

## 2022 Annual Planning & Zoning Report



### Planning Commission

Howard Haulotte, Chairperson

Jason Leonards

Pete Ross

Dave Woodworth

Alger Strom

John Noreus

Tom Butch

Prepared by:

Reneé Barron

Community Development Director



# Planning Commission Annual Report 2022

## **Purpose of the Annual Report**

In accordance with Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, the City of Gladstone's Planning Commission provides a written report to the legislative body on an annual basis. This report reflects the Planning Commission operations and the status of planning activities and includes recommendations regarding actions needed by the legislative body related to planning and development. The Planning Commission serves to promote orderly development within the city. The purpose of this annual report is to communicate to the governing body and the citizens of the City of Gladstone the activities and status of planning activities within the City of Gladstone.

## **2023** **Meeting Schedule**

**Meetings are held at  
5:00 p.m. in  
Chambers at City  
Hall on the first  
Tuesday of the  
month.**

- **April 4<sup>th</sup>**
- **May 2<sup>nd</sup>**
- **June 6<sup>th</sup>**
- **July 11<sup>th</sup>**
- **August 1<sup>st</sup>**
- **September 5**
- **October 3**
- **November 14**
- **December 5**

**What is Zoning** Zoning is the public regulation of land use; it is the division of a community into districts or zones and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings. Regulations are found in the text of the zoning ordinance and the accompanying zoning map. The City of Gladstone adopts local zoning codes to enforce regulations to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. The authority to adopt zoning is granted to local units of government through the state legislature. Zoning is adopted and enforced to ensure that natural resources are protected, to prevent nuisances, to ensure land use compatibility, to prevent overcrowding and to prevent the overuse of land. Zoning codes adopted also conserve property values and natural resources.

## **The Role of the Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission is responsible for implementing local land use and development regulations. They also play a key role in the development and maintenance of the comprehensive plan (Master Plan). Some of the key roles of a Planning Commissioner are:

- Educate the public on local planning issues, the master plan and land use regulations.
- Cooperate and coordinate with other units of government on planning matters.
- Prepare, adopt and maintain a master plan.
- Review other communities' master plans.
- Draft and present zoning ordinances and amendments and advise the Commission on various zoning actions.
- Review and comment on proposed public works projects

The Planning Commission meets the first Tuesday of the month at 5:00 PM in Chambers at City Hall. All meetings are open to the public and are posted regularly on our city website: [www.gladstonemi.org](http://www.gladstonemi.org).

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### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS**

The Planning Commission is made up of seven members, serving three-year terms. The membership has adopted By-Laws and Rules of Procedure which outline their operations.

Residents wishing to serve as Planning Commission Members may apply to the City Clerk and applicants are considered as terms expire and/or when an opening has occurred. In addition to fulfilling the duties of a Planning Commissioner, most of our members serve on various sub-committees. These sub-committees enable members, residents and staff to tackle specific issues, concerns and ordinances through workshop sessions. Sub-Committee members report back final recommendations to the Planning Commission for action. Current members of the Planning Commission are:

Name	Office	Phone
<b>Pete Ross</b>	Member	
<b>Dave Woodworth</b>	Member	906-428-2699
<b>Thomas Butch</b>	Member	906-428-2457
<b>Alger Strom</b>	Member	906-428-2262
<b>Howard Haulotte</b>	Chairperson	906-428-9021
<b>John Noreus</b>	Member	906-428-1764
<b>Jason Leonards</b>	Member	832-474-2128

### **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEMBERS**

The City Commission members serve as the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Appeals Board is responsible for hearing variances and appeals on administrative planning and zoning decisions and/or Planning Commission decisions. They are the final board of appeal within the city. There were two board of appeals meetings in 2022. The first one was regarding a zoning classification and the other was over a rental property maintenance order. Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals include:

Name	Office	Phone/Contact
<b>Joseph Thompson</b>	Mayor	906-420-1338
<b>Brad Mantela</b>	Pro-Tem	906-428-2457
<b>Robert Pontius</b>	Member	rpontius@gladstonemi.gov
<b>Judy Akkala</b>	Member	jakkala@gladstonemi.gov
<b>Greg Styczynski</b>	Member	906-420-8078

