



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING COMMISSION
2025 Annual Report**

TO: Mayor Milewski and Councilmembers
 FROM: Chairman Bailey and Planning Commissioners
 DATE: February 4, 2026
 RE: 2025 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 2025 operations of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and community development activities.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Membership

Commissioner	Expiration of Term
Logan Bailey, Chair	12/31/2027
Michael Donaldson	12/31/2027
Ryan Gregory	12/31/2026
Keturah Kelley	12/31/2028
Tim Lee, Vice-Chair	City Council Representative
Jason Perry	12/31/2026
Judy Swartz, Secretary	12/31/2028

Schedule and Attendance

The Planning Commission met 11 times throughout 2025. Regular Commission meetings were held on the second Wednesday of the month at 4:30 PM. However, the April meeting was held a week early due to spring break and the September meeting was rescheduled for the second Thursday because of a conflicting community event. The following table shows attendance throughout the year.

Meeting Dates											
Commissioner	1/8	2/12	3/12	4/2*	5/14	6/11	7/9	8/13	9/11*	10/8	11/12
Logan Bailey	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Michael Donaldson	P	A	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	A	P
Ryan Gregory	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	P
Keturah Kelley	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A
Tim Lee	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jason Perry	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	A
Judy Swartz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P

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

Site Condominium/Site Plan/Special Land Use Permits

During 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed the following site plans and special land use requests:

- Approval was granted for a site plan and special land use permit submitted by Relief After Violent Encounter-Ionia (RAVE) for transitional housing at 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue.
- Approval was granted for a site plan submitted by the Ionia Free Fair Association for a new pavilion at the fairgrounds located at 317 S. Dexter Street.
- Approval was recommended to City Council for the final site condominium plan submitted by Mr. Patrick Kapenga of Ionia Development Co. LLC for 14 condominiums at 520 E. Washington Street named the Homes of Heritage Row Condominium.
- Approval was granted for a site plan submitted by Bazco Holdings and Chillbox Convenience Store for the development of a convenience store, gas station, car wash, and drive-thru establishment at 421 and 431 W. Lincoln Avenue.
- Approval was granted for a site plan submitted by Ms. Karie Robbins for the development of a child care center named the Little Learners Care Center at 283 S. Steele Street.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments

During 2025, the Planning Commission drafted and recommended approval to City Council the following ordinances:

- Ordinance No. 593 – Rezoning of 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue from the B-1, Neighborhood Business District to the HDR, High Density District.
- Ordinance No. 594 – Amending the City’s site plan review requirements found in Chapter 1276 including the removal of the public hearing requirement for uses permitted by right in the Zoning Code.
- Ordinance No. 597 – Assigning the T, Technology Innovation Business District zoning classification to 80-acres of property purchased by the City of Ionia from the State Land Bank Authority for the development of a high-tech business park at the location of the former Deerfield correctional facility.
- Ordinance No. 598 – Enacting Chapter 1294 entitled “Short-Term Rentals” and amending various other chapters to allow short-term rentals in all residential zoning districts.

- Ordinance No. 601 – Amending the special land uses found in Section 1260.03 and creating Section 1274.10 to allow parking as an accessory use on an adjacent lot by special land use in the B-3, General Business District.

Miscellaneous Matters

- Reviewed Chapter 1278 – Nonconforming Lots, Structures, and Uses based on public comment on the inability to rebuild nonconforming structures. No changes to the ordinance were recommended by the Commission.
- Discussed and provided feedback to staff on the goals and priorities for the 2025-2030 Master Plan.
- Recommended approval to City Council of the 2025-2030 Master Plan following the required 63-day public review period and public hearing through Planning Commission Resolution 2025-01.
- Approved the final site plan and design for the creation of Steele Park.

Future Priorities

As the Planning Commission looks ahead to 2026, priority items on its list include:

- Continuing to review and update outdated sections of the Planning and Zoning Code;
- Following through with the identified Master Plan goals;
- Evaluating recent zoning changes to determine effectiveness and if amendments are needed;
- Coordinating expected transformational redevelopment projects through the review process;
- Participating in training opportunities to expand planning and zoning knowledge; and
- Marketing changes to the City's Zoning Code that promote flexibility and encourage residential and commercial development in Ionia.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Membership

Board Member	Expiration of Term
Logan Bailey, Vice-Chair	Planning Commission Representative
Mike Kirgis, Chair	12/31/2027
Amanda Ondersma	12/31/2026
Troy Waterman, Secretary	City Council Representative

Schedule and Attendance

The Zoning Board of Appeals met once in 2025. The following table shows the meeting’s attendance.

