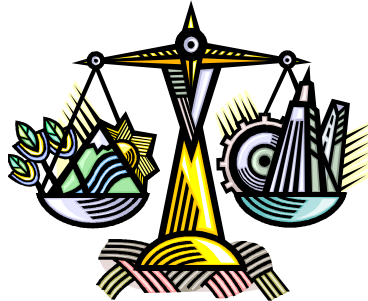
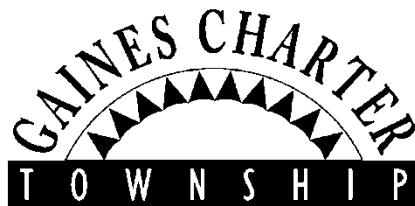


**GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP**  
**PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT**  
**2014 ANNUAL REPORT**



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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 **2014 Planning & Zoning Department Annual Report** provides the Planning Commission and Township Board with the following information:

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

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

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

The **Annual Report** offers 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

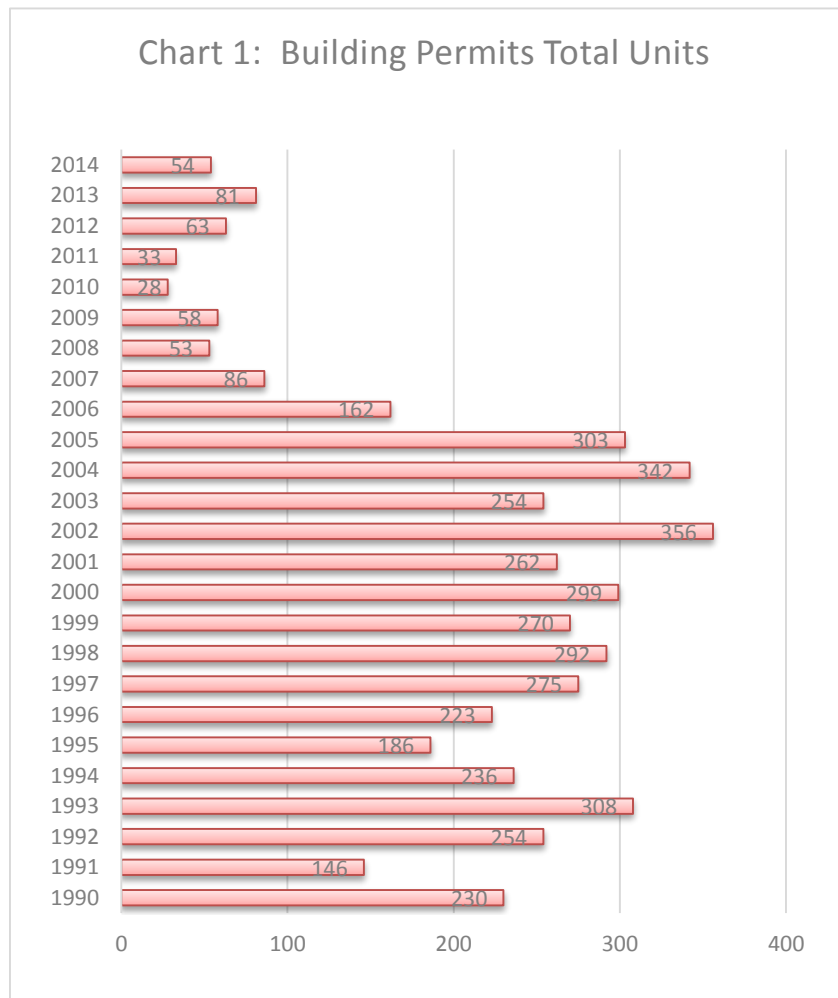
The Current Planning Division is divided into the following sections:

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

## BUILDING PERMITS

**Chart 1** details the number of new dwelling units per year over a 25-year period from 1990 to 2014. This includes single-family dwellings as well as attached units and apartments/condos.

- For the 5-year period from 2002 – 2006, the Township averaged 283 new housing units per year. Single-family housing averaged 172 new units per year over this time period. This 5-year period of time represents a significant period of growth for the Township; however the current averages are lower than in previous years.
- The actual numbers from 2007 – 2014 (57.42) 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.
- 2014 saw a decrease of 40% in new housing units from 2013.