### *Planning Commission -2022 Site Plan Reviews*

The Planning Commission reviewed just under twenty-one million dollars of improvements to our business, commercial and industrial class in 2022. Most of those improvements were involved with the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade. Other areas with improvement included:

- Bramco: 824 Clark Drive (40' X 50' Industrial Storage Building)
- Ives Trucking: 201 Rains Drive (30' X 50' Industrial Storage Building)
- Helping Hands: 704 Superior Avenue (Small Adult Foster Care Facility)
- Hansen Storage: 602 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North (68 Unit Storage Facility)





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- City of Gladstone Waste Water Treatment Plant: 413 Minneapolis Avenue  
(Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade)



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- Saloon Pizza: 1421 Delta Avenue (New Restaurant)



- Great Lakes Credit Union: 1005 Delta Avenue (Bank Upgrades, Expanded Drive thru)
- Norfab: 3520 Sjoquist Drive (3 buildings 60' X 75' for Industrial Use)

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### *Administrative Site Plan Reviews*

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The Community Development Department reviewed 1.5 million dollars' worth of improvements in the residential class. These improvements included two homes, 16 garages and several decks and additions.

- Garage 155 29<sup>th</sup> Street
- Garage North Bluff Drive
- Car Port 1418 Michigan
- Garage 39 Kenneally
- Pole Building 3 Park Avenue
- Pole Building 105 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North
- Garage 1701 Montana
- Garage 4 Harbor Point Lane
- Garage 623 North 14<sup>th</sup> Street



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- Garage 553 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street
- Garage 1518 Dakota Avenue
- Garage 404 Delta Avenue
- Garage 24 Tipperary
- Garage 6 Grand Avenue
- Garage 33 Kenneally
- Garage/Apartment 402 Minneapolis
- 3 Decks
- 2 Additions
- Home 14 Mallard Lane
- Home 23 Tipperary



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### **TRAININGS/EDUCATION**

Training and education are key components of being a Planning Commissioner and working with the public. Workshops and training provide valuable resources for staying up to date on Michigan laws, regulations, trends and upcoming issues.

Trainings attended in 2022 by the Planning Commission and staff includes:

- MEDC Brownfield Training
- Redevelopment Ready Community
- Managing Flood Plains
- NMPSA-FOIA
- NMPSA- Open Meeting Act
- Delta County Election Training
- Leadership Training (12 Week Series)

The Planning Commission maintains membership with the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) and is a subscriber to the Planning Commissioners Journal. MAP is the only organization in Michigan devoted solely to representing elected and appointed local officials, and professional planners, who share a commitment to making informed land use and planning decisions. They provide regional and online workshops, the MI Planner monthly magazine, publications, guidebooks and offer CEU to maintain certifications. The Planning Commissioners Journal (PCJ) is a yearly subscription that is the nation's principal publication designed for citizen planners, including (but certainly not limited to) members of local planning commissions and zoning boards. The PCJ covers a wide range of planning issues, focusing on how citizen planners can work most effectively.

### **FUTURE ACTIVITY:**

The text below outlines and prioritizes Zoning Ordinance amendments that should be considered to address the direction dictated in our Master Plan.

#### **Master Plan Amendment**

The City is currently in the process of amending the Master Plan and we hope to have this accomplished by the Summer of 2023. A sub-committee was created to work on this objective with Patricia West heading up the activities. Staff from each department have been involved and the public will also be invited to participate and provide input. A series of Public Hearings will be held to ensure compliance with the State Planning and Enabling Acts. Preliminary census data demonstrates that while Delta County had a slight population decrease the City was one of six U.P. Communities to see a significant population increase.

#### **Establish New Districts**

Many of the districts in the city's current Zoning Ordinance contain the beginnings of the new zoning classifications envisioned in the Master Plan. However, the Future Land Use Plan outlines zoning classifications that would, when implemented, guide the development of more districts within the city. Implementation of the Future Land Use Map should proceed in five steps:

1. Identify the desired standards for each district.



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2. Draft standards for each district, including any needed graphics.
3. Hold a public hearing on the draft standards.
4. Adopt standards.
5. Change the zoning map.

