



## **City of Ypsilanti**

Planning and Development Department

**Date: February 19, 2014**

## **2013 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 2012, the Planning Commission's membership was as follows:

Roderick Johnson (chair)	Heidi Jugenitz (joined Oct. 2013)
Richard Murphy (vice-chair)	Daniel Lautenbach (resigned June, 2013)
Anthony Bedogne (joined Aug, 2013)	Brett Lenart
Mark Bullard	Kelly Weger (resigned July 2013)
Gary Clark	Cheryl Zuellig
Phil Holifield	

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 held regular monthly meetings during 2013, except for the months of April, May and July. As well the planning commission hosted two joint meeting with the Planning Commission to discuss the Shape Ypsi Master Plan process April and August. From the perspective of formal applications, the Commission's agenda maintained an above average load compared to previous years. The Commission considered 24 actions, including 11 site plans, 5 special

use permits, and 2 Planned Unit Developments (PUD).

The Commission addressed a number of significant issues that weren't tied to individual sites or applications, in particular, the commencement and completion of a master planning process in 10 months!

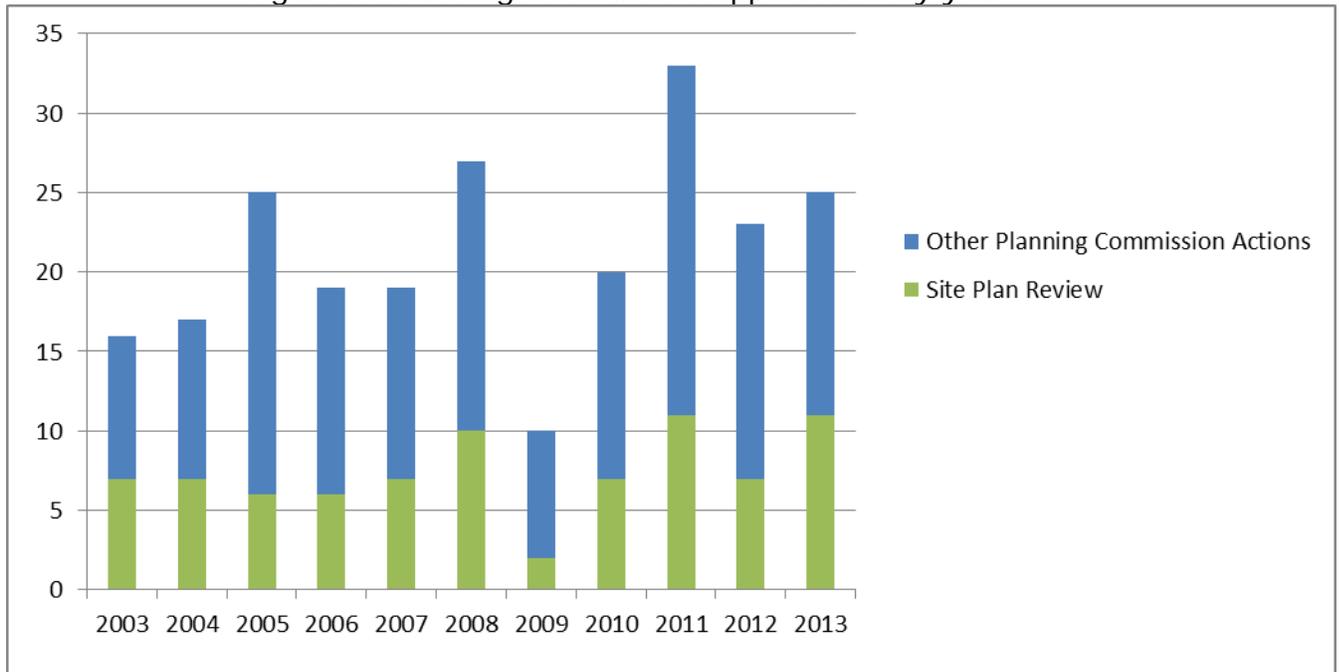
- The Commission also continued reviewing and making recommendations on capital improvement projects in the City of Ypsilanti, as called for in the Planning Enabling Act.
  - In December, the Planning Commission reviewed the infrastructure plan for the Water Street Redevelopment Area. The Commission emphasized the need to maintain the ring road, even in consideration of the East Side Recreation Center, the need for coordinated public parking, considering appropriate storm water management and desire to maintain the ring road for future development.
- As part of the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Community Challenge Grant awarded to Washtenaw County, the City was able to fund a Master Planning revision and zoning ordinance rewrite. After selecting a consultant team to assist in the process in the fall of 2012, the City launched a community-driven process, called *Shape Ypsilanti*, to create the Master Plan in January 2013. Due to the challenges facing the City, staff, elected and appointed officials requested the master plan recognize both the good and the bad, set realistic goals, and emphasize policy as well as land use. The process utilized social media and a website separate from the City's own to engage, educate, and empower. Feedback from on-line sources was used as fodder for discussions and decisions at a series of events, varying in size from interviews to two rounds of focus groups to community-wide, 4-day charrettes in March and April 2013. Events were attended by more than 400 individuals. Two joint sessions of the Planning Commission and City Council were held as well, providing opportunity for education and feedback. Ultimately the plan was adopted in October of 2013.
- Three committees were active during the past year
  - The Shape Ypsi Steering Committee met monthly and were more intensely involved during the March and April charrettes as well as again during the fall zoning charrette. The committee membership shifted somewhat after the Master plan was adopted, prior to going into the zoning phase. Planning Commission members have been engaged at the steering committee meetings as well.
  - The Non-Motorized Committee met monthly and has representation from the DDA and Recreation Commission in addition to Planning Commission although attendance is very up and down. The Committee will be submitting their annual report is included in February 2014 Planning Commission packet.

