



City of Ypsilanti

Planning and Development Department

Date: February 15, 2011

2011 Annual Report Planning Commission Ypsilanti, Michigan

INTRODUCTION

The Planning Commission of the City of Ypsilanti is governed by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, State of Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008, and by the City of Ypsilanti's Zoning Ordinance.

In 2011, the Planning Commission's membership was as follows:

Roderick Johnson (chair)	Brian McClemens (resigned 4-2011)
Gary Clark (vice-chair thru 10-11)	Kelly Weger (appointed 5-1-2011)
Phil Holifield (appointed 10-18-11)	Cheryl Zuellig
Daniel Lautenbach	Richard Murphy (vice-chair beginning 11-11)
Brett Lenart	
Mark Bullard	

Under the Planning Enabling Act, the Commission must provide an annual report to City Council, as the legislative body of the City. This report discusses,

1. The operations of the Commission during the past year
2. The status of any on-going planning activities
3. Recommendations to the legislative body related to planning and development

PLANNING COMMISSION OPERATIONS

The Planning Commission met monthly during 2011, except for the month of October. From the perspective of formal applications, the Commission's agenda maintained an above average load compared to previous years. The Commission considered 33 applications, including 11 site plans, 7 special use permits, and 6 text amendments. Significant reviews include the former Ford/Visteon/ACH property at 128 Spring Street, a Planned Unit Development for the former

Parkview, now Hamilton Crossing Project, the Corner Brewery expansions, and the expansion of the Gilbert Residence on S. Huron Street. Some of these applications were internally initiated, including zoning text amendments regarding sidewalks, abandonment, and sign and billboard ordinance revisions.

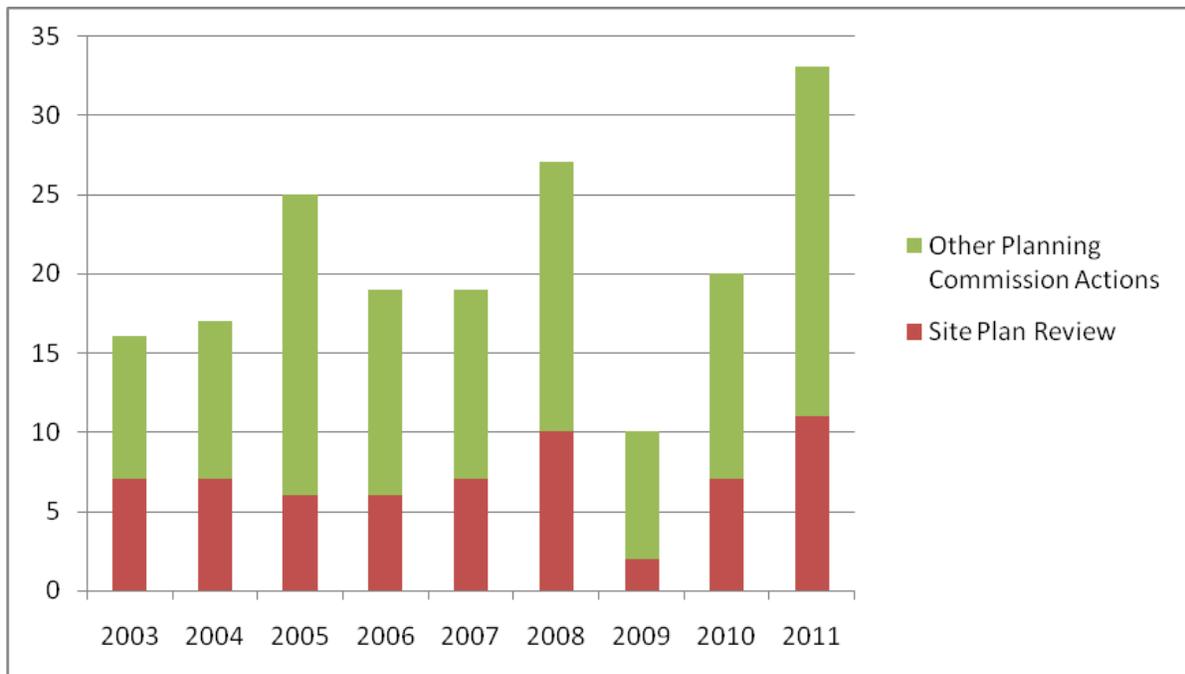
In addition to a above-average number of applicants, the Commission addressed a number of significant issues that weren't tied to individual sites or applications.

