

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
2013 ANNUAL REPORT

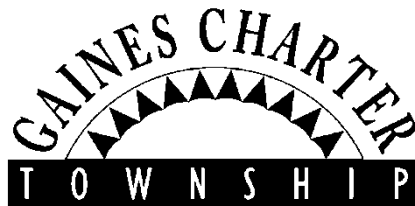


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 **2013 Planning & Zoning Department Annual Report** provides the Planning Commission and Township Board with the following information:

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

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

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

Staff has prepared the following statement as the Department’s vision:

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

CURRENT PLANNING DIVISION

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

BUILDING PERMITS

Chart 1, Table 1 and Chart 2 below detail the number of new dwelling units per year over an 12-year period from 2002 to 2013. This includes single-family dwellings as well as attached units and apartments/condos. Please note the following:

- For the 5-year period from 2002 – 2006, the Township averaged 283 new housing units per year. This includes all unit types. Single-family housing averaged 172 new units per year over this time period. This 5-year period of time represents a significant period of growth for the Township; however the averages are lower than in previous years.
- The actual numbers from 2007 – 2013 (53) are well below the average of dwelling units for 2002 – 2006 (283).
- 2010 was the **slowest year for new housing in Gaines Charter Township in the past 20 years.**
- 2011 and 2010 may represent a “bottom” to the housing market as Township saw a significant increase in building permits in 2013.
- 2013 saw an increase of 128.5% in new housing units from 2012; 114% Single-Family and 211% Condominium Development.

Chart 1 – Building Permits – Total Units

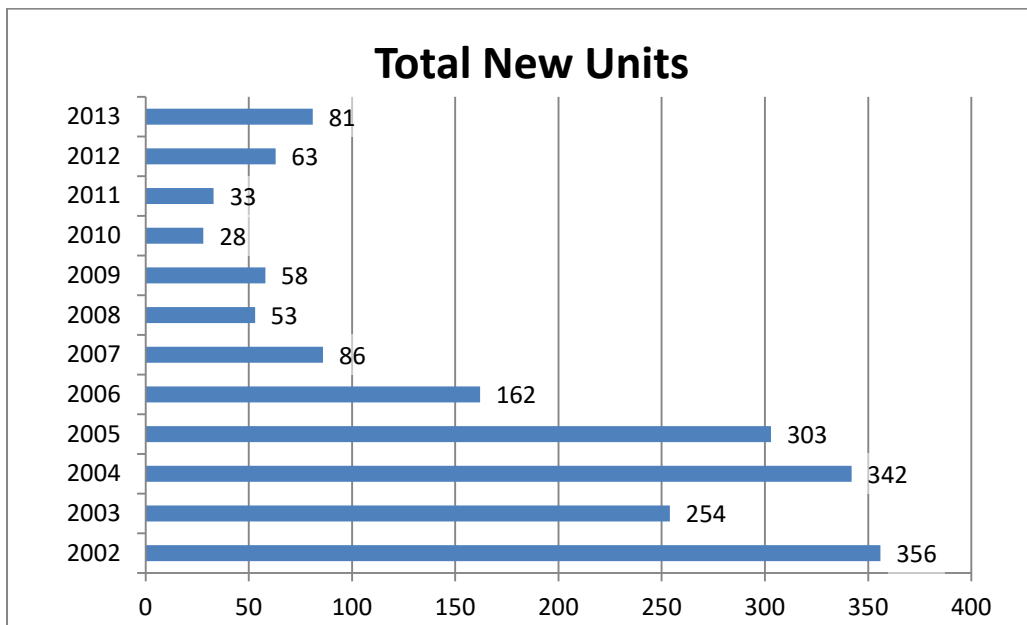
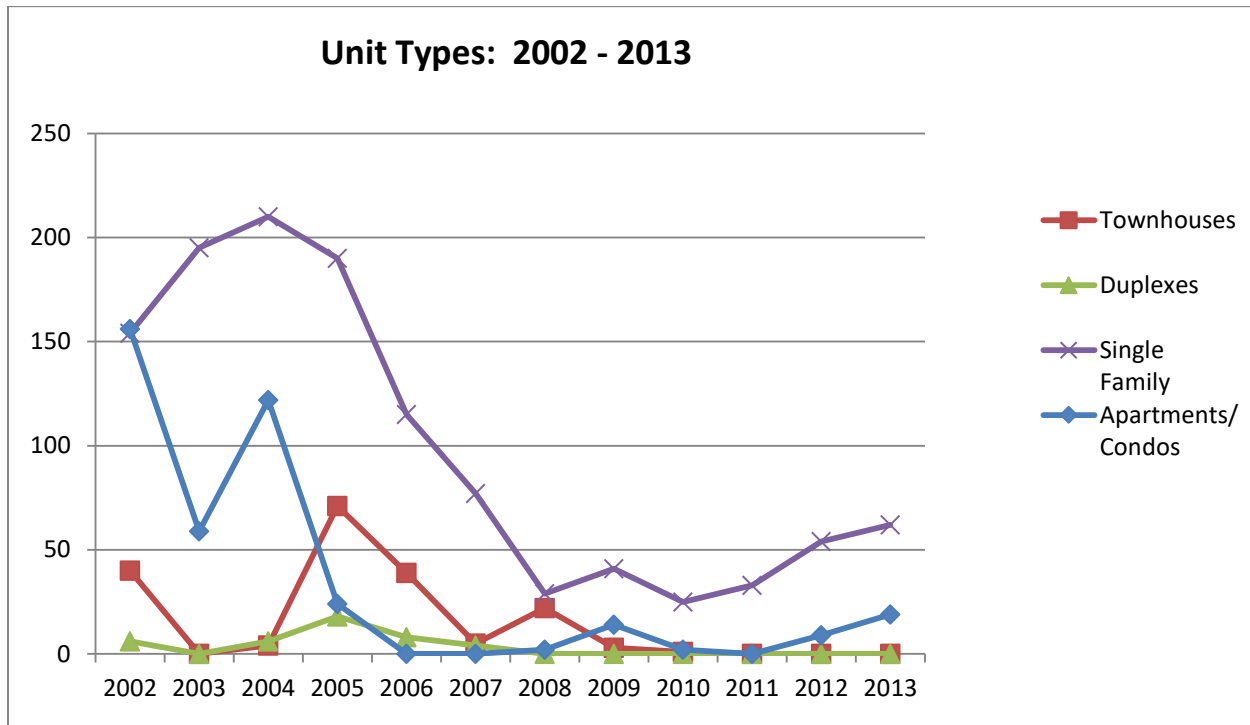