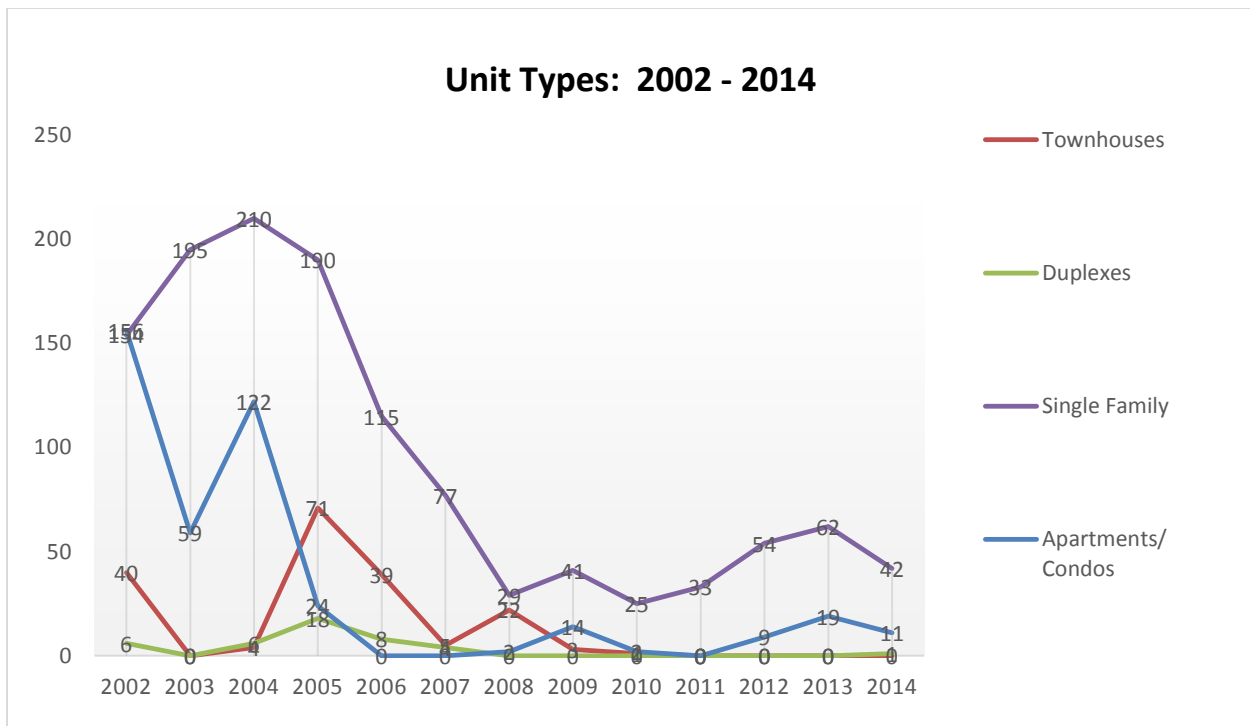


*Table 1 and Chart 2 Detail the specific types of housing constructed from 2002 - 2014*

**Table 1 – Building Permits – Total Units**

	Townhouses	Duplexes	Apartments/ Condos	Single Family	Total Units
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
2002	40	6	156	154	356

**Chart 2 – Building Permits – By Types**



## BUILDING DATA ANALYSIS

The number of building permits issued for new housing units during 2014 dropped 27 units from 2013. Staff finds that this has more to do with the amount of active residential developments within the Township than a poor economy.

Multi-unit building construction, while still low, has begun to rise in the past two years. The units being constructed are in existing condominium projects which stalled during the economic downturn. Specifically Avalon Pointe Phase 2 Condominiums finally was completed in 2014. Additionally, the Brewer Park Condominium project has begun construction of new buildings.

Staff finds both instances a positive sign in the housing market compared to five years ago. Finally, the Township has seen renewed interest in revitalizing past housing projects; mainly the Preservation Lakes Estates Planned Unit Development was taken over by Eastbrook Homes.

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 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 23 approved residential developments/phases not yet fully built out, 3 of which are still have not received final plat approval (Preservation Lakes, Harmon Farms, and South Creek East).
- 310 total lots are available for residential construction.
  - Township staff has removed two previously approved Phases in Cooks Crossing, the remainder of the buildings in the Fieldstone Apartment and Condominium Project, and Sandstone Condos from this number because there has been no sign of activity in these areas for over the last three years.
- **At the 2007-2014 average of 57 units/year, it would take approximately 5.5 years to complete construction of the total available single family units (lots).**
- **At the 2002-2005 average of 313 units/year, it would take slightly less than 1 years to complete construction of the total approved units. Staff does not expect a return to this level of residential construction activity in the near term; however the economic picture continues to improve in this area.**
- The Township continues to see limited residential development activity compared to years past with 102 new lots/units approved in 2014.

## FORECLOSURE

### DATA

The Planning and Zoning Department began analyzing foreclosures in 2008 with data provided by the Gaines Charter Township Assessing Department. This information is useful 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 1/1/2014 and 12/31/2014. However, if a property was foreclosed and redeemed, or foreclosed and purchased during this timeframe, it was only designated as a single foreclosure.

**2014 continued to show a decrease in foreclosure activity from the peak years of 2008 - 2009, with 50 foreclosed properties** in comparison to the 194 in 2009 and 207 in 2008. As of 2014, a total of approximately 5,551 single family homes exist in the Township. **The 2014 foreclosure number equates to 0.9% of the total housing stock.** *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 in Township since 2008.

Chart 3



**Table 2** lists specific sections and the number of foreclosures for the years 2010 – 2014.

**Table 2 – Foreclosures by Section**

Section	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	5 Year Avg.
3	4	8	6	8	6	6.4
4	1	0	2	4	6	2.6
5	5	6	7	9	6	6.6
6	3	4	8	12	7	6.8
7	11	13	10	10	12	11.2
8	7	9	3	4	5	5.6
9	4	7	7	6	14	7.6
10	3	2	2	1	1	1.8
11	2	4	3	2	4	3.0
16	1	1	3	3	2	2.0
17	0	1	4	11	4	4.0
18	4	4	5	9	4	5.2
19	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
22	1	0	0	0	1	0.4
26	0	1	3	2	1	1.4
Other	6	3	7	14	7	7.4
Total	50	63	70	95	81	71.8

This data shows that the Township housing market continues to stabilize with 2014 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** 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 - 2014**

