

# Gladstone

## PLANNING COMMISSION

### 2025 Annual Report

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#### 1. Introduction

The City of Gladstone Planning Commission operates under the authority granted by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) and the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006). The Planning Enabling Act establishes the creation, organization, powers, and duties of municipal planning commissions, while the Zoning Enabling Act provides the framework for adopting and administering zoning ordinances, establishing zoning districts, and outlining the responsibilities of officials involved in zoning matters, including the Planning Commission.

In accordance with Section 19 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MCL 125.3819), the Planning Commission is required to prepare an annual written report to the Gladstone City Commission summarizing its operations and outlining the status of planning activities completed during the past year.

The Commission works closely with City staff to develop and annually update the City's planning efforts, administer the Zoning Ordinance and related land use regulations, and collaborate with developers and community partners.

Zoning is one of the Commission's core responsibilities. As a public regulation of land use, zoning divides the community into districts and establishes standards for the use, placement, size, and density of structures and land. These regulations are adopted to protect public health, safety, and welfare; conserve property values; promote compatibility among land uses; prevent overcrowding; and safeguard natural resources. The Gladstone Code of Ordinances further outlines the Commission's membership, duties, and role in master planning, zoning, development review, and long-range community planning.

## 2. Membership

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires that Planning Commission membership be broadly representative of key segments of the community, including economic, governmental, educational, and social interests, and reflect Gladstone's diverse land use and development characteristics.

Consistent with statutory requirements and the City of Gladstone Planning Commission Bylaws, the Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Commission. Members serve three-year terms.

### 2025 Planning Commission Members

- Howard Haulotte, Chairperson
- John DeFiore, Vice-Chairperson / Secretary
- Jennifer Harding, Planning Commissioner
- Samuel Hewitt, Planning Commissioner
- Michael Kennedy, Planning Commissioner
- Jason Leonard, Planning Commissioner
- Nicholas Nastoff, Planning Commissioner

## 3. Meetings

At its organizational meeting on February 4, 2025, the Planning Commission confirmed its regular meeting schedule for the year. The Commission meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. in the Gladstone City Hall Chambers (1100 Delta Avenue). All meetings were noticed and conducted in compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976).

Two meetings were rescheduled to avoid conflicts with local elections:

- May meeting → May 13, 2025
- November meeting → November 11, 2025

In 2025, the Planning Commission held six (6) regular meetings. Meetings scheduled for January, April, May, June, November, and December were canceled due to a lack of actionable business.

### Meetings Held in 2025

- February 4, 2025
- March 4, 2025
- July 1, 2025
- August 5, 2025
- September 2, 2025
- October 7, 2025

## 4. Planning Commission Responsibilities

The Planning Commission is responsible for fulfilling the duties established in their bylaws, Code of Ordinances, and state enabling legislation, including:

- Developing, reviewing, recommending, and periodically updating the City's Master Plan.
- Reviewing and recommending zoning ordinances, zoning district boundaries, and other land-use regulations to ensure consistency with the Master Plan and state law.

- Reviewing development proposals, including subdivision plats, site plans, zoning amendments, and other land-use applications, and making findings and recommendations based on established standards, compatibility, infrastructure, and public welfare.
- Ensuring that public infrastructure, utilities, parks, open spaces, and transportation systems are coordinated with land use planning.
- Overseeing amendments to the Master Plan and related subplans, monitoring implementation progress, and recommending adjustments as needed.
- Serving as the public hearing or recommending body for land use matters in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.
- Preparing and submitting an annual report documenting its operations and planning activities.
- Advising the City Commission, staff, and partner agencies on planning, zoning, development, and capital improvement matters.

Through these responsibilities, the Planning Commission promotes thoughtful, sustainable growth and implements the long-term vision for the City of Gladstone.

## 5. Planning Commission Activity in 2025

The year 2025 represented a significant period of transition, growth, and capacity-building for both the Planning Commission and the Community Development Department. In July, longtime Zoning Administrator Renée Barron retired, and Patricia West assumed the role, prompting updates to administrative processes and renewed focus on long-term planning priorities.

During the same year, four of the seven Planning Commission members resigned and were replaced. With a majority of the Commission newly appointed, much of 2025 was dedicated to training, orientation, and establishing a shared understanding of zoning procedures, development review standards, and the Master Plan. This foundational work positioned the Commission to enter 2026 with a unified and informed approach to planning.

Although formal development activity was modest, the Commission’s work in 2025 laid critical groundwork for several high-impact planning initiatives, including zoning ordinance modernization, long-range planning updates, and improvements to development review processes.

### 2025 Required Reporting Actions

| <b>Action Type</b>               | <b>Count</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Special / Conditional Uses       | 0            |
| Planned Unit Developments        | 0            |
| Zoning Amendments                | 0            |
| Site Plans                       | 3            |
| Subdivisions / Site Condominiums | 1            |

### **Grand View Estates Subdivision**

A public hearing was held during the August 2025 Planning Commission meeting to review the preliminary plat for Grand View Estates #4. Representatives from Dynamic Design Group presented engineering plans on behalf of Phil & Lee’s Homes, the owner of the property proposing the subdivision expansion.