Table 1 – Building Permits – Total Units

	Townhouses	Duplexes	Apartments/ Condos	Single Family	Total Units
2002	40	6	156	154	356
2003	0	0	59	195	254
2004	4	6	122	210	342
2005	71	18	24	190	303
2006	39	8	0	115	162
2007	5	4	0	77	86
2008	22	0	2	29	53
2009	3	0	14	41	58
2010	1	0	2	25	28
2011	0	0	0	33	33
2012	0	0	9	54	63
2013	0	0	19	62	81

Chart 2 – Building Permits – By Types



The number of building permits issued for new housing units during 2013 has continued to rise. Residential Building Permit activity for 2013 is based fully on the merits of the market itself and not on artificial support indicating the start of recovery; however, it is safe to say the Township has not returned to a “normal” level of residential building activity still in 2013.

Multi-unit building construction, while still low, has begun to rise in the past two years. These units are infill of existing condominium projects which stalled during the economic downturn. Staff finds both instances of growth a positive sign in the housing market as a whole. Finally, the Township has seen renewed interest in past housing projects, such as Preservation Lakes Estates going into 2014.

In order to better understand the larger picture in terms of potential housing construction, staff tracks the number of approved, but undeveloped, lots and units.

These numbers will help guide the Township's decision making process in terms of future residential development and Master Plan updates. In looking at data from the Planning Department and Building Department, staff has determined the following:

- There are 27 approved residential developments/phases not yet fully built out.
- 213 total dwelling units were not constructed
 - Township staff has removed two previously approved Phases in Cooks Crossing, the remainder of the buildings in the Fieldstone Apartment and Condominium Project, and Preservation Estates from this number because there has been no sign of activity in these areas for over the last three years.
- **At the 2007-2013 average of 54 units/year, it would take approximately 8 years to complete construction of the total available single family units (lots) and 15 years for the total unbuilt dwellings.**
- **At the 2002-2005 average of 313 units/year, it would take slightly less than 3 years to complete construction of the total available units.**

Most of the available lots are within 2 developments. Staff has spoken with the original developer of Preservation Lakes Estates in late 2012 and found that the developer had backed out. In late 2013 staff met with Eastbrook Homes who stated they may have an interest in reestablishing the development as the company did with the Cooks Crossings neighborhood. Cooks Crossing is now a strong and vibrant community which continues to expand. **Staff finds that new residential development largely depends upon market demand for specific types of housing and neighborhoods.**

FORECLOSURE DATA

The Planning and Zoning Department began analyzing annual foreclosure data in 2008 with data provided by the Gaines Charter Township Assessing Department. This information can be used to assist with development projections, code enforcement activities and to keep Township officials, staff and residents informed about housing trends within the Township.

The following information includes "foreclosures" as (1) filings completed of properties foreclosed, (2) redeemed from foreclosure, or (3) purchased from a foreclosing entity between 1/1/2013 and 12/31/2013. However, if a property was foreclosed and redeemed, or foreclosed and purchased during this timeframe, it was only designated as a single foreclosure.

2013 continued to show a decrease in foreclosure activity from the peak years of 2007 - 2009, with 63 foreclosed properties in comparison to the 197 in 2009 and 207 in 2008. *It should be noted that both 2008 and 2009 had developments where many lots owned by a single developer or company were foreclosed within the same year which inflated the number of foreclosures. These developments include a portion of Cook's Crossing (formerly "Cobblestone Corners") and the developments located largely in the northeast quarter of section 9.*

Chart 3 provides the number of total annual foreclosures by section of the Township, and **Table 2** includes the same information with a six year annual average.