<b>Development Name/Address</b>	<b>Request Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Township Board Action</b>
Avalon Pointe Phase 3 Condominiums	Major PUD Amendment	Amend PUD Plan for 16 Buildings and 43 Units	Approved	Approved
Dutton Middle School Addition	Administrative Site Plan Review	Additions to the Front of the Main School Building	Approved	N/A
Stone Co	PUD-MR Annual Review	Review of 2014 Stoneco Operating Plan	Approved	N/A
Avalon Pointe Phase 2: McBrayer Court	Major PUD Amendment	Request to reduce Front Yard Setback of Building 26	Approved	Approved
Peppino's Restaurant	PUD Amendment	Request for expanded outdoor patio	Approved	Approved
Preservation Lakes Estates	Major PUD Amendment	Amend PUD for new development layout	Approved	Approved
Grass Cutters Landscaping	Special Use Request	Special Use Request to operate a Landscaping Business in the A-R Zoning District	Approved	N/A
Ada Bible	Site Plan Review	New Addition to Existing Religious Building	Approved	N/A
Orchard Hill Farm Market 2934 68 <sup>th</sup> Street	Special Use Permit	New Addition to Existing Accessory Building.	Approved	N/A
Creekside Storage PUD	Rezoning	Request to construct a mini-storage and condominium development	Approved	Denied
Michael McKinney 8425 Breton Avenue	Special Use Permit	Request to construct a 2,816 square foot accessory building on 7 acres	Approved	N/A
Ed and Susan Ulyate 8769 East Paris Ave	Special Use Permit	Request to create a Bed and Breakfast	Approved	N/A
Beth Spica 7787 Thornburst Court	Rezoning	Rezoning from A-R to RL-14	Approved	Approved
South Creek East Plat	Preliminary Plat Review	Creation of a Platted Development for 31 New Lots	Approved	Approved
Preservation Lakes Estates	Phase 1: Preliminary Plat Review	Creation of a Platted Residential Development for 33 New Residential Lots	Approved	Approved
Alliance Beverage	Special Use Permit	Request to permit above ground Fueling Tanks to be located on site	Approved	N/A

<b>Development Name/Address</b>	<b>Request Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Township Board Action</b>
Traci Miller 3920 68 <sup>th</sup> Street	Special Use Permit	Request for Accessory Building Square footage for Car port	Approved	N/A
Eastbrooke Homes Cook's Crossing	Cobblestone Weathervane Phase 4	Request for Phase Approval for 38 Single Family Site Condominium Lots	Approved	Approved
Cooks Crossing Ranch Condominium Reduction	Administrative Site Plan Review	Amending approved Site Plan for 2 Ranch Condominium Buildings; from 3 unit attached to 2 unit Attached Buildings (Units 25, 26, 33, & 34)	Approved	N/A
Kamps Hardwood	Administrative Site Plan Review	Boiler Room Addition	Approved	N/A
Chapter 19 – Special Use Permit	Zoning Ordinance Amendment	Add specific language requiring a primary residential use be established before specific special uses can begin	Approved	Denied
Pyramid PUD	Rezoning to PUD	Rezoning of the Steelcase Pyramid to a Mixed Use Facility with a focus on providing STEAM Education	Recommendation of Approval	Tabled, <i>pending direction from the applicant</i>

## COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REVIEW

The Township has experienced some activity in the business community with five businesses submitting Zoning Applications for review in the Township in 2014. Development activity is showing a *slight* increase compared to the period between 2008 and 2011, but has remained low for the past three years. The largest project reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2014 is the Alliance Beverage Distribution Center at 4490 60<sup>th</sup> Street.

Kalamazoo Avenue Commercial Corridor: Township staff finds that available commercial land is limited in many commercial corridors in the Township. South of the M-6 Freeway along Kalamazoo Avenue, to the east is one available lot (East of Southland Auto Wash) and to the west, three available lots. Finally there is a large lot east of Target currently zoned as part of the Gaines Market Place PUD. North of the M-6 Freeway, lots are only available on the west side of Kalamazoo Avenue. Staff finds that the largest available land is still owned by Heritage Baptist Church at approximately 17 acres of undeveloped land. Additionally there is potential for smaller commercial development both east and west of Peppino's Restaurant.

68<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor (Dutton): In 2013 Dutton saw the rezoning of 7 properties to C-2 Zoning. Currently many of the properties rezoned continue to be used as residences. Staff finds that this trend will likely continue until a new residential development in the area draws developers to consider the merits of the 2008 Township Sub-Area plan for that area. Additionally with the pending change of ownership to the Streelcase Pyramid, this area should be considered for reassessment during additional planning efforts.

Division Avenue Corridor: The Division Avenue Corridor activity remains low with new construction. One new developable lot has been created due to a fire at the Cutlerville Bridal Building located at 6610 S Division. Finally 6266 Division Avenue remains vacant and staff finds that most of 6240 Division Avenue is vacant.

84<sup>th</sup> Street and Kalamazoo Avenue Sub-Area Plan: The Township began the planning process to create a new Sub-Area plan for the lands surrounding the 84<sup>th</sup> Street and Kalamazoo Avenue intersection, and the lands following 84<sup>th</sup> Street west to Division Avenue. This plan will look at the area of study and make recommendations for future land uses.

## SPECIAL LAND USE REQUESTS

During 2014, the Planning Commission handled 6 requests for special land uses. The yearly average from 2008 – 2014 is 5.1. Staff finds that the amount of special use requests has decreased significantly since the zoning ordinance was updated in 2008 addressing Accessory Buildings.

**Table 4** and **Table 5** shown below for a 13-year history of special land use requests and detailed information regarding accessory building requests, respectively.

