SF of accessory buildings in the A-R zoning district.	Approved	N/A
1470 68 th Street	Special Use Permit	To allow a 3,200 SF accessory building in the RL-10 zoning district.	Approved	N/A
4598 84 th Street	Special Use Permit	To allow a 2,400 SF addition to an accessory building for a total of 5,422 SF of accessory buildings in the A-R zoning district.	Approved	N/A
6141 East Paris Ave	Site Plan Review	SPR for a 6,000 SF StonePro warehouse featuring some office space for a total of 10,007 SF of accessory buildings in the I-1 zoning district.	Approved	N/A
7376 Hanna Lake Ave	Special Use Permit	To allow a 2,048 SF accessory building in the RL-14 zoning district.	Approved	N/A
985 61 st Street	Special Use Permit	To allow a 2,500 SF accessory building in the RL-10 zoning district.	Approved	N/A
163 68 th Street	Special Use Permit	To allow a 1,200 square feet (SF) accessory building in RL-10	Approved	N/A

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
2701 76 th Street	PUD Amendment	PUD amendment to request a new site plan review for the Alexander Trails PUD.	Approved	Approved
9515 Hanna Lake	Special Use Permit	To allow a vehicle repair as a home occupation in a residential accessory building in the A-R zoning district.	Denied	N/A
10648 Eastern Ave	Special Use Permit	To allow a 728 SF of ground mounted solar panels for residential use in the A-R zoning district.	Approved	N/A
4142 92 nd Street	Special Use Permit	To allow a 1,200 SF of ground mounted solar panels for residential use in the A-B zoning district.	Approved	N/A
2701 76 th Street	Tentative Preliminary Plat – Phase 1	A tentative preliminary plat featuring 25 single-family lots that make up Phase 1 of the Alexander Trails PUD.	Approved	Approved
2701 76 th Street	Tentative Preliminary Plat – Phase 2	A tentative preliminary plat featuring 20 single-family lots that make up Phase 2 of the Alexander Trails PUD.	Approved	Approved
8190 Division Ave	1-Year Extension Request	1-year extension for Site Plan approval for the Brewer Park Apartments.	Approved	N/A
8460 Kalamazoo Ave	Site Plan Review - Phase 1	Prairie Wolf Station PUD mixed use center	Approved	N/A
3316 68 th Street	PUD Rezone and Site Plan Review	Dutton Center PUD Rezoning; Phase 1 SPR which will include veranda homes and attached townhomes.	Approved	Approved
3495 68 th Street	PUD Amendment Resolution	Dutton Mill Village PUD Amendment for a 1,400 SF addition at the Marathon gas station.	Approved	Approved
6844 Rosecrest	Special Use Permit	To allow a 506 SF attached accessory dwelling unit in the RL-10 zoning district.	Approved	N/A

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
7514 Melinda Court	Special Use Permit	To allow a Group Child Day Care Home increase from 6 to up to 12 children.	Approved	N/A
10287 Kalamazoo Ave	Stoneco Annual Review	2023 Annual Review for the Stoneco Jeplawy parcel.	Approved	N/A
1160/1188/1190 76th Street	Final Condo Plan	Cooks Enclave 25-unit residential development	Approved	Approved
1587 108 th Street	Special Use Permit	To allow a 2,600 SF accessory building in the A-R zoning district.	Approved	N/A
3805 92 nd Street	PUD Rezone/ Site Plan Review	PUD Rezone/ Site Plan Review for a PUD-OSP development named Caledonia Meadows.	Denied	N/A
4200 60 th Street	Site Plan Review	Phase 2 of the Switch electrical substation.	Approved	N/A
7114 Cornerstone	Special Use Permit	To allow a 412 SF accessory building in the RL-10 zoning district.	Approved	N/A
9443 Meadow Valley	Special Use Permit	To allow a 928 SF of consumer scale ground mounted solar panels in the A-R and A-B zoning districts.	Approved	N/A
Gaines Charter Township	Zoning Ordinance Amendment	Discussed new updates to the GCTZO, including the updated street ordinance, the new Village Residential zoning district, and standards for managing open space developments.	N/A	N/A
3316 68 th Street	Tentative Preliminary Plat – Phase 2	Tentative Preliminary Plat featuring 51 single-family lots that make up Phase 2 of the Dutton Center PUD.	Approved	Approved
1627 Sunny Glenn	Special Use Permit	SUP to allow chickens to be kept in the RL-14 zoning district.	Approved	N/A
520 68 th Street	Special Use Permit	SUP to allow for a 48 square foot monument sign in the RL-10 zoning district with a 2 foot by 8 foot LED illuminated panel.	Approved	N/A