Chart 3 – Total Yearly Foreclosures

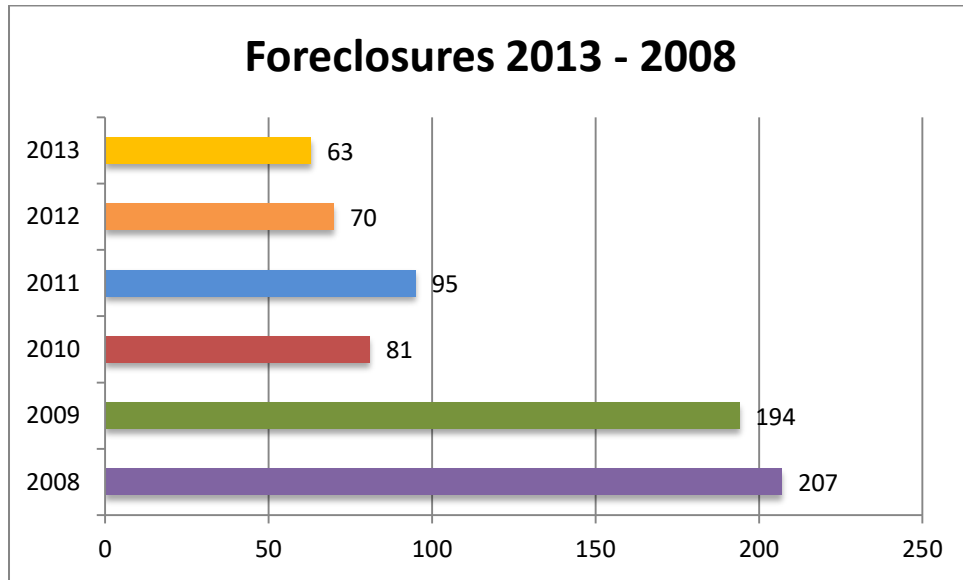


Table 2 – Foreclosures by Section

Section	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	6 Year Avg.
3	8	6	8	6	8	7	7.2
4	0	2	4	6	5	23	6.7
5	6	7	9	6	8	10	7.7
6	4	8	12	7	12	20	10.5
7	13	10	10	12	16	23	14.0
8	9	3	4	5	9	25	9.2
9	7	7	6	14	56	44	22.3
10	2	2	1	1	7	6	3.2
11	4	3	2	4	3	5	3.5
16	1	3	3	2	2	11	3.7
17	1	4	11	4	40	5	10.8
18	4	5	9	4	12	11	7.5
19	0	0	0	1	4	1	1.0
22	0	0	0	1	2	2	0.8
26	1	3	2	1	3	1	1.8
Other	3	7	14	7	7	13	8.5
Total Properties	63	70	95	81	194	207	118.3*

*In 2012 the average was at 129.4.

This data shows that the Township housing market continues to stabilize with 2013 having the lowest number of foreclosures since the Township began tracking this data. Foreclosure activity continues to be focused in the most populated Sections of the Township. Staff finds no other specific trends besides housing density in this data.

Further foreclosure data can be found in the Code Enforcement section of this report.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Table 3 on the following page 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 - 2013

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Status	Township Board Action
William Hoyer / 10065 Eastern Avenue	Special Use Permit	SPU to be allowed to keep 3 existing residential accessory buildings which exceeds the 2,400 square foot maximum floor area.	Approved	N/A
Kamps Hardwood / 6925 Dutton Industrial Drive	Site Plan Review	New Storage Building, Kiln, and Open Air Storage Building	Approved	N/A
Mark Brideau / 3506 68th Street	Rezoning	Rezoning 9 properties total; 7 from RL-10 to C-2 and 2 from I-2 to C-2	Approved	Approved
Cascade Die Casting / 7750 Division Avenue	Site Plan Review	New Accessory Building	Approved	N/A
Peppinos / 1515 Eastport Drive	Site Plan Review	Enclosing Existing Patio	Approved	N/A
Grandview Ventures / 6123 Eastern	Rezoning	PUD Rezoning for Ministorage Facility	Approved	Pending
Susan Garbow / 6950 Dutton Avenue	Special Use Permit	Request for a Kennel License	Denied	N/A
Alliance Beverage / 4500 60th Street	Site Plan Review	New Warehousing and Distribution Facility	Approved	N/A
Consumers Credit Union / 1673 68th Street	Site Plan Review	Request for a Credit Union Building	Approved	Approved
R&T of West Michigan / 6955 East Paris Industrial Court	Site Plan Review	Approval of 7,500 square foot addition onto existing building	Approved	N/A
Eastbrook Homes / Cooks Crossings PUD (Cobblestone Way Drive and Peaceful Drive)	PUD Amendment	Request for approval of 3 new phases of the Cooks Crossing PUD	Approved	Approved
Applebees / Marketplace Drive	PUD Amendment	Approval for a new sign located on the North side of the building	Approved	Approved
Terry Wopperer / 3631 Deeprise Drive	PUD Amendment	Approval for changes to the rear setback	Approved	Approved
David Potgeter / 190 92nd Street	Special Use Permit	Approval for a larger accessory building allowances	Approved	N/A

High Grade Materials / 6869 East Paris Avenue	Site Plan Review	Approval for a 5400 square foot addition on existing building	Approved	N/A
Randall Buitier / 137 76th Street	Special Use Permit	Approval to construct at 1080 square foot Accessory Building	Approved, at a lesser amount	N/A
Stonewater Maintenance Facility / 1850 68th Street SE	Site Plan Review	Approval to construct a maintenance building and storage shed	Approved	Approved
Hilco Technologies / 3268 Hanna Lake Industrial Drive	Siteplan Review	Administrative Review for an Accessory Building	Approved	N/A
Kamps Hardwood / 6925 Dutton Industrial Drive	Siteplan Review	Approval to construct a Open Air Storage Building	Approved	N/A
Ed and Susan Ulyate / 8769 East Paris Avenue	Special Use Permit	New Accessory Building greater than 2,400 square ft	Approved	N/A
Stoneco Annual Review / 900 100th Street	Annual Review	Annual PUD Review	Approved	N/A
Midwest V, LLC / 3607 68th Street SE	Siteplan Review	Review for the construction of a Dollar General Store	Approved	N/A
Southland Autowash / 6700 Kalamazoo Avenue	Siteplan Review	Request for the rehabilitation of an existing building into a carwashing facility.	Approved	N/A
Goodwill Industries / 1545 Edgeknoll Drive	PUD Amendment / Site Plan Review	Request to amend the Crossings PUD for a Commercial Building	Recommended Approval	Denied
Midwest V, LLC / 3607 and part of 3707 68th Street SE	Rezoning	Rezoning request from RL-10 to C-2	Approved for C-1	Approved
Bob and Karen Speyer / 6444 Eastern Avenue	Special Use Permit	Request to construct an accessory building on the property when multiple accessory buildings exist on site	Approved	N/A

The Township continues to see limit residential development activity, with no new residential units approved in 2013. Subsequently the only new residential request was to amend the Avalon Pointe PUD replacing 7 duplex condominium units with 7 single family homes, for a net decrease of 7 units.

The Township has seen some activity in the business community with six businesses submitting Zoning Applications for review in the Township in 2013. Development activity is showing a *slight* increase compared to the period between 2008 and 2011. Staff has fielded many questions on potential sites for future development, but nothing significant was submitted to the Township. On average, the trend is the development of small, single-use sites.