**Table 4 – Special Land Use Requests**

Year	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14
# of Requests	29	29	29	23	18	13	7	4	4	4	5	6	6
Change from Previous Year	7%	0%	0%	-21%	-22%	-28%	-46%	-43%	0%	0%	125%	120%	0%
# of Staff Recommended Approvals	25	27	25	20	12	11	7	3	3	4	5	5	6
% Recommended by Staff for Approval	86%	93%	86%	87%	86%	85%	100%	75%	75%	100%	100%	80%	100%
# Approved	28	28	27	21	13	11	6	3	3	4	5	5	6
% Approved	97%	97%	93%	91%	93%	85%	86%	75%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%

**Table 5 – Accessory Building Requests**

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014
# of Requests	16	17	16	18	12	8	4	0	0	0	1	5	3*
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-B"	4392	2000	0	1733	1800	3248	0	0	0	0	5408	0	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "A-R"	2454	2452	2313	2845	1781	2749	9440	0	0	0	0	3,333	2816
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-10"	978	1020	1140	2221	0	0	863	0	0	0	0	1000	3,780
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "RL-14"	1236	408	1666	732	586	1008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Avg. Sq. Ft. in "R-3"	484	2590	0	528	828	576	0	0	0	0	0	780	0

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

Changes to the Zoning Ordinance were made in 2006 that doubled the amount of accessory building floor area allowed by right, making this type of request simpler for most property owners. The “by right” square footage allowed has provided a greatly reduced level of special use requests related to accessory buildings. This continues to be evident in 2014 and this change in the Zoning Ordinance can be viewed as a success.

## VARIANCES

Table 6 shows an 11 year history of variance requests:

**Table 6 – Variance Request**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>*Total Number of Variances Requested</b>	20	15	11	2	3	8	1	7	9	5	4
<b>% Change in Total from Last Year</b>	150%	-25%	-27%	-82%	50%	100%	-88%	600%	122%	-55%	160%
<b>Total Number Approved</b>	14	11	10	2	2	8	1	5	7	5	3
<b>% of Total Requests Approved</b>	70%	73%	91%	100%	67%	100%	100%	400%	85.7%	100%	75%
<b>Number Recommended for Approval by Staff</b>	8	5	7	1	2	6	0	5	3	3	2
<b>% of Total Recommended for Approval by Staff</b>	40%	33%	64%	50%	67%	63%	0%	71%	33.3%	40%	50%
<b>Number of Use Variances Requested</b>	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
<b>Number of Use Variances Approved</b>	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
<b>% of Total Requested as Use Variances</b>	5%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	0	0	0

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

Table 7 provides a summary of the variance requests in 2014.

**Table 7 – Variance Request Summary**

Address	Variance Type	Description	Staff Recommendation	Action
3920 68 <sup>th</sup> Street	Dimensional	Side yard setback variance in the C-2 District for a residential accessory building	Denial	Approved
9343 Westview Drive	Dimensional	Front yard setback variance in the A-R District for a primary residence	Approval	Approved
8695 Hanna Lake Avenue	Dimensional	Side yard setback request for a Landscaping Business in the A-R Zoning District	Approval	Approved
8695 Hanna Lake Avenue	Dimensional	Variance to allow a Landscaping Business to occur on a parcel with a width of 203 feet.	Denial	Denied

## LAND DIVISIONS, COMBINATIONS, ADJUSTMENTS

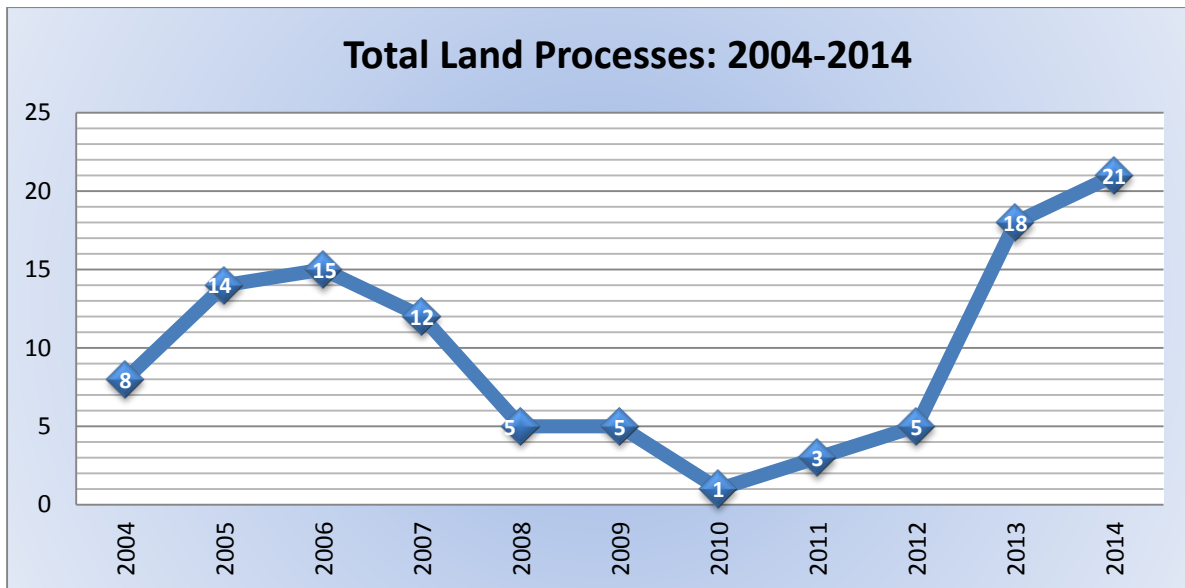
The creation and alteration of parcels based on the State Land Division Act also plays a role in the development of land in the Township. Therefore, it is important to identify any trends involving parcel alterations.

The past two years have shown a significant increase in the amount of Land processes approved by Township staff.

**In 2014, Township staff approved 7 Lot Line Adjustments, 9 Land Divisions, and 5 Land Combinations.**

**Chart 5** provides information on the number of land division applications since 2004. As you will notice, the overall number of applications decreased during the economic downturn, but has since rebounded to levels not seen since the early 2000s when the economy was stronger. This data indicates a return to economic health in the area.

