



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING COMMISSION
2023 Annual Report**

TO: Mayor Milewski and Councilmembers
 FROM: Chairman Bailey and Planning Commissioners
 DATE: February 7, 2024
 RE: 2023 Community Development and Planning Commission Annual Report

This report is submitted to fulfill Article II, Section 19 of Public Act 33 of 2008 (Michigan Planning Enabling Act) and pursuant to Section 1202.05 of the Ionia Code of Ordinances.

The Municipal Planning Enabling Act states that, “a planning commission shall make an annual written report to the legislative body concerning its operations and the status of planning activities, including recommendations regarding actions by the legislative body relating to planning and development.” This report summarizes 2023 operations of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and community development activities.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Membership

Commissioner	Expiration of Term
Logan Bailey	12/31/2024
Michael Donaldson	12/31/2024
Ryan Gregory	12/31/2023
Boomer Hoppough, Chair	12/31/2023
Keturah Kelley (Partial-Term: Appointed)	12/31/2025
Tim Lee, Vice-Chair	City Council Representative
Judy Swartz, Secretary	12/31/2025
Ryan Videtich (Partial-Term: Resigned)	12/31/2025

Schedule and Attendance

The Planning Commission met 12 times including a joint work session with City Council. The following table shows attendance throughout the year.

Commissioner	Meeting Dates											
	1/11	2/8	3/8	4/12	4/12*	5/10	6/14	7/12	8/9	9/13	10/11	12/13
Logan Bailey	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	A	P	P	P
Michael Donaldson	A	P	A	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	A	A
Ryan Gregory	A	A	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A
Boomer Hoppough	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P	P
Tim Lee	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Judy Swartz	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
New Member												
Keturah Kelley	N/A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	P
Old Member												
Ryan Videtich	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*There was a special joint session with City Council on 4/12.

During these meetings, action was completed on a variety of matters, including the following:

Site Plan/Special Land Use Permits

During 2023, the Planning Commission reviewed the following site plans and special land use requests:

- Reviewed and approved final site plans for 3 parks and recreation projects including the dog park, Fred Thwaites Trail, and Hale Park.
- Approval was granted for a special land use permit submitted by Mr. Gregory Weaver of Papa & Ooma's BBQ and Catering to operate a mobile food vending park located at 260 S. Dexter Street.
- Approval was granted for a site plan and special land use permit submitted by TowerCo and AT&T Mobility for a telecommunications tower located at 603 W. Adams Street.
- Conditional approval was granted for a special land use permit submitted by Mr. Christopher Mercado for outdoor sales to operate a flea market located at 315 Webber Street.
- Approval was granted for a one-year extension of the final site plan originally approved July 13, 2022, for Mark Purkey, LLC to expand the gas station at 703 W. Lincoln Avenue.
- Approval was granted for the final site plan submitted by Sparrow Ionia Hospital for a proposed medical rehabilitation facility at 205 S. Dexter Street.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments

During 2023, the Planning Commission drafted and recommended approval to City Council the following ordinance:

- Ordinance No. 572 – Recommend approval to rezone 17 parcels from the B-1, Neighborhood Business Zoning District to the B-3, General Business Zoning District as established in Section 1246.01 Districts Established of Chapter 1246, and conforming with Section 1246.02 Districts Generally and Zoning Map District Boundaries of Chapter 1246.

Miscellaneous Matters

- Evaluation of properties zoned B-1, Neighborhood Residential District along the M-21 and M-66 corridors and alignment of this district with the Future Land Use Map.
- Conducted a Community Input Survey to receive public input on the City’s parks and recreation programming and facilities.
- Updated the Parks and Recreation 5-Year Plan after creating opportunity for public input and a thorough review of the existing plan.
- Held a special joint work session with City Council to discuss long-term planning and future development opportunities for the City.
- Reviewed a variety of nonconforming parcel issues in the City and evaluated the reasons for their existence along with strategies for bringing parcels into compliance with City ordinances.
- Discussed residential needs in Ionia and potential ways to address the local housing crisis through updating the City’s residential zoning districts.
 - Conducted training on accessory dwelling units and the Michigan Association of Planning’s (MAP) housing best practices.
 - Reached a consensus on changing the City’s approach to residential zoning districts by collapsing the zone districts into low, medium, and high-density categories to allow for greater housing flexibility.

