

**CITY OF KALAMAZOO  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2009**

**Introduction**

This is a summary of the activities conducted by the Kalamazoo City Planning Commission during year 2009, 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 2009:

Terry Kuseske, Chair	Mark Fricke
Bertha Stewart	Linda Wienir
Sonja Dean	Reed Youngs
James Kneen	Casey Fawley
Merilee Mishall	

Commissioner Kuseske was elected to the City Commission in November and resigned from the Planning Commission. Commissioner Dean was elected chair of the Commission to replace him. Commissioner Kneen relocated his residency outside of the city and resigned his seat on the Commission. Commissioners Fricke, Dean, and Mishall were each appointed to additional terms on the Commission. The Nominating Sub-Committee of the Commission interviewed five candidates in December to fill the two vacant seats. Appointment by the City Commission to fill the seats is expected in early 2010. The Planning Commission convened eleven (11) meetings during the year; the meeting for October was cancelled. All of the meetings were held in City Hall. The annual meeting of the Planning Commission was held on April 2. The Commission voted to continue allowing the Planning staff to coordinate the site plan review process for new development.

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

A total of fourteen (14) requests were processed by the Planning Division staff in 2009 for review and action by the Planning Commission. The request types are identified as follows:

Rezoning	1	Special Use Permits	5
Text amendments	2	Street vacations	2

Historic District item	1	CIP review	1
Parks Plan	1	Downtown Guide. Amendments	1

The rezoning request reviewed by the Commission was to rezone two parcels on Sage Street to allow a new senior citizens apartment complex to be constructed on them. Special use permits were reviewed and approved to allow building additions for the Kalamazoo Islamic Center facility on W. Michigan Avenue, development of a site on Pleasant Avenue for the ARK program facilities, co-location of telecommunication antennas and equipment on top of an apartment building on Douglas Avenue, extension of the height of an existing telecommunications tower on Kilgore Road, and a new fraternity use in an existing building on W. Michigan Avenue.

A portion of the former W. Michigan Avenue roadway between Stone and Monroe Streets was vacated to the University Roadhouse restaurant property for development purposes, and a portion of Whiskey Alley was vacated to the properties in the 100 block of E. Michigan Avenue, also for development purposes. The 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the city was reviewed and approved, and an initial review was conducted of proposed amendments to the Downtown Design Review Guidelines. Two new historic districts were created and approved (Metropolitan Local Historic District, Rickman House Local Historic District), and an existing district was deleted (South Burdick Local Historic District) due to changes in the historic character of the buildings. Text amendments were approved to regulate murals in the city, and new Wind Energy Regulations were developed by staff, which will be reviewed in 2010. The Capital Improvement Plan for 2010 was reviewed and approved.

**Summary of Planning Division staff activities**

The following is a list of significant activities completed by the Planning Division staff in 2009:

1. The Planning Division processed 50 site plan projects in 2009. Forty-seven (47) of the plans had been approved by the end of the year. Nearly \$10,350 in application fees was collected for the program. The Site Plan Review Committee convened 33 meetings to review the site plans. Some of the more notable site plans included the new University Roadhouse restaurant on W. Michigan Avenue, expansion of the Life EMS facility on E. North Street, an addition to the Stadium Shoppes commercial strip mall on Stadium Drive, the new airport terminal building, phase 2 of the Public Safety training facility on Nazareth Road, a new senior citizens apartment complex on Sage Street, a new air traffic control tower for the airport, and renovation of the buildings in the 100 block of E. Michigan Avenue. Forty (40) site plan cases from 2009 and prior years were closed out through the inspection and enforcement process.
2. During 2009, 279 trees and 1,229 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 6,791 new trees and 21,817 new shrubs.

3. The draft Wind Energy Regulations ordinance was developed by the Planning Division staff to regulate wind turbines and other related devices in the city. The Environmental Concerns Committee reviewed the draft regulations, and the Downtown Design Review Committee/DKI planned to review them in early 2010. Approval of the regulations is anticipated by mid-2010.
4. A draft Bicycle Rack Ordinance was also developed by the Planning Division staff to require bike racks to be placed in parking lots associated with new development projects in the city. Various groups will be reviewing the standards, and approval is anticipated in 2010.
5. A database of the existing cellular tower and antenna co-location sites in the city was developed.
6. The Planning Division staff assisted the Economic Development Division with the planning and site design of the proposed renovation of the buildings in the 100 block of E. Michigan Avenue. Staff also assisted with a proposed transitional residence for veterans at 508 E. Frank Street.
7. Work continued on the city's Master (Comprehensive) Plan update project including two sets of working group meetings, and four meetings with the public to gather input on the needs and desires for the future of the community. Based on the input received from the groups and citizens, along with research completed by the consultants and stakeholders, a draft of the Plan was presented to the Planning Division staff in late 2009. The draft Plan will be made available for review and comment in early 2010, and approval is anticipated by the end of the year.

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