Chart 5 – 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 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 a demographic update would be performed internally. In 2014 it was decided that due to development outside of the Township borders, that the 84<sup>th</sup> and Kalamazoo Avenue intersection should be studied for future development potential.

**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	Positive Action	Areas of Kalamazoo Avenue are currently being studied in the new sub-area plan, however the plan generally focuses on the lands adjacent to 84 <sup>th</sup> street.
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.

Task	Status	Comments
Improve Public Understanding of Growth Management Benefits	No Action	The Department has not actively been pursuing this area.
Promote the Purchase of Development Rights	No Action	It is currently the Township's policy to support the county PDR program, but to not utilize local dollars.
Promote Transfer of Development Rights	No Action	The 2009 Planning Department Intern conducted research on TDR programs.
Improve Non-Motorized Transportation Network	Positive Action	This has been done on a case-by-case basis (Cobblestone Corners, Cooks Crossing, and Prairie Wolf Park). The Township has also played a major role in the development of the Fred Meijer M-6 Trail and Paul Henry Thornapple Trail

**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
<b>2002 Master Plan Implementation Tasks</b>	14	4	29%	2	14%

The original 2002 Master Plan is 13 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. However staff finds that the plan is increasingly becoming out dated and should be rewritten in the near future.

### **ORDINANCE UPDATES**

The Planning Commission began reviewing Chapter 19 – Special Use Permits in August of 2014. The proposed amendment was to add specific language within the ordinance to make a single family home a requirement to seven Special Uses in the A-R and A-B Zoning Districts. The proposed amendments were denied by the Township Board in November 2014 and January of 2015.



## REZONINGS

**Table 10** provides information on the two rezoning applications received in 2014.

**Table 10 – 2014 Rezoning Requests**

Development Name/Address	Request Type	Description	Status	Township Board Action
Beth J. Spica Trust 7787 Thornburst Court	Rezoning	Rezoning from A-R to RL-14	Completed	Approved
Creekside Storage PUD	Rezoning	Rezoning from RL-14 to PUD to permit a condominium development and Mini-Warehousing Development	Completed	Denied

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Township staff, in 2014 met with members of *The Right Place* and created a list of all existing industrial businesses within the Township and also available industrial lands. The list was intended to help the Right Place program identify the needs of the Township’s industrial sector as they continue to grow their businesses. The Township has not yet heard the result of that effort.

Township staff received a request from Cascade die Casting Group, Inc. in June 2014. This request was reviewed, processed and completed by October 2014. The Township Board approved an abatement of Real Property valued at \$250,000 and Personal Property valued at \$585,000. Real property was abated for 6 years and Personal Property for 4 years. Cascade Die Casting Croup, Inc. stated that within 2 years they will be hiring 9 employees.

Township staff also assisted R&T of West Michigan, Inc. with an information request from the State for their abatement granted in 2013. The R & T abatement has helped them retain a staff of 26 employees (or full-time equivalents) at their site in Gaines Township.

## GRANT WRITING

Township staff did not seek out grant applications in 2014. The Township may not be eligible for many of the grants at this time, as many require matching funds and/or partnership with a 501(C)3 entity, or are specific to cities, villages or counties.

## PARKS & RECREATION

Planning staff continued in its role as support to the Parks and Recreation Committee. During 2014, staff worked with the Parks & Recreation Committee on developing new maps for Prairie Wolf Park. 2014 marks the last applicable year for the current Parks and Recreation Plan; which is scheduled to be reviewed and amended as needed for 2015.

## CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

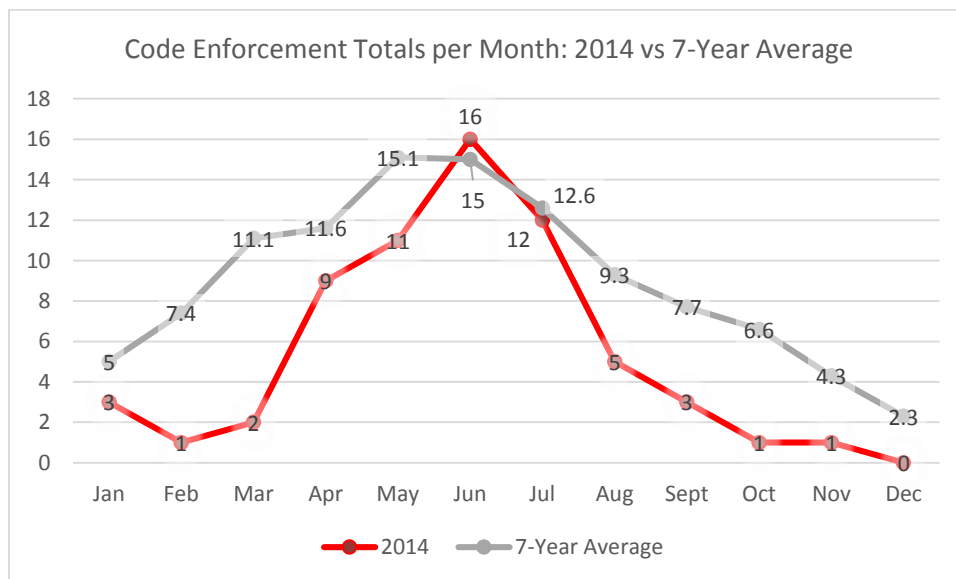
Throughout 2014, the Planning Department continued to utilize BS&A software to register and track code enforcement cases. Filed cases are those where a complaint has been received and registered in the software, and staff has completed a physical inspection of the property or contacted the property owner regarding a potential violation.