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
1718 68 th Street	Special Use Permit	SUP to allow for a 2,400 square foot accessory building in the RL-10 zoning district.	Denied	N/A
6684 Hanna Lake Ave	Rezoning	Proposed rezone of 3 parcels from Light Industrial (I-1) to Multifamily Residential (R-3).	Denied	N/A
7174 Martin Ave	Special Use Permit	SUP to allow an adult foster care small group home to increase their capacity from 6 to 12 people.	Denied	N/A

Table 4 provides a summary of four application reviews completed by Township staff as administrative approvals.

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Planning Staff Action
3555 68 th Street	Temp Event	Railtown Trunk or Treat	Approved
6100 East Paris	Minor Amendment	Switch Substation Site Plan	Approved
4500 68 th St	Minor Amendment	Amazon Parking Lot Lane Changes	Approved
7590 Division	Minor Amendment	Parking Lot Circulation	Approved

VARIANCES

Table 5 provides a summary of the five variance requests heard by the ZBA in 2024.

Address	Variance Type	Description	Staff Recommendation	Action
1267 100 th Street	Dimensional	Reduce side yard setback from 20 feet to 10 feet to construct a pole barn.	Approve	Approve
3241 Muff Ridge Lane	Dimensional	Reduce side yard setback from 20 feet to 9 feet, and reduce front yard setback from 60 feet to 52 feet to construct a pole barn.	Approve	Approve

225 Sorrento Drive	Dimensional	Reduce side yard setback from 20 feet to 10 feet to construct a single family dwelling.	Approve	Approve
9375 Eastern Avenue	Dimensional	Reduce front yard setback from 60 feet to 34 feet to construct an accessory building.	Approve	Approve
1200 60th Street	Dimensional	Increase scale of two directional signs from 4 square feet to 16 square feet.	Deny	Deny

ORDINANCE UPDATES

Over the last year, substantial efforts to overhaul and update the Zoning Ordinance have been underway; the updated ordinance is nearing completion and subsequently approval by both the Township Board and Planning Commission. Efforts to update the ordinance were largely spearheaded by Community Development Director Dan Wells, in collaboration with Planning Consultant David Jirousek, AICP. The Zoning Ordinance Steering Committee has also provided valuable feedback and thoughts on proposed updates, and the most recent iteration of the draft ordinance has also undergone legal review.

The push for an update stemmed largely from the fact that the Zoning Ordinance needed to be more consistent with objectives outlined in the 2023 Master Plan, however, the overhaul process also provided the opportunity to improve the user-friendliness of the Zoning Ordinance and increase the overall readability of the document. As the ordinance has been updated, revised, and new sections have been added over the course of approximately 40 years, it has made for a jumbled reading experience; the proposed updates make for a concise document that will better serve staff and residents alike.

REZONINGS

Table 6 provides information on the two rezoning applications received in 2024. Although two applications were received, only one was granted approval.

Development Name/Address	Description	Planning Commission Action	Township Board Action
7610 Division	Rezone from I-2 (Heavy Industrial) to NC (Neighborhood Commercial)	Approve	Approve
6684, 6700, and 6710 Hanna Lake Ave	Rezone three parcels from I-1 (Light Industrial) to R-3 (Multiple Family Residential)	Deny	N/A (withdrawn)

Long-Range Planning Division

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

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. Planning Department staff performed work on 4 of the 12 implementation steps laid out in the 2002 Master Plan.