Future Priorities

As the Planning Commission looks ahead to 2024, priority items on its list include:

- Comprehensive Master Plan update with a high level of community involvement
- Updates to the residential zoning districts
- Revitalization of the M-21 and M-66 corridors
- Updating outdated sections of the Planning and Zoning Code
- Following through with Master Plan goals

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Membership

Board Member	Expiration of Term
Logan Bailey	Planning Commission Representative
Jim Denny, Vice-Chair	12/31/2024
Mike Kirgis, Chair	12/31/2024
Amanda Ondersma	12/31/2023
Troy Waterman, Secretary	City Council Representative
Alternate Member	
Lynn Lafler	N/A

Schedule and Attendance

The Zoning Board of Appeals met once in 2023. The following table shows the meeting’s attendance.

	Meeting Date
Board Member	2/6
Logan Bailey	P
Jim Denny, Vice-Chair	A
Mike Kirgis, Chair	A
Amanda Ondersma	P
Troy Waterman, Secretary	P
Alternate Member	
Lynn Lafler	P

Approvals

- Approval was granted to The Machine Three, LLC (Arcanna) for a one-year extension to a temporary use previously approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals for six storage containers and two sets of mobile office trailers at 29 Beardsley Road. The new expiration date for the temporary use is February 18, 2024.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Code Enforcement

The following chart tracks all closed code enforcement cases by month in 2023. A total of 309 cases were opened throughout the year, but ongoing cases have not been included in this report.

	Enforcements Closed by Month												
Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Abandoned Vehicles	0	0	1	5	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	11
Animals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Blight	0	4	9	16	16	5	8	5	3	5	11	3	84
Dead Trees	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Front Yard Parking	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Property Maintenance	0	0	1	0	3	2	0	2	1	1	0	1	11
Public Nuisance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sidewalk	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	2	0	8
Trash Container	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Vegetation	0	0	1	0	50	38	30	13	5	2	1	0	140
Zoning	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	5	13	23	69	51	39	21	9	12	16	5	263

In March of 2023, The City hired a part-time Code Enforcement Officer, Warren Conley, to create a consistent code enforcement presence in the community. Before this dedicated code enforcement position was created, a public safety officer was assigned code enforcement, but there was often little time available for code enforcement between the demands of law enforcement and the officer shortage in the Public Safety Department. Warren has hit the ground running and continues to tackle the challenging code enforcement issues as they arise.

People seeking to submit a code enforcement complaint can email CodeEnforcement@ci.ionia.mi.us or submit one using the “Report a Concern” form on the City’s website at cityofionia.org.

Permits

The chart below summarizes all community development permit activity by month in 2023.

Permits Issued by Month													
Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Accessory Structure	1	0	1	3	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	2	14
Alcohol – Special Event	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	4
Demolition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Home Addition	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fence	0	0	0	4	1	1	2	4	0	2	1	0	15
Land Division	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	8
Mobile Food Vending Unit	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
New Home Construction	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	8
Public Infrastructure (Tap-In)	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	3	0	13
Right-of-Way	2	1	1	2	3	1	0	0	5	2	1	3	21
Sidewalk (Construction)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Sign	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	1	10
Street Closure	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	0	11
Peddler License	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Vertical Pole Banners	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Total	4	3	10	13	8	12	6	20	13	10	11	8	118

Rental Registration

The following chart tracks all issued certificates for fire inspections and the rental registration program by month in 2023. A total of 144 certificates were started throughout the year, but certificates that are still being processed have not been included in this report.

	Certificates Issued by Month												
Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Fire Inspections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Rental Units	0	0	0	7	2	13	5	10	9	0	12	16	74
Total	0	0	0	7	2	13	5	10	9	0	12	18	76

Royal Shilton is the City's rental inspector. Royal joined the City in late 2022 in a newly created position serving as Public Safety's first full-time firefighter and paramedic. In 2023, Royal began facilitating the City's rental registration program. Chapter 858 of the City of Ionia Codified Ordinances was amended in 2014 to establish the rental registration program. All residential property being rented in the City must be registered and receive a certificate of compliance in accordance with the ordinance. Property owners interested in renting their residential property should contact Royal at (616) 527-4431 to schedule an inspection or visit the City's Code Enforcement & Rentals page of the website at cityofionia.org for more information.

As approved by the Planning Commission at its January 10, 2024, regular meeting.