- As mentioned, the Planning Commission undertook a revision of the sign ordinance, the largest wholesale revision of the ordinance since the down zoning in 2006. Highlights of the revision include the introduction of flexible standards and a provision for allowing restoration of signs of local historic significance.
- In September, the Commission received the presentation of the South of Michigan Community Needs Assessment. The report is available online here: <http://cityofypsilanti.com/Government/Departments/PlanningDepartment/CurrentUpcomingPlanningProjects/SouthofMichiganAvenueStudy>
- The Commission also continued reviewing and making recommendations on capital improvement projects in the City of Ypsilanti, as called for in the Planning Enabling Act.
 - Planning commission made recommendations related to a sidewalk expansion/bumpout for the 300 block of Normal Street at W. Cross.
 - Planning Commission recommended two options for the 2012 West Cross Street road project. Recommendations were later considered at a neighborhood meeting where consensus was reached on adding in bicycle lanes, limiting on-street parking to the south side of the street, and the addition of bumpouts. This review was the first since the adoption of the Complete Streets ordinance.
- Two committees were active during the past year
 - The Master Plan Committee met semi-regularly to review the existing master plan and providing more research on demographics changes in the City of Ypsilanti. The committee presented preliminary information to the Planning Commission in July. The committee also proposed a strategy and timeline for updating the plan.
 - The Non-Motorized Committee met monthly and has representation from the DDA and Recreation Commission in addition to Planning Commission. The Committee will be submitting their annual report to the Commission in March.

Table 1: Planning Commission applications by type

Planning Commission Applications	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Site plan review	7	7	6	6	7	10	2	7	11
Amend approved site plan	0	0	0	0	4	1	1	1	2
Special use permit	3	3	6	3	3	6	1	1	7
Zoning map amendment	2	1	4	5	2	5	2	3	2
Zoning text amendment	2	1	3	1	2	2	3	6	6
Master plan amendment	0	2	3	2	0	2	0	1	0
Planned unit development	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Amend approved PUD	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Alley/Street closure/vacation	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	2
Change in non-conforming use	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allow add'l floor area in B1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Historic Overlay discretionary zoning								1	0
Capital Improvements Review (tally starts in 2011)									2
Total Applications	16	17	25	19	19	27	10	20	33

Figure 1: Planning Commission applications by year



ONGOING PLANNING ACTIVITIES

As of the end of 2010, a few specific planning activities remain in-progress.

- The Climate Action Plan is underway. Milestones include completion of a greenhouse gas inventory for the City. Public outreach continues in the form of stakeholder meetings and community forums. This process is expected to culminate with adoption of the plan by Planning Commission and City Council in early fall of 2012.
- As part of the Washtenaw County HUD Community Challenge Grant, the City of Ypsilanti is expected to receive funding for a Master Plan revision. The Master Plan Update Committee will work with the Commission on a plan for this larger revision process, and presentation of a request for proposals to hire a consultant to assist in spring of 2012.
- The ordinance committee has begun consideration of four possible amendments, changes related to food production, process and distribution in the City.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission urges that the importance of these and similar projects to Ypsilanti's future not be overlooked.

- Ypsilanti City Council has included in their 2012 goals consideration of the sale of City-owned property. Planning Commission would like to be engaged in potential reuse considerations for the properties under consideration, as well as providing recommendations for a disposition policy for properties returned to the City through tax foreclosure sales.
- Additionally, it's recommended that the Ordinance Committee work with staff on identifying and prioritizing areas of the ordinance to be addressed in 2012. Possible areas to evaluate would be the parking section, the overlay districts and landscaping standards – these sections were updated or added since the 1998 Master Plan adoption and have been identified by the Master Plan Update committee as areas to review for their effectiveness in advancing the City's economic development and quality of life goals.
- The Commission would like to active the Capital Improvements Committee to work on a 5-year Capital Improvements plan as it is a requirement of the State Planning Enabling Legislation.
- Ongoing projects such as Water Street redevelopment remain priorities that require staff time and may further engage the Commission as the City continues a partnership with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission to develop a portion of the site.

ACTION

The Planning Commission will reviewed this report at its February 15, 2012, meeting and are approved transmittal to City Council.