Staff believes that another factor *possibly* influencing commercial construction in the Township is the overall reduced availability of commercial property within the immediate M-6/Kalamazoo Avenue interchange area. Although there are still vacant properties in this area, availability of commercial

property continues to be limited. There will be increased pressure over time to zone more property in the Township to commercial use. **In 2013, the Planning Commission may wish to begin discussing this scenario during the Master Planning process before there is a dramatic increase in demand for additional residential and commercial development. In 2010, Staff suggested that it may be time for a full rewrite of the Master Plan. By State Law, the Township is required to review the Master Plan in 2013 so input from the public, Planning Commission and the Township Board can be gathered to facilitate staffs efforts in this regard.**

During 2013, the Planning Commission handled 5 requests for special land uses, nearly the same amount as in 2010 & 2011. **The special land use requests in 2009, 2010 and 2013 are the lowest amounts in the last 10 years, down from a high of 29, which occurred in 2002, 2003 and 2004.**

Table 4 and Table 5 below for a 11-year history of special land use requests and detailed information regarding accessory building requests, respectively.

Table 4 – Special Land Use Requests

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
# of Requests	29	29	29	23	18	13	7	4	4	4	5	6
Change from Previous Year	7%	0%	0%	-21%	-22%	-28%	-46%	-43%	0%	0%	125%	120%
# of Staff Recommended Approvals	25	27	25	20	12	11	7	3	3	4	5	5
% Recommended by Staff for Approval	86%	93%	86%	87%	86%	85%	100%	75%	75%	100%	100%	80%
# Approved	28	28	27	21	13	11	6	3	3	4	5	5
% Approved	97%	97%	93%	91%	93%	85%	86%	75%	100%	100%	100%	80%

Table 5 – Accessory Building Requests

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013
# of Requests	16	17	16	18	12	8	4	0	0	0	1	5
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-B"	4392	2000	0	1733	1800	3248	0	0	0	0	5408	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-R"	2454	2452	2313	2845	1781	2749	9440	0	0	0	0	3,333

Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-10"	978	1020	1140	2221	0	0	863	0	0	0	0	1000
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-14"	1236	408	1666	732	586	1008	0	0	0	0	0	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "R-3"	484	2590	0	528	828	576	0	0	0	0	0	780

Changes to the Zoning Ordinance were made in 2006 that doubled the amount of accessory building floor area allowed by right, making this type of request simpler for most property owners. The “by right” square footage allowed has provided a greatly reduced level of special use requests related to accessory buildings. This continues to be evident in 2013 and this change in the Zoning Ordinance can be viewed as a success.

VARIANCES

Table 6 shows a 12 year history of variance requests:

Table 6 – Variance Request

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
*Total Number of Variances Requested	11	8	20	15	11	2	3	8	1	7	9	5
% Change in Total from Last Year	-21%	-27%	150%	-25%	-27%	-82%	50%	100%	-88%	600%	122%	-55%
Total Number Approved	7	8	14	11	10	2	2	8	1	5	7	5
% of Total Requests Approved	64%	100%	70%	73%	91%	100%	67%	100%	100%	400%	85.7%	100%
Number Recommended for Approval by Staff	4	2	8	5	7	1	2	6	0	5	3	3
% of Total Recommended for Approval by Staff	36%	25%	40%	33%	64%	50%	67%	63%	0%	71%	33.3%	40%
Number of Use Variances Requested	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Number of Use Variances Approved	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
% of Total Requested as Use Variances	0%	0%	5%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	0	0

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

Table 7 provides a summary of the variance requests in 2013.

Table 7 – Variance Request Summary

Address	Variance Type	Description	Staff Recommendation	Action
3592 100 th Street	Dimensional	Allow for a parcel with a width of 150 feet in an A-B district	Denial	Approved
8488 Division Court	Dimensional	Allow for a front yard setback of 15 feet to be able to add an access easement on the property in a RL-14 District.	Approval	Approved

1440 68 th Street	Dimensional	Allow for Electronic Changeable Copy in a RL-10 District	Approval	Approved
137 76 th Street	Dimensional	Allow for a 3 ft side yard setback for an accessory building over 200 square feet in an R-3 District	Denial	Approved
3268 Hannah Lake Industrial Dive	Dimensional	Allow for a 20 foot rear yard setback in an I-1 District	Denial	Approved

LAND DIVISIONS

The creation of parcels based on the State Land Division Act also plays a role in the development of land in the Township. Therefore, it is important to identify any trends involving administrative land divisions.

2013 continued to be very slow for administrative land divisions requested in the Township. The Township approved three land division applications, four lot line transfer applications, and two land combination applications.

Chart 5 provides information on the number of land division applications since 2002. As you will notice, the overall number of land division applications has been decreasing since 2002. **This decline may be attributed to the slowdown in new housing construction as new parcels are often created to allow for new housing.**

Chart 4 – Land Division Applications



LONG-RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

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

MASTER PLAN

As a part of the 2002 Master Plan, an Implementation chapter was prepared to help guide future planning activities. **Table 8** lists the proposed implementation tasks and their current status. **Staff has not made any updates to Master Plan Implementation activities documented in Table 8 and Table 9 with the writing of this report. In March of 2013, Township staff and the Planning Commission began the five year review process of the Master Plan. During that time it was decided that**

Table 8 – 2002 Master Plan Implementations

Task	Status	Comments
Evaluate and Revise the Zoning Ordinance	Positive Action	Although the Township adopted a new Zoning Ordinance in 2007, it is continuously monitored for potential amendments.
Inventory Key Natural and Cultural Features	No Action	These tasks have been done on a case by case basis through PUDs, but not on a Township-wide, or Subarea basis.
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	Positive Action	This was accomplished as part of the 2008 Master Plan Update
Prepare a Sub-Area Plan for the Cutlerville Village Center	No Action	This may be included as part of future planning for the Division Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority.
Prepare a Corridor Plan for Kalamazoo Avenue	No Action	No action has been taken on this item.
Establish Consistent Standards for	Mixed Results	No formal action taken on this item.