Following the hearing, the Planning Commission approved the preliminary plat and forwarded its recommendation to the City Commission, which approved it on August 25, 2025 after holding an additional public hearing.

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026, adding 24 new residential lots to the Grand View Estates subdivision.

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## **Other 2025 Planning Commission Activities**

### **City Utility Waiver**

In September 2025, the Planning Commission granted a waiver from the City’s utility-connection requirement for a property facing unique infrastructure constraints, including limited easement access and distance from existing mains.

### **Sign Ordinance Subcommittee**

Also in September, the Commission formed a subcommittee to evaluate amendments to the City’s sign ordinance in response to administrative challenges and evolving legal standards following *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015). Recommendations are expected in 2026.

### **Commission Appointments**

New commissioners appointed in 2025 included Michael Kennedy, Nicholas Nastoff, Samuel Hewitt, and Jennifer Harding, replacing four outgoing members and contributing to renewed Commission engagement and alignment.

### **Sale of City-Owned Land**

In August 2025, the Commission reviewed and approved adding the Escanaba Township properties to the City’s list of lands available for sale.

## **6. Zoning Permit Activity**

### **Demolitions**

Two residential demolition permits were issued in 2025. One was the result of a house fire, and the other was at the property owner’s request due to the required amount of investment in the property in order to make the home inhabitable.

### **Fence Permits**

| <b>Approved</b> | <b>Denied</b> | <b>Withdrawn</b> |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|

|    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 27 | 0 | 0 |
|----|---|---|

### **Land Divisions**

Two land division applications were approved in 2025. Both involved lot-line splits within platted subdivisions and were exempt from the limited splits allowed under the State Land Division Act.

### **Sign Permits**

| <b>Approved</b> | <b>Denied</b> | <b>Withdrawn</b> |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 0 | 0 |
|---|---|---|

### **Zoning Compliance for Business Use**

All submissions were permitted uses within their applicable districts. One application for an automotive repair facility was withdrawn before Planning Commission review.