- o The Annual Report committee began work to incorporate the goals and objectives of the Shape Ypsi master plan into the annual report. As much of this effort requires baseline data, they are committed to work on that data and a form for the annual report. The baseline data (2013) would be completed by June and a new format by the end of the calendar year if not sooner.

Table 1: Planning Commission actions by type

Planning Commission Applications	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Site plan review	7	7	6	6	7	10	2	7	11	7	11
Amend approved site plan	0	0	0	0	4	1	1	1	2	1	0
Special use permit	3	3	6	3	3	6	1	1	7	2	5
Zoning map amendment	2	1	4	5	2	5	2	3	2	3	1
Zoning text amendment	2	1	3	1	2	2	3	6	6	2	0
Master plan amendment (full revision in 2013)	0	2	3	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	1
Planned unit development	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Amend approved PUD	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Alley/Street closure/vacation	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	1
Change in non-conforming use	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allow add'l floor area in B1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Historic Overlay discretionary zoning (tally starts 2010)								1	0	0	0
Capital Improvements Review (tally starts in 2011)									2	1	1
Special topic planning (tally starts in 2012)										1	2
Study item (tally starts in 2012)										4	0
Conditional rezoning (tally starts in 2012)										1	0
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>

Figure 1: Planning Commission applications by year



## **ONGOING PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

As of the end of 2013, a few specific planning activities remain in-progress.

- Reimagine Washtenaw – The right-of-way study for the corridor is near completion and will come before the Planning Commission for approval during the spring of 2014. The Traffic Demand Management analysis including Eastern Michigan University and other major employers has been completed, and the county is has convened a workgroup with institutional stakeholders to look at implementation steps.
- WATS has convened a steering committee to work on an updated concept for a Huron/Whittaker pedestrian crossing of I-94. Funded by the HUD Community Challenge grant, this work should result in engineered plans and implementation steps by the summer/fall of 2014.
- The zoning ordinance revision is currently underway and revised draft is expected in spring/summer of 2014. Additional education sessions and public forums will be planned in conjunction with the draft release.
- The property disposition strategy remains in a draft form and will likely be revised for Planning Commission in 2014.

## **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

- The Commission would like to activate the Capital Improvements Committee to work on a 5-year Capital Improvements plan as it is a requirement of the State Planning Enabling Legislation. In addition to this being required by state law, it's recommendation of the SEMCOG report as well as the Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification administered by MEDC.
- The Planning Commission requests ongoing support for the recommendations related to the Redevelopment Ready Recertification.
- Ongoing projects such as Water Street redevelopment remain priorities that require staff time and may require further support through contractual and other expert partners to maintain efficacy due to increased activity on the site and elsewhere in the city.

## **ACTION**

The Planning Commission adopted this report at its February 19, 2014, meeting and approved transmittal to City Council.