Calculating Density		We have been consistent in measuring density using the net density approach, but with no formal standards.
Improve Public Understanding of Growth Management Benefits	Mixed Results	This is always an ongoing task. With a revised website, the Department has been making staff reports available online.
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	Mixed Results	The 2009 Planning Department Intern conducted research on TDR programs.
Improve Non-Motorized Transportation Network	Positive Action	This has been done on a case-by-case basis (Cobblestone Corners, Cooks Crossing, and Prairie Wolf Park). The Township has also played a major role in the development of the Fred Meijer M-6 Trail and Paul Henry Thornapple Trail

Table 9 below provides a small statistical analysis of the action taken on the 2002 Master Plan implementation strategies.

Table 9 – 2002 Master Plan

	# of Actions	# of Positive Actions	% of Positive Actions	# of Positive Actions and Mixed Results	% of Positive Actions and Mixed Results
2002 Master Plan Implementation Tasks	14	5	36%	9	64%

The original 2002 Master Plan is 10 years old and staff finds that adequate progress has been made on the implementation strategies, considering the Master Plans typically projects at least 10 years into the future.

ORDINANCE UPDATES

Due to a code enforcement ticket being challenged in court and the a Township Zoning ordinance regarding the size of political signs declared unenforceable, the Township's sign ordinance was amended. The main amendment was to increase the political sign size from 20 square feet to 32 square feet. Also some definitions were amended, and finally the number of allowed billboards in the Township was reduced from 9 to 8 on recommendation from the Township attorney in regards to the Hucul Advertising, LLC vs. Gaines Township, Case No. 1:11-cv-682 lawsuit filed in 2011.

REZONINGS

Table 10 provides information on the one rezoning application received in 2013.

Table 10 – 2013 Rezoning Requests

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Status	Township Board Action
Dollar General 6607 and 6707 68 th Street	Rezoning	Rezoning from RL-10 to the C-1 zoning district	Completed	Approved
Mark Brideua	Rezoning	Rezoning 2	Completed	Completed in January of 2014

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Department did not undertake any major economic development initiatives in 2013. However, it is anticipated that the Department will begin to take on a much larger role in economic development activities in the future. Staff members met with the Cutlerville Chamber of Commerce in 2013 for discussion on a promotional brochure for the Township. Economic development efforts are a result of outcomes from the Township Board's 2-day strategic planning exercise in December of 2010.

GRANT WRITING

The Department has been responsible for the federal reporting requirements for the FEMA fire station construction grant. Reports are submitted quarterly online, and help the federal government track job creation and funding requests. Department staff is also responsible for submitting the actual request for funds through FEMA's online portal. The FEMA fire station construction grant and all of the reports and requests for funds have been fully completed at this time. FEMA has audited one of the funding requests requiring staff time to full fill the request; otherwise this grant project is complete.

The grant writing database has held steady in 2013 and now holds application information for over 120 grant opportunities or sources. The Township may not be eligible for many of the grants at this time, as many of them require matching funds and/or partnership with a 501(C)3 entity, or are specific to cities, villages or counties.

PARKS & RECREATION

Planning Department staff continued in its role as staff support to the Parks and Recreation Committee. During 2013, staff worked with the Parks & Recreation Committee on developing new maps for Prairie Wolf Park and on researching information pertaining to Barn restoration and re-use.

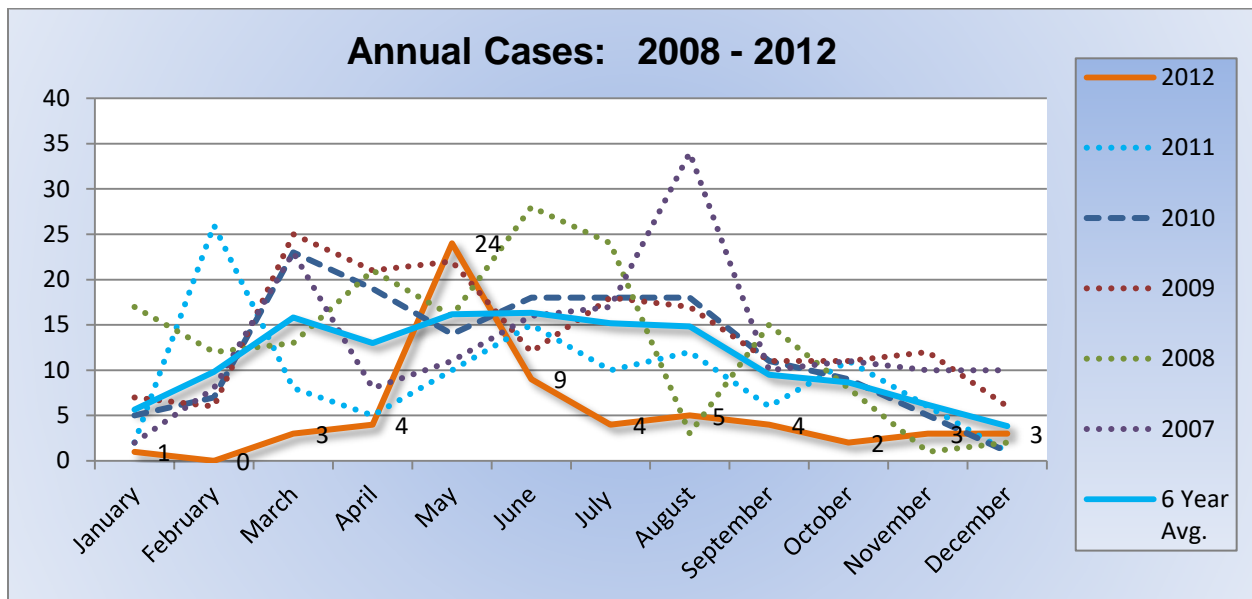
CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Throughout 2013, the Planning Department continued to utilize BS&A software to register and track code enforcement cases. Filed cases are those where a complaint has been received and registered in the software, and staff has completed a physical inspection of the property or contacted the property owner regarding a potential violation.

