

<p><b>CITY OF KALAMAZOO PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2008</b></p>
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**Introduction**

This is a summary of the activities conducted by the Kalamazoo City Planning Commission during year 2008, plus information on other significant tasks undertaken by the Planning Division staff.

**Planning Commission Members**

The Planning Commission was made up of the following members at the beginning of 2008:

Terry Kuseske, Chair	Frank Cody, Vice-Chair
Bertha Stewart	Linda Wienir
Sonja Dean	Reed Youngs
James Kneen	Casey Fawley
Merilee Mishall	

Commissioners Kuseske, Kneen, and Stewart were re-appointed during 2008 by the City Commission to the Planning Commission to serve additional terms. In addition, Commissioner Mark Fricke was appointed in October to replace Commissioner Cody, who resigned during the year. The membership of the Commission became full with the appointment of Commissioner Fricke. The Commission convened eleven (11) meetings during the year; the meeting for August was cancelled. The April 3 meeting was held at the old Central High School facility in the Vine neighborhood, and the July 8 meeting was held at the Lawrence Education Center in Borgess Hospital. All of the other meetings were held in the Kalamazoo City Hall building. During the annual meeting of the Planning Commission held on April 3, the Commission elected Commissioner Kuseske to continue serving as chairman and for Commissioner Dean to serve as the vice-chair.

**Summary of requests reviewed by the Planning Commission**

A total of eighteen (18) requests were processed by the Planning Division staff in 2008 for review by the Planning Commission. The request types are identified as follows:

Rezoning	6	Special Use Permits	5
Appeals	1	Street vacations	1

Site plans in BTR	1	CIP review	1
Master plan	1	Corridor Plan	1
Downtown plan	1		

The rezoning requests reviewed by the Commission included a rezoning for the Maggie’s Café parcels on W. Michigan Avenue to allow for development of a mixed-use building on the site. The rezoning was postponed due to unpaid back taxes on the property. Two parcels on Sage Street were rezoned to allow for a new commercial use in the existing building. A parcel on Rambling Road was rezoned to allow expansion of a dentist office. Six parcels on Gilbert and Engleman were rezoned to allow the construction of new single-family homes. Two parcels on N. Park Street were rezoned to allow expansion of the plasma collection center. The Marketplace Plat was rezoned from a commercial zone to a residential zone to allow single-family homes to be constructed.

Special use permits were approved to allow the ARK program to operate in a former school building on Pleasant Avenue, a new church use in a former bank building on N. Burdick, a new music store in a vacant building on Portage Street, and a new group day care use in a house on Hazard Avenue. Another special use permit for a group day care use to be located in a house on Homecrest Avenue was denied. An appeal was reviewed of a decision made by the DDRC to allow a projecting business sign on the Kalamazoo Mall that is larger than normally allowed under the Downtown Design Review Guidelines. The decision was upheld. A portion of E. Harkins Court was vacated to allow expansion of the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission.

A site plan was approved to allow development of a parcel in the WMU BTR Park for the new Fleis & VendenBrink Engineering facility. The Capital Improvement Plan for 2009 was reviewed and recommended for approval. The Portage Creek Corridor Reuse Plan was reviewed and recommended to be sent out for public comment. The Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Kalamazoo was readied for review by the Planning Commission. Activity was conducted on the city’s new Master Plan, including initiating the solicitation of a consultant to assist with the project.

**Summary of Planning Division staff activities**

The following is a list of significant activities completed by the Planning Division staff in 2008:

1. The Planning Division processed 56 site plan projects in 2008. This compares with 71 projects in 2007 and 50 in 2006. Forty-nine (49) of the plans have been approved to date. Nearly \$9,600 in application fees was collected for the program. The Site Plan Review Committee convened 32 meetings for the purpose of reviewing the site plans. Some of the more notable site plans included a new retail building and parking lot for the

Kalamazoo Gospel Mission, a large building addition and parking lot for Graphic Packaging, a new Consumers Credit Union facility on Portage Road, a new shingle recycling business on Gembrit Circle, a mosque on East Main Street, re-use of the former Mead Paper facility by Fabri-Kal, the new Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering facility in the BTR Park, the Borgess Health Alliance nursing home, a new multi-tenant commercial building on N. Drake Road, and the water playground facility on the north side. Forty-five (45) site plan cases from 2008 and prior years were closed out through the inspection and enforcement process.

2. During 2008, 347 trees and 1,127 shrubs were planted or committed to be planted in the city for approved projects under the site plan review program. The total count for the program since its inception in 2000 is 6,512 new trees and 20,588 new shrubs.
3. The 155 recommendations of the city-wide Comprehensive Plan were reviewed for status of completion. It was determined that 139 of the recommendations have either been completed, are in the process of being addressed, or have been partially addressed and are considered on-going due to their nature. Sixteen of the recommendations have not yet been addressed.
4. Draft zoning regulations for the operation of after-hours clubs were developed and provided to the city Attorney's office for review.
5. Draft amendments to the zoning ordinance that address the recent planning and zoning enabling act changes were developed and provided to the city Attorney's office for review.
6. The Planning Division staff assisted the Economic Development Division with the planning and site design of a church expansion project and a potential food co-operative business project in the Riverfront Redevelopment Area. Staff also assisted with the re-development investigations for the 100-block of E. Michigan Avenue.
7. A draft of the Portage Creek Corridor Reuse Plan was developed by the Planning Division staff with assistance from the Coradino Group. Input was obtained from the property and business owners located in the affected areas in developing the draft plan. It was presented to the Planning Commission and recommended for release to the public for review and comment. The project is scheduled for completion in 2009.
8. The city's Master (Comprehensive) Plan update project was launched including development of an RFP to select a consultant to assist with the task. It is anticipated that the project will be completed in approximately two years. Significant public input and participation will be sought during the project.
9. Neighborhood Enterprise Zones (NEZ) were established for the Vine and Edison neighborhoods.
10. The Planning Division provided technical support toward the development of the

Eastside and Fairmont/Stuart Plans.

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