Board Member	Meeting Date
	1/6
Logan Bailey	P
Mike Kirgis	P
Amanda Ondersma	P
Troy Waterman	P

Approvals

- Approval was granted to the Ionia County Historical Society for a 4 ft. variance from the front yard setback requirement found in Appendix I – “Schedule of Regulations” for the MDR, Medium-Density Residential District related to the construction of an accessory structure at 253 E. Main Street.
- Approval was granted to the Ionia County Historical Society for a 7 ft. variance from the 20 ft. maximum height allowed for accessory structures found in Section 1286.02(b)(3) – “Accessory Buildings” related to the construction of an accessory structure at 253 E. Main Street.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Code Enforcement

The following chart tracks all code enforcement cases by month in 2025. A total of 320 cases were opened throughout the year.

2025 Code Enforcements by Month														
Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2025 Total	2024 Total
Abandoned Vehicles	0	0	1	6	0	2	1	0	2	4	0	0	16	16
Animals	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
Blight	2	5	6	5	1	4	9	8	4	7	3	0	54	79
Dead Trees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fire/Housing Code	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
Front Yard Parking	0	1	0	2	1	3	2	1	2	7	0	0	19	4
Garbage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Leaves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Paint Conditions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Property Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	9
Public Nuisance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
Sidewalk Hazardous	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	115	41
Sidewalk Overgrowth	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	5
Trash Container	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	69
Vegetation	0	0	0	0	26	18	22	13	6	4	0	0	87	75
Zoning	0	2	0	1	1	0	4	4	1	0	1	0	14	10
Total	73	9	8	14	29	27	42	31	17	22	4	44	320	320

The City's part-time Code Enforcement Officer Warren Conley accomplished a lot in his second full year serving in this role. Warren evaluated another section of sidewalks in accordance with the City's sidewalk maintenance and replacement program. His evaluation revealed 48 sidewalks in need of replacement totaling approximately 909 linear feet of sidewalk. Each property was notified and given

a period of time to fix their sidewalk, or the option to wait for the City to hire a contractor to complete the work. City Council approved a 25% City cost share for each replacement, as part of the program.

Individuals seeking to submit a code enforcement complaint can reach out via email to CodeEnforcement@ci.ionia.mi.us, call (616) 523-0157, or submit one online 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 2025. In addition to the permits listed in this chart, the City established the Discover Ionia Social District in 2025 and approved 5 social district permits to allow various businesses to participate.

2025 Permits Issued by Month														
Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2025 Total	2024 Total
Accessory Structure	1	0	1	4	2	2	3	0	0	1	1	1	16	12
Alcohol – Special Event	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	0	0	0	13	3
Curb Cut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Demolition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Home Addition	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Fence	0	1	3	2	2	4	2	0	1	3	1	1	20	16
Land Division	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	6	4
Mobile Food Vending Unit	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	7
New Home Construction	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	9
Public Infrastructure (Tap-In)	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	8	23
Right-of-Way	3	1	4	2	4	5	5	4	1	1	1	1	32	37
Sidewalk (Construction)	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	8	8
Sign	1	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	9	6
Street Closure	0	0	0	1	3	4	0	0	3	1	1	0	13	13
Peddler License	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Vertical Pole Banners	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	11	7	14	14	18	23	17	9	11	8	5	5	142	144

Rental Registrations and Fire Inspections

The following chart tracks all issued certificates for fire inspections and the City's rental housing registration program by month in 2025.

2025 Certificates Issued by Month														
Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2025 Total	2024 Total
Fire Inspections	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Rental Units	11	4	39	13	14	0	0	4	15	49	48	23	220	65
Total	12	4	39	15	0	0	0	4	15	49	48	23	222	68

Dan Davis has been the City's rental and fire inspector since July of this year. Dan has hit the ground running and been a fantastic addition to the team. In 2025, the City completed a comprehensive review of the Rental Registration Program and made several updates to Chapter 858 through Ordinances 598 and 599. These updates included the addition of short-term rentals to the program and revised program fees.

All residential property being rented in the City must be registered and receive a certificate of compliance in accordance with Chapter 858. Property owners interested in renting their residential property should contact Dan at (616) 523-0158 to schedule an inspection or visit the City's Code Enforcement & Rentals page of the website at cityofionia.org for more information including the rental housing registration application.

As approved by the Planning Commission at its January 14, 2026, regular meeting.