Table 11 – Annual Cases by Month

Month	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	5 Year Avg.
January	17	7	5	2	1	6.2
February	12	6	7	26	0	10.2
March	13	25	23	8	3	14.2
April	21	21	19	5	4	14.6
May	16	22	14	10	24	18
June	28	12	18	15	9	16.2
July	24	18	18	10	4	14.4
August	3	17	18	12	5	10.6
September	15	11	11	6	4	9.4
October	8	11	9	11	2	8.2
November	1	12	5	6	3	5
December	2	6	1	1	3	2.2
Annual Total	160	168	148	112	62	130.6

Chart 5 – Annual Cases by Month



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

The number of cases is down significantly from previous years. Staff believes this is indicative of people being good neighbors, and fulfilling their responsibilities as homeowners.

Table 12 – Annual Case Types

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Annual Average		2013 – 2011 Differentials
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	%	No.
Animal Control	5	3	12	5	2	5.4	6.65%	-3
Grass/Weeds	11	9	14	9	3	9.2	11.33%	-6
Noise	0	1	1	0	5	0.4	0.49%	+5
Sidewalks	3	5	1	25	0	6.8	8.37%	-25
Signs	24	6	11	3	27	15.2	18.72%	+24
Trash	35	39	32	20	8	26.8	33%	-12
Other	21	33	20	12	1	17.4	21.43%	-11
TOTALS	160	148	148	112	62	81.2	100%	-50

Chart 6 provides a percentage breakdown of the types of enforcement cases that were processed in 2013, while **Table 12** provides the number of case types and annual averages.

Chart 6 – Annual Case Types

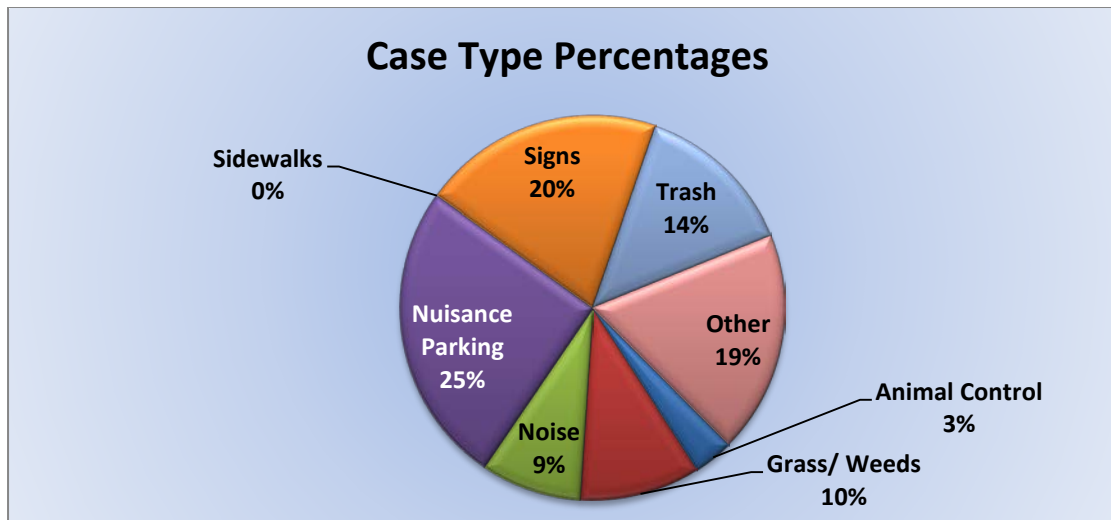


Table 12 shows an increase the “Signs” and “Noise” categories. All other categories realized a decrease over the five year average. Staff notes that the sign increase is largely due to one complaint which encompassed approximately 15 individual businesses with “Snipe Signs” along Kalamazoo Ave. Also, the noise complaints were largely a result of the deregulation of fireworks.

Staff also assesses annual data for problem areas within the Township. **Chart 7** provides an overview of cases per Section by percentage, while **Table 13** provides cases per Section comparisons between 2007 and 2013. This data is important for future use if/when the Township pursues more proactive code enforcement practices, instead of performing inspections solely on a complaint basis.

Chart 7 – 2013 Section Comparison

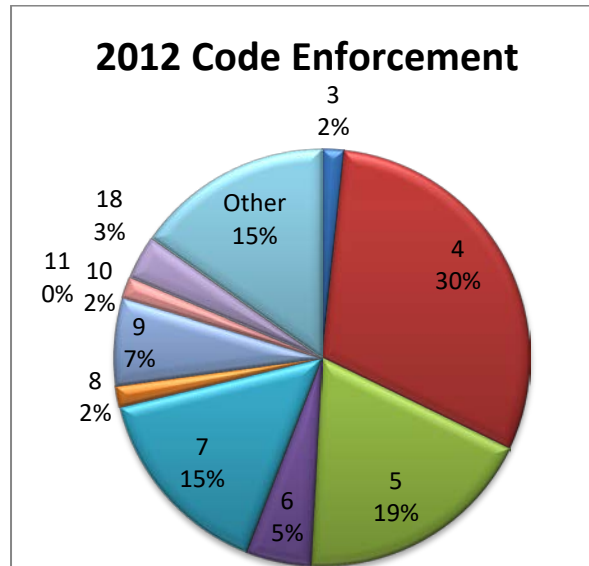


Table 13 – Annual Cases by Section

Section	Number							Average		2013/2011 Differential
	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	No.	%	
3		1	6	4	6	3	3	3.83	2.8%	-5.0
4		19	17	19	19	22	8	17.17	14.7%	1.0
5		13	5	10	14	16	7	10.5	8.7%	6.0
6		4	22	19	18	12	29	17.17	12.3%	-19.0
7		9	15	34	41	53	54	34.33	23.7%	-6.0
8		1	8	20	12	10	15	11	7.5%	-7.0
9		4	18	12	29	24	11	16.33	11.6%	-14.0
10		1	2	3	5	0	7	3.0	2.1%	-1.0
11		0	0	4	8	0	1	2.17	1.3%	0.0
18		2	4	9	4	8	12	6.5	4.6%	-2.0
Other		9	15	15	13	15	14	13.0	10.4%	-6.0
		63	112	149	169	163	161	135	100.0%	-53.0

Increases: Most Code Enforcement by Section saw a decrease in 2013 and no trends are noted at this time.