Task	Status	Comments
Evaluate and Revise the Zoning Ordinance	Continued Action	One ordinance text amendment was approved in 2024. The Zoning Ordinance is also undergoing a large overhaul; much progress was made in 2024 through collaboration with the steering subcommittee and Planning Consultant David Jirousek. The ordinance update is anticipated to be complete and adopted in early 2025.
Inventory Key Natural and Cultural Features	Continued Action	The Township accepted a bid from EnviroScience, based in Stow, Ohio, to complete a Natural Features Inventory for the Township to assess geographical assets and environmentally sensitive areas. This will assist in guiding development objectives during the next Master Plan update.
Develop A Program for Natural Buffers and Scenic Easements	Continued Action	
Develop Performance Standards for the PUD District	Continued Action	The Multi-Family Development Guidance, a document for architectural and design standards for apartment complexes, was regularly implemented in 2022.
Improve Non-Motorized Transportation Network	Positive Action	Staff and the Planning Commission worked with developers on specific projects to enhance the non-motorized transportation

		network throughout the township.
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PARKS & RECREATION

In 2022, Township Planning Staff in conjunction with the Parks and Trails Committee and MCSA Group, Inc., made major progress to update the Gaines Charter Township Parks & Trails Plan. The five-year plan is completed and was approved by the Township Board of Trustees in January of 2023. The committee continues to focus on the management of Prairie Wolf Park and is still in the initial stages of trying to establish an environmental education center at 8665 Kalamazoo, which the Township acquired in 2020.

Planning staff also applied for a SPARK grant through DNR to build a pavilion and make parking lot improvements in Prairie Wolf Park.

Additionally, staff continues to search for opportunities to purchase land to be used for future parks and recreation initiatives.

Code Enforcement Division

The Planning Department continued to use BS&A software to register and track code enforcement cases in 2024. Filed cases are those where a complaint has been received and registered in the software, and staff has completed a physical inspection of the property and contacted the property owner regarding a potential violation. Warning letters are sent and followed up with a second letter or Sherriff’s Deputy site visit. Complaints that have no corresponding enforceable ordinance are not included (e.g., high grass or weeds).

Table 8 is a summary of the enforcement cases undertaken by planning staff.

Address	Category	Date Filed	Status
6715 Summerbreeze	Inoperable Vehicles	11/12/2024	Case closed
6708 College	Keeping of Animals	11/25/2024	Warning issued
1181 68 th Street	Keeping of Animals	07/29/2024	Case closed
6650 Paris Ave	Keeping of Animals	03/05/2024	Case closed
912 76 th Street	Nuisance Parking	03/01/2024	Case closed
3056 68 th Street	Nuisance Parking	11/25/2024	Case closed
6911 Hartman	Nuisance Parking	03/28/2024	Case closed
6935 Terra Cotta	Nuisance Parking	03/07/2024	Case closed
7261 Brooklyn Ave	Nuisance Parking	03/11/2024	Case closed
149 Coleman	Rubbish	07/18/2024	Case closed
149 Kenton	Rubbish	04/30/2024	Case closed
426 Brownell	Rubbish	03/14/2024	Case closed

652 66 th Street	Rubbish	12/16/2024	Warning issued
940 60 th Street	Rubbish	07/24/2024	Case closed
2864 60 th Street	Rubbish	02/19/2024	Case closed
3275 76 th Street	Rubbish	09/13/2024	Case closed
6475 Prairie Pointe Drive	Rubbish	08/07/2024	Case closed
6535 Creekside View Drive	Rubbish	09/18/2024	Case closed
6941 Marshall	Rubbish	08/16/2024	Case closed
6944 Madison	Rubbish	05/13/2024	Case closed
9371 Westview	Rubbish	04/30/2024	Case closed
7213 Regal	Rubbish/ Inoperable Vehicles	08/19/2021	Case closed
7655 Hanna Lake	Rubbish/ Inoperable Vehicles	11/11/2024	2 nd Warning issued/ Inspection scheduled
924 76 th Street	Rubbish/ Temporary Storage Container	05/03/2024	Case closed
532 76 th Street	Sidewalk Obstruction	08/23/2024	2 nd Warning issued/ Inspection scheduled
2297 68 th Street	Sidewalk Obstruction	08/21/2024	Case closed
6569 Summer Shores	Sidewalk Obstruction	07/30/2024	Case closed
6702 Madison	Sidewalk Obstruction	07/30/2024	Case closed
6714 Madison	Sidewalk Obstruction	07/30/2024	Case closed
6740 Madison	Sidewalk Obstruction	07/30/2024	Case closed
3555 68 th Street (Oskar Scots)	Illegal Sign	05/13/2024	Case closed
3555 68 th Street (Barry G's)	Illegal Sign	05/13/2024	Warning issued
2861 84 th Street	Temporary Occupation	05/22/2024	Enforcement ongoing
7207 Regal	Temporary Occupation	03/29/2024	Case closed
7072 Division	Temporary Occupation	02/28/2024	Case closed
153 Lurie	Trash Can Maintenance	11/08/2024	Case closed
6896 Madison	Zoning Violations	02/15/2024	Enforcement ongoing
9515 Hanna Lake	Zoning Violations	05/23/2024	Citation issued
Hoffman Meadows (Various)	Zoning Violations	10/14/2024	Case closed

Department Administration

PLANNING COMMISSION

Table 9 lists the members of the Planning Commission during 2022.