**Table 11** lists the number of complaints received by Township staff through each month and compares it with past numbers from 2008. **Chart 5** graphs the 2014 numbers over a 7-Year Average.

**Table 11 – Annual Cases by Month**

Month	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	7-Year Average
January	17	7	5	2	1	0	3	5.0
February	12	6	7	26	0	0	1	7.4
March	13	25	23	8	3	4	2	11.1
April	21	21	19	5	4	2	9	11.6
May	16	22	14	10	24	9	11	15.1
June	28	12	18	15	9	7	16	15.0
July	24	18	18	10	4	2	12	12.6
August	3	17	18	12	5	5	5	9.3
September	15	11	11	6	4	4	3	7.7
October	8	11	9	11	2	4	1	6.6
November	1	12	5	6	3	2	1	4.3
December	2	6	1	1	3	3	0	2.3
Annual Total	160	168	148	112	62	42	64	108.0

**Chart 5 – Annual Cases by Month**



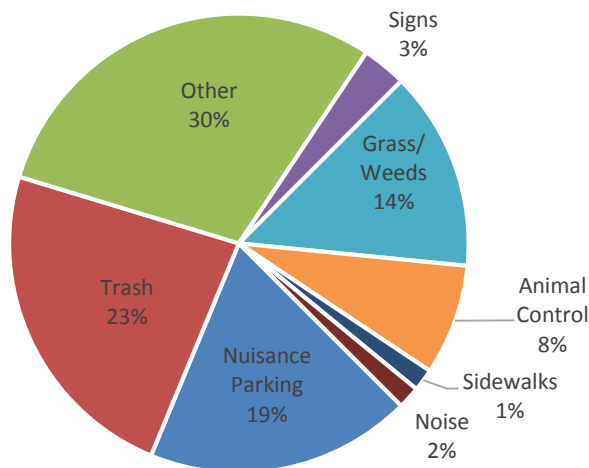
**Table 12** shows the categories of each enforcement case and its 7-Year Average. **Chart 6** provides a percentage breakdown by type of enforcement case processed in 2014. Instances of Trash in yards has risen over the past two years, however many types of decreased. Instances of Grass/Weeds complaints have gone up over the past three years, but it still below the high of 14 in 2011.

**Table 12 – Annual Case Types**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	7-Year Average		2014– 2013 Differentials
<b>Animal Control</b>	5	3	12	5	2	5	5	5.3	5.1%	0
<b>Grass/Weeds</b>	11	9	14	9	3	1	9	8.3	7.9%	-2
<b>Noise</b>	0	1	1	0	5	0	1	1.1	1.1%	1
<b>Nuisance Parking</b>	61	52	57	38	15	11	12	35.7	34.1%	1
<b>Sidewalks</b>	3	5	1	25	0	1	1	5.1	4.9%	0
<b>Signs</b>	24	6	11	3	27	4	2	8.5	8.1%	-2
<b>Trash</b>	35	39	32	20	8	10	15	22.7	21.7%	5
<b>Other</b>	21	33	20	12	1	11	19	18	17.2%	20
<b>TOTALS</b>	160	148	148	112	62	42	64	104.7	100.1%	22

**Chart 6 – Enforcement Percentages**

**Enforcement Breakdown: 2014**

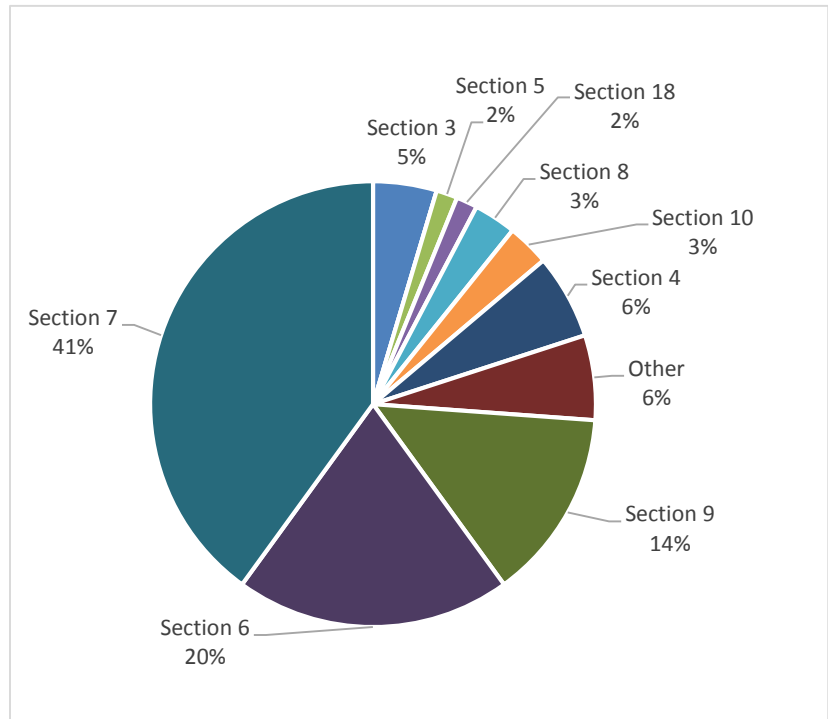


The number of cases is down significantly from previous years. Staff believes this is indicative of a stabilizing economy and residents being good neighbors by fulfilling their responsibilities as homeowners.