Decrease: There has been a notable, gradual decrease of cases in Section 7, even though it is one of the more populated sections of the Township. These decreases may be attributed to the slow improvement of the real estate market and the affordability of these properties for new home owners, and is hopefully a sign of continued improvement in the more populated areas of the Township.

Staff has also been analyzing code enforcement data over time to see if there is any correlation between foreclosures and code enforcement filings.

Table 14 – Foreclosures and Code Enforcements Cases by Section

Section	2012CE	2012 F	2011 CE	2011 F	2010 CE	2010 F	2009 CE	2009 F	2008 CE	2008 F
3	1	6	6	8	4	6	6	8	3	7
4	19	2	17	4	19	6	19	5	22	23
5	13	7	5	9	10	6	14	8	16	10
6	4	8	22	12	19	7	18	12	12	20
7	9	10	15	10	34	12	41	16	53	23
8	1	3	8	4	20	5	12	9	10	25
9	4	7	18	6	12	14	29	56	24	44
10	1	2	2	1	3	1	5	7	0	6
11	0	3	0	2	4	4	8	3	0	5
17	0	4	2	11	6	4	4	40	3	5
18	2	5	4	9	9	4	4	12	8	11
Other	9	13	13	19	10	13	9	18	12	28
Totals	63	70	112	95	149	82	169	194	163	207

Staff has expected some correlation between enforcement issues and foreclosures based simply on population densities of the specific Sections. Reviewing the table above, evidence exists which would indicate a small correlation between Enforcement Activity and Foreclosures in the Township. However in staff’s opinion, the high foreclosure rates of 2008 and 2009 were more representative of the times and more than likely a result lending policies and the unemployment level. It is plausible that the enforcement activities were a direct cause of the foreclosures, but no strong evidence is available to support that statement. Present levels have dropped dramatically, but staff is not convinced that this is directly related to foreclosures in the Township.

Staff expects that this correlation will continue to be an indicator of where code enforcement activities should be focused.

Table 15 provides an overview of civil infraction citations administered from the time the Township began utilizing the municipal civil infraction process in 2007 through 2013. Noticeably, civil infractions issued in 2013 are low because of staff's ability to work with the property owners to come into compliance with the ordinance before actually having to write a ticket.

Table 15 – Civil Infraction Citation Types

Civil Infraction Citation	2013	2011*	2010	2009	2008	2007	Totals	Annual Averages
Grass/ Weed Control	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Nuisance Parking	2	0	5	4	3	3	17	3
Trash/ Junk	0	0	2	3	6	3	14	3
Sidewalk	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	1	0	1	1	1	0	4	1
TOTAL	3	0	8	8	10	6	36	6

If a violation is brought into compliance prior to an informal hearing requested by the Township or citation recipient, staff dismisses the citation. If there is no representative present for the recipient at the informal hearing, a default judgment is entered and the recipient is fined.

Staff continues to believe that civil infraction citations have assisted in motivating property owners to bring their property into compliance quicker and maintain compliance longer, as opposed to treating violations as criminal misdemeanors.

DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION

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

PLANNING COMMISSION

Table 16 lists the members of the Planning Commission during 2013.

Table 16 - 2010 Planning Commission Members

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Rob DeWard	December 31, 2015	1990	Chairperson
Tim Haagsma	Township Trustee	2002 (1992 – 1997)	Vice-Chairperson
Louis Waayenberg	December 31, 2014	1997	Secretary
Ted Essenburg	December 31, 2015	2001 (1981 – 1990)	
Ronnie Rober	December 31, 2014	2002	
Lani Thomas	December 31, 2016	2006	
Connie Giarmo	December 31, 2016	2008 (1991 – 2000)	

During 2013, The Planning Commission held 11 regular meetings and no special meetings. For the regular meetings, the average starting time was 7:04 p.m. and the average end time was 8:13 p.m., for an average meeting time of 1 hour and 9 minutes. The attendance for all meetings is shown in **Table 17**.

Table 17 – 2013 Attendance

Meeting Attendance							
	DeWard	Essenburg	Haagsma	Rober	Waayenberg	Thomas	Giarmo
Jan	Absent	X	X	X	Absent	X	X
Feb	X	X	Absent	X	Absent	X	X
Mar	X	X	X	X	Absent	X	X
Apr	X	X	Absent	Absent	X	X	Absent
May	Absent	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Jun	X	X	Absent	X	X	X	X
Jul	X	X	X	X	X	X	Absent
Aug	X	X	Absent	X	X	Absent	X
Sep	<i>Meeting Cancelled</i>						
Oct	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nov	Absent	X	X	X	Absent	X	Absent
Dec	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Table 18 lists the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2013:

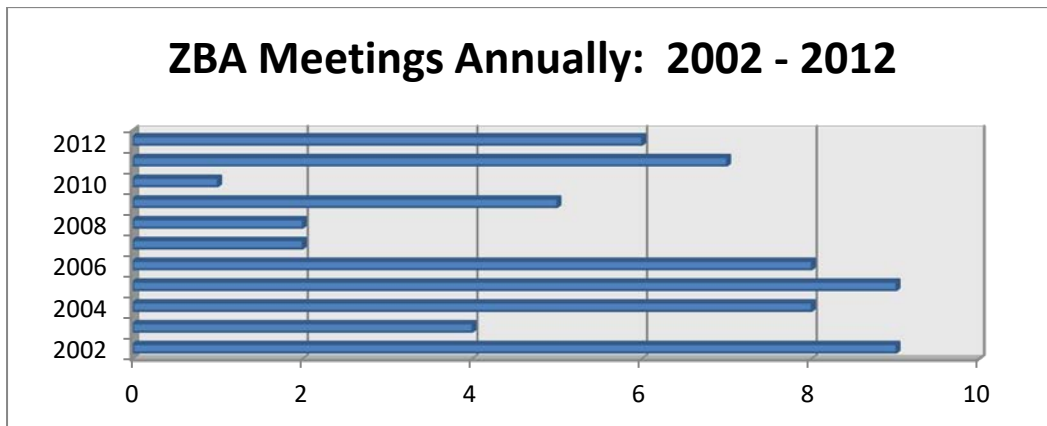
Table 18 – 2013 ZBA Members

Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Tom Werkema	December 31, 2015	2013	Chair
Gayle McCrath	December 31, 2013	2008	Vice Chair
Ted Essenburg	December 31, 2013	1996	Secretary
Dan Fryling	Township Trustee	2000	
Ruth Ringnald	December 31, 2013	2002	
None			Alternate

Zoning Board of Appeals – 2013

Meeting Attendance						
	Essenburg	Fryling	McCrath	Ringnalda	Steigenga	Werkema
Jan	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Feb	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Mar	X	X	Absent	X	X	X
Apr	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
May	X	X	Absent	X	Absent	X
Jun	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Jul	Absent	X	Absent	Absent	X	X
Aug	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sep	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Oct	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Nov	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Dec	X	X	X	X	X	X

Chart 9 – Meetings Annually



DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

Township Planner
David Waligora
 Since: April 2012

Assistant Planner
Vacant
 Vacant Since: March 2011

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

The Township has been evaluating the Planning and Zoning Department structure and job responsibilities. In April of 2013, David Waligora was hired to operate the Planning, Zoning, and Code

Enforcement Divisions of the Township. The Township Engineer, Jeff Gritter has been providing continued staff support and oversight to the Planning Department.

The Planning Department Assistant will dedicate approximately 40% of their time to the Planning and Zoning Department but will be available at all times for immediate assistance when the Township Planner or Township Engineer are unavailable. The Township Planner and Township Engineer will fulfill the role of Zoning Administrator with the Township Planner taking on the majority of the work load for the Department. The Township Planner is primarily responsible in the Current Planning and Code Enforcement efforts, while the Department Assistant provides administrative support within the department. The Township Engineer will provide oversight for the department.

In the past, the Department established a Summer Internship Program in 2009 to assist with projects within the Department. In 2011 and 2013, this position went unfilled and unfunded in reflection of budget constraints faced by the Township. The intent behind the program is that the Township would employ an intern in the Department from approximately May through August of each year. It is seen as win-win situation, where the intern gains work experience while the Township is able to utilize the skills of the intern in a meaningful and cost-effective manner. The internship program will need to be reevaluated in the future to see if it is fiscally responsible to reestablish.

As housing construction and overall development activity has decreased over the course of the last 3-4 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:

- 2013 Master Plan Update
- Increased staff support to the Division Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority and Parks and Recreation Committee
- Involvement in strategic planning and capital improvement programming efforts
- Increased grant writing efforts and administration
- Increased economic development efforts, including PA 198 requests
- Increased graphic design work

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

BUDGET

The Department is committed to providing our work in the most efficient and cost effective manner. See the following Tables for information related to recent Department budgets.

Table 19 lists the adopted budgets for the Planning and Zoning Department for fiscal years 2005 – 2013 and also shows the Departments Budget as a percentage of the overall General Fund Budget.

Table 19

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
P/Z Budget	\$221,366	\$199,219	\$216,429	\$214,495	\$183,444	\$173,335	\$166,413	\$160,833
% of General Fund Budget	8.22%	6.36%	7.64%	7.55%	6.51%	6.33%	6.00%	4.96%

The average budget amount over for this 8 year period is **\$191,941**. **The current budget is the lowest over this 8 year period and down approximately 27% from 2005.** The Planning and Zoning Department

budget of \$160,833 represents 4.96% of the total 2013 Township General Fund Budget. As future budgets are prepared this percentage of the full budget should be the target for “normal” budgeted expenditures for this Department. As economic activity and development activity increases the Department will need to be prepared to bring staffing levels up to respond in a timely manner to all requests.

Table 20 presents the actual dollar amount spent in the fiscal years 2005 – 2013 and is also expressed as a percentage of the approved Planning and Zoning Department’s Budget.

Table 20

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2013
Actual Expenditures	\$181,096	\$145,665	\$161,910	\$196,269	\$152,098	\$154,082	\$88,446
% of Budget Used	81.80%	73.11%	74.81%	91.50%	82.91%	88.89%	53.15%

The average dollar amount spent between the 2005 – 2013 fiscal year period is \$120,536. The Department continues to be fiscally responsible and spends less than budgeted monies for all Department activities. Township Staff members have always attempted to provide the highest level of professional service while keeping budget figures reasonable and under control. Since 2005, the department has, on average, spent only 65.04% of its approved budget. *It should be noted that in 2013 full time staff did not begin until April 10, and the actual expenditures are a reflection of this lack of staff support.*

As the Township continues to work towards the vision laid out by the 2002 Master Plan and the 2008 Master Plan Update, Planning and Zoning Department staff will continue to seek out new ways to provide meaningful service to the Township and its residents. The Township will need to consider what level of review and update is needed as outside consultants may be needed to assist staff in completing this task and the future budget will need to reflect this.

As development activity stabilizes and potentially increases in the future the Township will need to continue to carefully consider the staffing levels needed to provide a high level of professional planning service to the public and the development community.