Step 5 is crucial to convey to developers what the city hopes to be in the future. The individual Future Land Use Plan pages of the Master Plan outline some specific recommendations for future district standards.

### **New Provisions**

Screening standards for industrial uses can dramatically improve the aesthetic environment of the city, especially along the waters edge. Some existing industrial uses will be non-conforming after the adoption of such standards, and the city can work with these property owners to determine a course of action for improved screening. This may include pursuing funding for plantings.

The establishment of the CBD Central Business District zoning classification is intended to provide the city with an opportunity to differentiate the commercial uses and intent of this area from the more general uses currently provided for in the B-2 classification; the B-1 classification is currently not used on the city's current zoning map.

### **Broader Changes to the Zoning Ordinance**

Generally, the current Zoning Ordinance lacks strong site standards for landscaping, screening, lighting, flexibility for off-street parking, and building materials. The city may decide that in some of these areas additional standards are not appropriate, but in many cases even a few simple provisions to give stronger guidance to developers could go very far in improving the city's overall appearance. Additional regulation need not be anti-development, and in fact, a well-crafted regulation can help promote development by ensuring predictability and giving a developer confidence that the quality of subsequent development will match the quality of his or her project.

The ordinance also does not provide standards for most uses permitted in the city, either as principal uses or as conditional uses. Special land use should be governed by clear standards.

In general, incorporating more visual aids and performing some minor reorganization, such as collecting use standards in one section and site standards in another, or relocating all definitions to one section where currently some appear in other parts of the ordinance, could help make the ordinance easier for potential developers to navigate and use. Design standards and provisions for publicly accessible space may be appropriate for the FLEX districts.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**Renée Barron, Community Development Director/Zoning Administrator**  
**Jerry Hebert, Code Enforcement Official**  
**Patricia West, DDA Coordinator/Code Enforcement Official**

Rentals are inspected on a two-year basis and are intended to ensure a high quality of rental housing stock to help maintain positive property values in the community.

In 2017 the city decided to go through the County to provide building inspections, they continue to provide this service for the City of Gladstone. The City completes a zoning approval for each site to ensure the development meets zoning codes that are in place and the county ensures that all State building codes are met. The county issued 34 building permits in 2022 on behalf of the City. Of these 34 permits, 24 of them were for residential activity. While largely the permits consisted of remodeling, additions and garages, two residential homes were built. The remaining permits were for commercial/industrial development. The estimated value of construction for 2022 was around \$21,000,000, with nearly \$17,000,000 of that coming from the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades.