**Approved Denied Withdrawn**

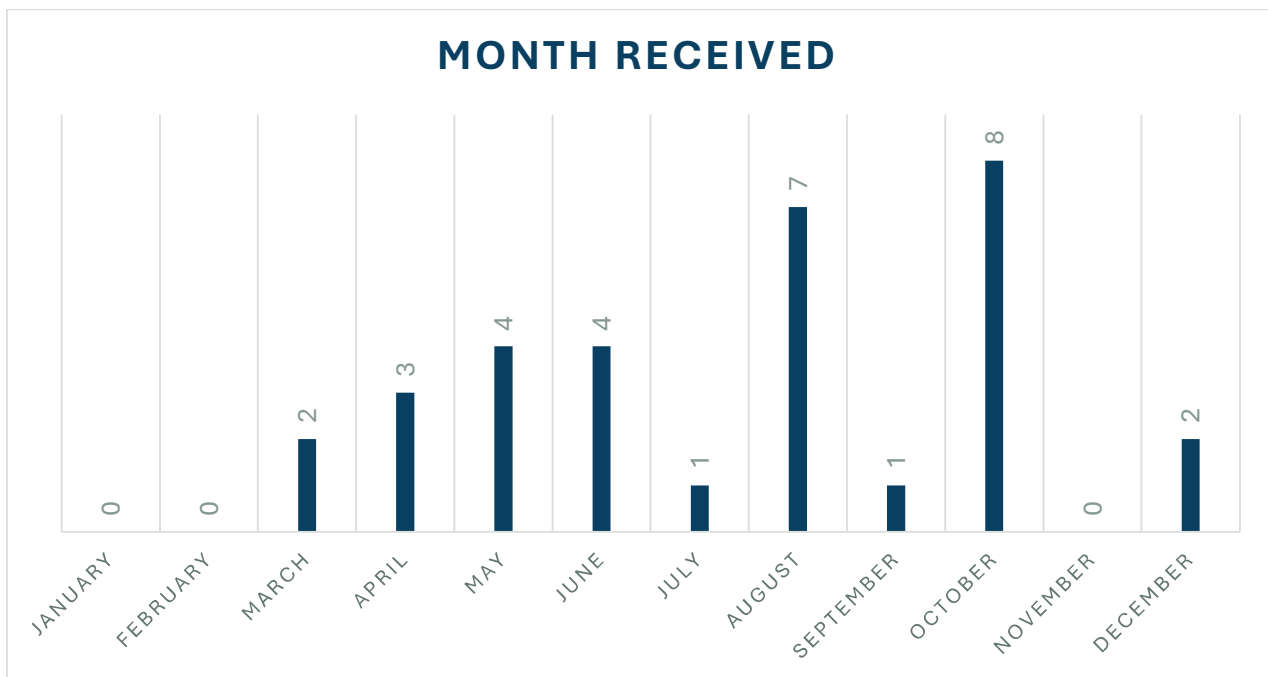
12      0      1

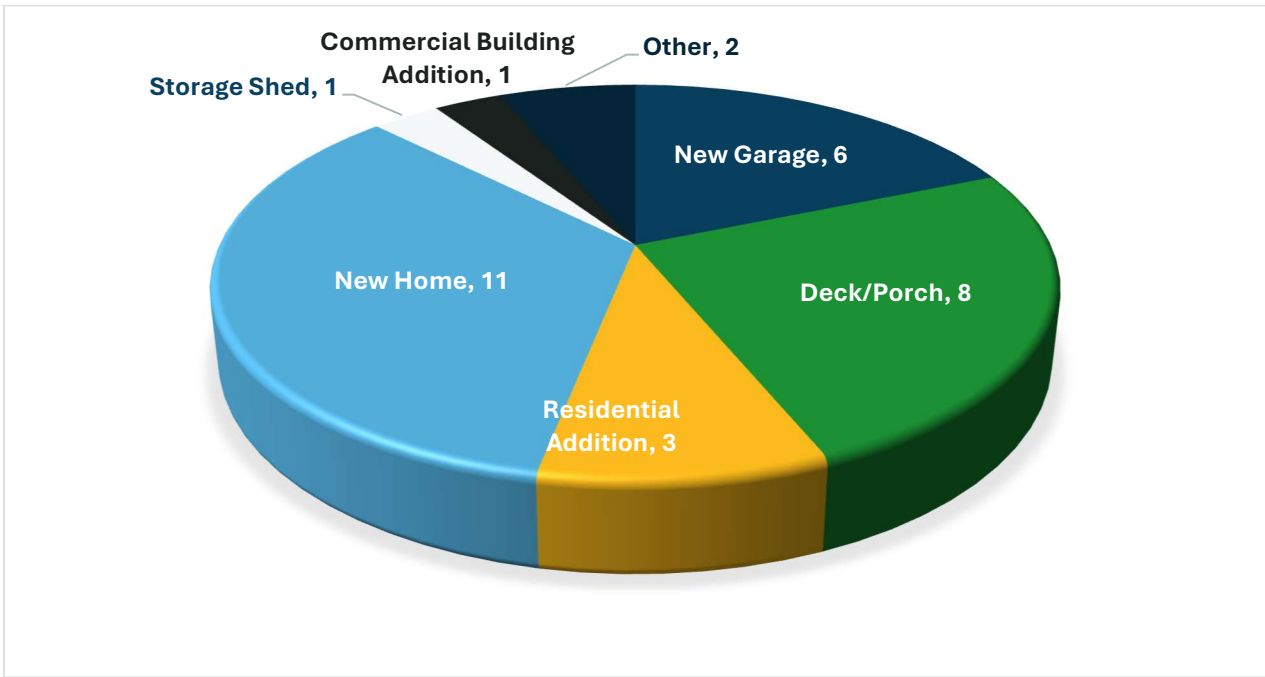
**Zoning Land Use Applications**

Of the 31 submissions received, two required Planning Commission review due to their location within a Business or Industrial District.

**Approved Denied Withdrawn**

31      1      0





## 7. Zoning Board of Appeals Activity

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) provides relief in situations where strict application of the zoning ordinance would cause practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship. The ZBA's responsibilities include appeals of administrative decisions, variance requests, ordinance interpretations, and consideration of certain nonconforming situations.

In Gladstone, the ZBA is composed of the City Commission.

There were no ZBA cases filed in 2025.

## 8. Training

Because 2025 involved significant transitions in both staffing and Commission membership, substantial emphasis was placed on professional development.

### 2025 Planning Commissioner Training

| Training Program                | Leonard Kennedy Nastoff Hewitt |   |   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| MAP – Michigan Sign Guidelines  | ✓                              | ✓ | ✓ |
| MSU Extension – Citizen Planner | ✓                              | ✓ | ✓ |

### 2025 Zoning Administrator Training

| Training Program                   | West |
|------------------------------------|------|
| EGLE – Land Division Act           | ✓    |
| MAP – Michigan Sign Guidelines     | ✓    |
| MAP – Planning & Zoning Essentials | ✓    |
| MIDEAL – AG FOIA Presentation      | ✓    |

| <b>Training Program</b> | <b>West</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
|-------------------------|-------------|

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| MSU Extension – Citizen Planner | ✓ |
|---------------------------------|---|

Zoning Administrator, Patricia West, is scheduled to complete the MSU Extension Zoning Administrator Certificate and the Leading Rural Michigan Program in 2026.

## **9. Planning Commission Goals for 2026**

The following goals reflect the Commission’s commitment to strengthening Gladstone’s planning framework, improving intergovernmental coordination, and enhancing development review efficiency.

1. Adopt and Implement Sign Ordinance Amendments
2. Collaborate with the Incoming City Manager to Develop and Maintain a Capital Improvement Plan
3. Use the Master Plan to Guide Municipal Budget and Policy Decisions
4. Strengthen Collaboration with City Boards and Commissions
5. Build Regional Partnerships through the Delta County Planning Commission
6. Incorporate MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Best Practices
7. Implement BS&A Software to Modernize Internal Planning and Zoning Processes