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Connie Giarmo	December 2024	2008 (1991 – 2000)	Chairperson

Ronnie Rober	December 2023	2002	Vice-Chairperson
Lani Thomas	December 2025	2006	Secretary
Tim Haagsma	Township Trustee	2002 (1992 – 1997)	Member
Ryan Wiersema	December 2024	2022	Member
Talimma Billips	December 2025	2017	Member
Brad Waayenberg	December 2023	2018	Member

Table 10 illustrates the attendance at Planning Commission Meetings in 2024.

2023 Meeting Attendance							
	Billips	Wiersema	Haagsma	Giarmo	Rober	Thomas	Waayenberg
January	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
February	X	X	Absent	X	X	Absent	X
March	Absent	X	X	X	X	X	X
April	X	X	X	Absent	Absent	X	X
May	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	X
June	X	X	Absent	X	X	X	Absent
July	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
August	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
September	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
October	Absent	X	X	X	X	X	X
November	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
December Special Meeting	Absent	Absent	Absent	X	X	X	X
December Regular Meeting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Absences	3	1	3	2	1	1	1

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals met on three occasions in 2024.

Table 11 lists the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2024.

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Tom Werkema	December 2023	2012	Chair
Ruth Ringnald	December 2024	2002	Vice Chair
Don Hilton	December 2025	2018	Secretary
Ryan Wiersema	December 2025	2022	Member (PC Liaison)
Matt Kooiman	December 2023	2022	Member
James Peacock	December 2025	2022	Member

Mark Krier	December 2027	2024	Alternate Member
Rob DeWard	December 2027	2024	Alternate Member

**Chair Tom Werkema submitted formal notice of his resignation to the Planning and Zoning Department in November. The ZBA must appoint a new Chair at their next meeting, and subsequently nominate a new Vice Chair and Secretary. In lieu of this change, James Peacock's member status has been updated from alternate member to permanent member. Two new alternate members have been selected to serve the ZBA; Rob DeWard and Mark Krier.*

Table 12 lists the meeting dates of the ZBA in 2024.

2023 Meeting Attendance						
	Werkema	Ringnalda	Kooiman	Hilton	Peacock	Wiersema
May	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
August	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
October	X	X	Absent	X	N/A	X
No. of Absences	0	0	1	0	0	0

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

Community Development Director Dan Wells has led planning efforts for the Township since taking office in March 2020. The Planning Department hired a full-time Assistant Planner, Dakota Swan, in January of 2024 who assists with plan reviews, zoning enforcement, and larger projects on an as-needed basis. Planning Consultant David Jirousek, AICP continues to assist with plan reviews and has contributed largely to the Zoning Ordinance overhaul. Jeff Gritter of Vriesman & Korhorn Civil Engineering continued to provide support and guidance to the Planning Department.

BUDGET

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

Table 13 lists the adopted budgets for the Planning and Zoning Department for fiscal years 2016-2023 and also shows the Department's Budget as a percentage of the overall General Fund Budget.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
P&Z Budget	\$209,274	\$209,815	\$222,837	\$219,223	\$236,439	\$219,031	\$339,256	\$416,706
% of Gen. Fund	5.7%	5.9%	5.9%	5.2%	4.5%	4.4%	7.2%	7.89%

Table 14 presents the actual dollar amount spent in the fiscal years 2016 – 2023 and is also expressed as a percentage of the approved Planning and Zoning Department’s Budget.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Actual Expenditures	\$173,548	\$174,995	\$189,710	\$204,153	\$198,665	\$156,395	\$261,558	\$274,784
% of Budget	82.7 %	83.4%	85.1%	93.1%	84%	71.4%	77.1%	5.75%