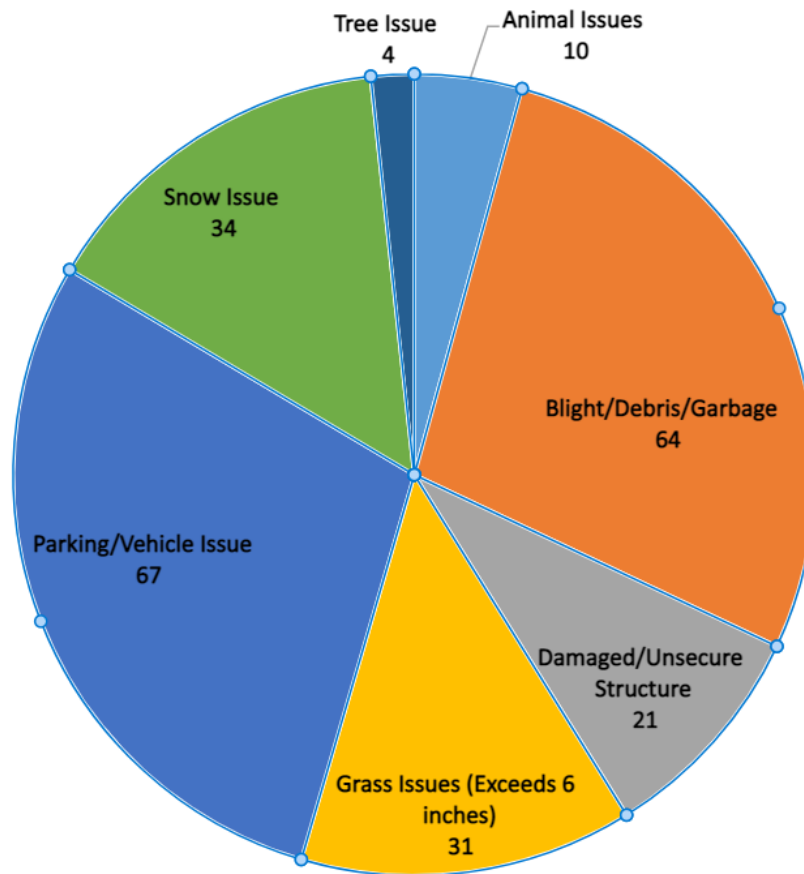
### **CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Patricia West, our Code Enforcement Official, works closely with Public Safety and various departments to handle property maintenance issues. She handled 207 property maintenance complaints in 2022. Many of the complaints involve properties that are neglected by owners and works to resolve neighbor issues that arise. She also enforces grass violations to maintain property values and snow removal from sidewalks to ensure the safe passage for pedestrians.

In 2022, Code Enforcement transitioned their property complaint form from physical to digital, and it is available on the City of Gladstone's website. This has streamlined complaint tracking significantly by funneling all complaints into a spreadsheet allowing anyone within the city to reference the current status, documentation and details related to the complaint.

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2022 Complaint Categories (Count)



Outside of the rental inspection process, Code Enforcement condemned one property in April of 2022 due to structural damage in our downtown district. The intent of a condemnation is to work with the property owners to get the property back into compliance and fit for human occupancy, meeting the minimum health and safety standards. This building was sold in December of 2022 with the pre-established Property Maintenance orders on the property transitioning to the new owner. The Code Enforcement Team is optimistic that the orders will be corrected in 2023.



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The following are a few before and after photos of successful Property Maintenance orders issued in 2022.

**January 2022**



**March 2022**



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January 2022



March 2022



2021



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June 2022





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## City of Gladstone Planning Commission Priorities & Budget Recommendations 2023-2024

### **PRIORITIES & BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Planning Commission suggests the following areas receive priority for the upcoming fiscal year.

- Trainings
- Continued GIS Mapping
- Continued Codification
- Professional Planning to address Flex Zoning and other zoning deficiencies identified through the Master Plan

**County** level Planning and Zoning should be a priority as their situation is currently not in a good place. The City should monitor and support the County and encourage them to work with the smaller townships who do not have the resources and expertise to manage Planning and Zoning. All communities will suffer if Delta County should decide to abandon its support to those who rely on the County for these services.

**Training** is a key component of a functioning Planning Commission. Commissioners and/or ZBA members will attend and seek training as needed. Two new commissioners are on board this year, but they bring a wealth of talent and experience. Local training will be utilized whenever possible to minimize expenses.

**GIS Mapping** is critical to enabling the Zoning Administrator to carry out job functions. The City has made great strides in the development of its GIS capabilities. The Planning Commission continues to support further development of GIS to enable all departments and residents' access to these services.

**Codification/Professional Planning:** When new ordinances are adopted, they need to get into the code (called codification). An accurate and up-to-date code is a key component to ensure the Planning Commission, the Zoning Administrator and others make accurate decisions regarding any zoning/planning issue. Each time an ordinance is created or updated the Municode system will track them and keep an up-to-date version available to the public and staff. Professional Planning is a valuable resource to the Planning Commission and assists us on occasions when expert planners are needed to help guide and direct activities.

The Planning Commission will need to address some areas within the zoning code to adopt the Flex Zoning district. We will work with planners and other experts to work through these requirements. Funding will be sought from outside resources to accommodate this process, but some local funds will have to be utilized.