Chart 6 shows that the “Other” category is the largest category in 2014. Reviewing the individual cases this category represents are complaints of accessory buildings within a private road easement, extended yard sales, more than 2 cars being sold per year, and other complaints not typically found year-to-year.

**Chart 7 – 2014 Section Comparison**

Staff assesses annual data for Sections 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 2014. 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.



**Table 13 – Annual Cases by Section**

Section	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	Total	%	AVG
3	3	0	1	6	4	6	3	3	26	2.82%	3.25
4	4	4	19	17	19	19	22	8	112	12.13%	14
5	1	4	13	5	10	14	16	7	70	7.58%	8.75
6	13	4	4	22	19	18	12	29	121	13.11%	15.12
7	26	11	9	15	34	41	53	54	243	26.33%	30.37
8	2	6	1	8	20	12	10	15	74	8.02%	9.25
9	9	2	4	18	12	29	24	11	109	11.81%	13.62
10	2	0	1	2	3	5	0	7	20	2.17%	2.5
11	0	1	0	0	4	8	0	1	14	1.52%	1.75
18	1	2	2	4	9	4	8	12	42	4.55%	5.25
Other	4	8	9	15	15	13	15	14	93	10.08%	11.62
	64	42	63	112	149	169	163	161	923	100.00%	

Staff finds that Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 represent the lands from 60<sup>th</sup> Street to 76<sup>th</sup> Street and Hanna Lake west to Division Avenue. These sections are the most densely populated sections in the Township and the data tend to show that there is a correlation between housing density, single family detached housing stock, and code enforcement actions.

**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 2014. Noticeably, civil infractions issued in recent years are low because code enforcement numbers have been lower and due to staff’s ability to work with property owners to bring their properties into compliance without having to issue a ticket.

**Table 15 – Civil Infraction Citation Types**

Civil Infraction Citation	2014	2013	2012	2011*	2010	2009	2008	2007	Totals	Annual Averages
Grass/ Weed Control	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.2
Nuisance Parking	0	0	2	0	5	4	3	3	17	3.7
Trash/ Junk	1	0	0	0	2	3	6	3	14	3.2
Sidewalk	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Other	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>7.9</b>

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.*

Additional Ordinances or modifications to existing Ordinances may be necessary in the future. Staff is unable to resolve complaints relating to overgrown lawns and deteriorating buildings. People who call in with complaints for these issues are often surprised to find that the Township has no ability to effectively enforce basic property maintenance. A Township with a population of 25,000 people begins to look, feel, and operate like a city and Township leaders should continue to consider effective Ordinances to maintain quality of life and quality of real property in the Township.

## 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 2014.

**Table 16 - 2014 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, 2017	1997	Secretary
Ted Essenburg	December 31, 2015	(1981 – 1990) (2001 – 2014)	
Ronnie Rober	December 31, 2017	2002	
Lani Thomas	December 31, 2016	2006	
Connie Giarmo	December 31, 2016	2008 (1991 – 2000)	
Brad Burns	December 31, 2015 (Remainder of Ted Essenburg's Term)	2014	

During 2014, The Planning Commission held 10 regular meetings and 1 special meeting. For the regular meetings, the average starting time was 7:03 p.m. and the average end time was 8:39 p.m., for an average meeting time of 1 hour and 36 minutes. The attendance for all meetings is shown in **Table 17**.

**Table 17 – 2014 Attendance**

Meeting Attendance							
	DeWard	Haagsma	Rober	Waayenberg	Thomas	Giarmo	Burns
<b>Jan</b>	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	
<b>Feb</b>	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	
<b>Mar</b>	X	X	X	Absent	X	X	
<b>Apr</b>	Absent	X	Absent	X	X	X	
<b>May</b>	X	Absent	X	X	X	X	
<b>Jun</b>	X	Absent	X	X	X	X	
<b>Jun (Special)</b>	X	Absent	X	X	X	X	
<b>Jul</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Aug</b>	X	X	X	X	Absent	Absent	X
<b>Sep</b>	X	X	X	Absent	X	Absent	X
<b>Oct</b>	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>						
<b>Nov</b>	X	X	X	X	X	Absent	X
<b>Dec</b>	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>						
<b>No. of Absences</b>	1	3	1	4	1	3	0
<b>Percentage</b>	9%	27%	9%	36%	9%	27%	0%

## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

**Table 18** lists the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2014:

**Table 18 – 2014 ZBA Members\***

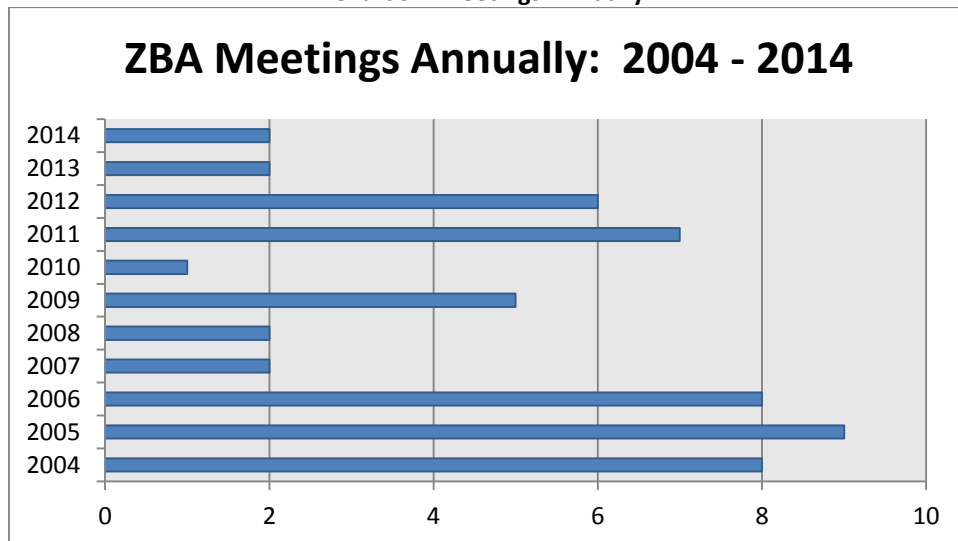
Member	3-Year Term Ends	Member Since	Officers
Tom Werkema	December 31, 2015	2013	Chair
Ruth Ringnalda	December 31, 2016	2002	Vice Chair
Tom Wolffis	December 31, 2017	2014	Secretary
Dan Fryling	Township Trustee	2000	
Connie Giarmo	Planning Commissioner	2014	
Brad Burns	N/A	2013	

