

City of Newaygo
Planning Commission Annual Report
Covering activity in 2023



Introduction

The [Michigan Planning Enabling Act](#) (MPEA) allows for the establishment of local Planning Commissions, master plans, and other associated activities. The City of Newaygo’s Planning Commission is established in local ordinance and consists of 7 members. The Planning Commission is responsible for:

- Developing the community’s master plan which provides a framework for orderly growth and redevelopment.
- Creating a zoning ordinance to translate master planning goals to land use regulations.
- Reviewing and approving development requests
- Studying special topics or conducting other special projects as requested by the governing body

This report contains a record of the Planning Commission’s activity over the past year. Besides items highlighted throughout the report, the following activities also took place:

- Discussion on façade grant program for TIFA and LDFA districts
- Discussion on need to develop regulations relating to short-term rentals
- Discussion on benefits of installing a service road parallel to M37 in the LDFA district
- Discussion on whether to pursue EV charging stations for the community
- Discussion on future locations for industrial uses
- Discussion on net migration increase to rural areas
- Discussion on housing demographics (i.e. 74% of households lack children)
- Discussion on Town Square project
- Discussion on expansion of Social District
- Discussion on remodeling old powerhouse building for use as open air pavilion
- Discussion on sign ordinance

Membership

Planning Commission members for this reporting period were:

Name	Term Expires	Voting Member
Dave Chambers, Chair	12/31/2023	Yes
Ed Fedell, Vice Chair	12/31/2024	Yes
Sandy Williams, Secretary	12/31/2024	Yes
Robbin Faulkner	12/31/2023	Yes
Luke Francis	12/31/2024	Yes
Ron Wight	12/31/2025	Yes
Denise DeVries	12/31/2025	Yes
Jon Schneider – Zoning Administrator		No
Kim Goodin – Recording Secretary		No

Meetings

The MPEA requires that local Planning Commissions meet at least four times a year. Meetings of the City of Newaygo Planning Commission are scheduled for the Thursday preceding the second Monday of each month. The Planning Commission met 7 times during this reporting period.

Master Plan Status

The Planning Commission is responsible for regularly reviewing and updating the master plan to ensure it continues to be relevant to the community’s needs. The community’s current [master plan](#) was adopted on 3/11/2019. The MPEA requires a formal review (and update or reaffirmation) occur at least every five years. The current Master Plan is still relevant and will be reviewed as needed or required.

Some accomplishments relating to the Master Plan include:

- Partnered with developer and local and state governments to increase community housing stock
- For downtown, enhanced walkability and increased on-street parking
- Discussed ideas for pocket park/town square project located at corner of M37 & Quarterline Rd.
- Façade improvements at 41 W State Rd, 38 W State Rd, 34 W State Rd, 1 State Rd, 65 W State Rd, and 73 W State Rd.
- Medical center on downtown development site
- New businesses on South Gateway sites
- More sidewalk installations

The City of Newaygo continues to look for developers interested in a 200 acre piece of land located in the southwest region of the City as identified in the City’s Master Plan.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments & Rezoning

Zoning is the legal mechanism which turns planning goals into reality via development regulations. It is imperative that a community maintain an up-to-date zoning ordinance which aligns with those goals and addresses emerging trends. Throughout the year, the Planning Commission discussed or acted on the following **ordinance amendments**:

Topic	Summary	Status
Landscaping and buffering	Amended Chapter 6 of Zoning Ordinance to make zoning code consistent with City’s General Code of Ordinances regarding maximum grass height allowed.	Recommended: Yes Adopted by Council: Yes

The Planning Commission is also responsible for making recommendations on **rezoning requests**. Such requests must align with the master plan’s future land use map.

Address	Existing Zoning	Requested Rezoning	Planning Rec.	Council Decision
413 Division St	R-1	B-1	Yes	Approved

Site Plan Reviews & Variances

Site plan review is a primary role of the Planning Commission and helps ensure that new development in the community aligns with the zoning ordinance requirements. Prior to Planning Commission review, staff conducts an internal review process as well. When needed, variances are considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Project Type	Location	Description	Status
Special Land Use	541 Industrial Dr	Mercury Broadband service center	Approved by Council (PC Rec: Approve)
Site Plan Review	413 Division St	Motel/Bed and Breakfast operation	Approved by Planning Commission
Site Plan Review	65 W State Rd	Mixed use. Short-term rental on 2 nd floor.	Approved by Planning Commission
Site Plan Review	361 Adams St	Expansion of pizza restaurant	Approved by Planning Commission
Site Plan Review	30 Quarterline Rd	Use of building as a church	Approved by Planning Commission
Site Plan Review	8005 Mason Dr	New business: Newaygo Plumbing. Add new pole barn.	Approved by Planning Commission
Site Plan Review	8115 Mason Dr	Addition to Auto body shop for mechanic work.	Approved by Planning Commission
Site Plan Review	41 State Rd	Approve 3 rd floor assembly space. New commercial kitchen and restrooms.	Approved by Planning Commission
Special Land Use	611 Quarterline Rd	Short-term rental	Denied by PC and City Council
PUD	120/160 Pine Lake Dr	Preliminary review for a multi-family development. Approx 100 units.	PC recommendation to seek final PUD approval

In Closing & Looking Forward

The Planning Commission had a typical year in terms of work load. Besides required actions, the PC received updates on various projects in progress during each of their meetings. This afforded an opportunity to ask questions or give input.

Looking forward, the Planning Commission aims to accomplish the following:

- Update sign ordinance.
- Develop regulations regarding short-term rentals.
- Work with willing developers to develop 200 acre site in southwest region of City.