\*The ZBA Position of Alternate was first held by Tom Wolffis in 2014, however after Brad Burns move to the Planning Commission, Tom Wolffis was promoted to a voting member.

### Zoning Board of Appeals – 2014

Meeting Attendance						
	Burns	Fryling	Wolffis	Ringnalda	Giarmo	Werkema
Jan	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Feb	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Mar	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Apr	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
May	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Jun	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jul	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Aug	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Sep	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Oct	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					
Nov		X	X	X	X	X
Dec	<i>Meeting Canceled</i>					

**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 2012, David Waligora was hired to staff 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 25% of their time to the Planning and Zoning Department but will be available at all times. 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 2011-2014, 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. The intern gains work experience while the Township is able to utilize the skills of the intern in a meaningful and cost-effective manner. It is intended that the internship program will again begin in 2015.

As housing construction and overall development activity has remained relatively low 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:

- Kalamazoo Avenue and 84 Street Sub-area Plan and Zoning updates
- 2015 Parks and Recreation Plan
- Seeking grant opportunities for capital improvement projects
- GIS support for the Parks and Recreation Committee and other Township Departments
- Increased economic development efforts, including PA 198 requests (Tax Abatement)

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



## BUDGET

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

**Table 19** lists the adopted budgets for the Planning and Zoning Department for fiscal years 2007 – 2014 and also shows the Departments Budget as a percentage of the overall General Fund Budget.

**Table 19**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>P/Z Budget</b>	\$216,429	\$214,495	\$183,444	\$173,335	\$166,413	\$160,833	\$182,862	\$173,956
<b>% of General Fund Budget</b>	7.64%	7.55%	6.51%	6.33%	6.00%	4.96%	5.00%	4.8%

The average amount over 8-years is \$181,731.75. The current budget is both less than the 8-year average and previous year's approved budget. The 2014 Budget of \$173,956 represents 4.8% of the total 2014 Township General Fund Budget, which is the lowest percentage in the past 8 years, even with approximately \$28,318.21 (or 16.2%) going to Contracted Services, for the Kalamazoo Avenue and 84<sup>th</sup> Street Sub-Area Plan.

As future budgets are prepared, this percentage of the General Budget should be the target for a “normal” working year for the Planning Department staffed at current levels. 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**

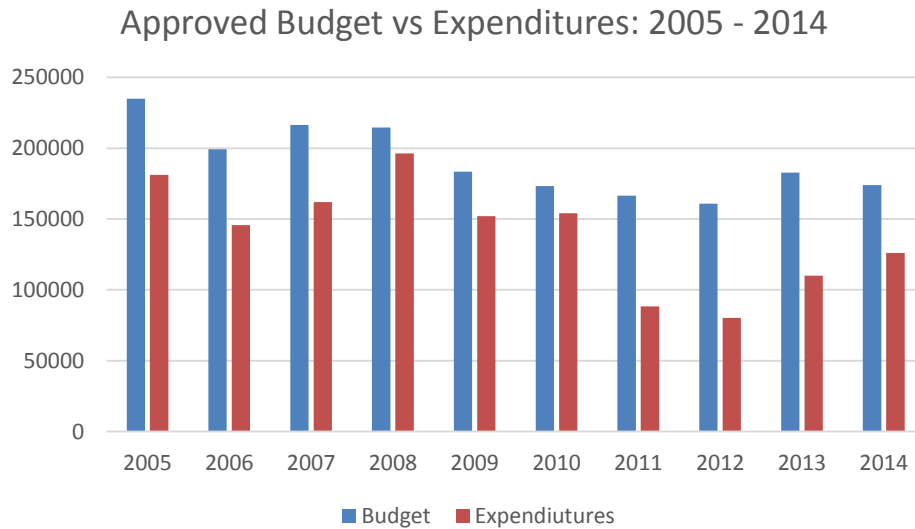
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Actual Expenditures</b>	\$161,910	\$196,269	\$152,098	\$154,082	\$88,446	\$80,130	\$109,986.26	\$126,029.37
<b>% of Budget</b>	<b>74.81%</b>	<b>91.50%</b>	<b>82.91%</b>	<b>88.89%</b>	<b>53.15%</b>	<b>49.82%</b>	<b>60.14%</b>	<b>72.44%</b>

**The average amount spent from 2007 – 2014 is \$120,536; the Planning Department was 5% over the average in 2014.**

Staff finds that 2011 and 2012 are low years due to the lack of full-time staff in the Planning Department, and do not reflect a fully functioning department with at least one full-time staff member. Additionally years 2007 – 2010 are elevated from more recent years due to the presence of 2 full-time employees in the Planning Department, an intern, and a department assistant.

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

**Chart 10** shows all monies allocated to the department and all yearly expenditures from 2005 – 2014.



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.