



CITY OF IONIA
PLANNING COMMISSION
2015 Annual Report

TO: Mayor Balice and Councilmembers
FROM: Chairman Young and Planning Commissioners
DATE: March 1, 2016
RE: 2015 Planning Commission Annual Report

The City of Ionia Planning Commission is pleased to provide this Annual Report of its activities for calendar year 2015. This report is being submitted in fulfillment of Article II, Section 19 of Public Act 33 of 2008 (Michigan Planning Enabling Act) and pursuant to Section 6 of the Planning Commission's By-Laws and Rules of Procedure.

The Municipal Planning Enabling Act states that "a planning commission shall make an annual written report to the legislative body concerning its operations and the status of planning activities, including recommendations regarding actions by the legislative body relating to planning and development."

Calendar year 2015 proved to be a busy one for your Planning Commission. Of particular interest is the following:

Site Plan and Special Land Use Permit Reviews

During 2015 the Planning Commission reviewed the following site plans.

- Resurrection Life Church: The Planning Commission reviewed, and subsequently recommended approval to the City Council, a revised site plan/Planned Unit Development Plan, for the Resurrection Life Church project planned for the 400 block of West Main Street. The City Council accepted the recommendation of the Planning Commission and approved the revisions to the plan.
- 120 South Dexter Street: The Planning Commission reviewed and approved an updated site plan for the re-use of the former Burger King restaurant site at 120 South Dexter Street. The approved revised plan permits the removal of the existing restaurant building and the construction of a new 6,006 square foot commercial/retail building.

- 2016 Reconstruction Projects: The Planning Commission reviewed options for improving the sidewalk network along the streets proposed for reconstruction during 2016 which includes Bliss Street, Cyrus Street, Pleasant Alley and West Lytle Street. After review, the Planning Commission offered recommendations for improving the linkages/eliminating gaps in the sidewalk network in this area of the City. The recommendations offered by the Planning Commission are consistent with the Planning Commission's Sidewalk System Priorities Policy.

Ordinance Amendments

During 2015, the Planning Commission recommended the following zoning ordinance amendments:

- Ordinance No. 518: The Planning Commission recommended, and the City Council subsequently adopted at its March 3, 2015 meeting, Ordinance No. 518 which amended the off-street parking and loading standards contained in Chapter 1282 of the City Code.
- Ordinance No. 519: The Planning Commission recommended, and the City Council subsequently adopted at its May 5, 2015 meeting, Ordinance No. 519 which amended the City's official zoning map and rezoned some of the properties owned by Sparrow Ionia Hospital in the Lafayette/East Washington Street areas.
- Ordinance No. 525: The Planning Commission recommended, and the City Council subsequently adopted at its July 7, 2015 meeting, Ordinance No. 525 which revised/updated Chapter 1271 of the City Code, the Resurrection Life Church Planned Unit Development District.
- Although an amendment to the City Code was not drafted and recommended to the City Council for adoption, the Planning Commission spent several months discussing the pros and cons of amending the City Code to permit urban chickens. The City Council subsequently weighed in on the discussion and expressed its informal position of not supporting a change of the current prohibition.

Master Plan – Implementation Plan

The Planning Commission drafted and approved at its February 13, 2013 meeting a plan for implementing the planning and zoning recommendations contained in the 2012 Master Plan. The plan categorizes the recommendations contained in the Master Plan into short-term, mid-term, long-term and on-going priorities. During 2015 worked on the following priorities contained in the implementation plan:

- Development of a Sub-Area Plan for the Current Sparrow Ionia Hospital Property: In May the Planning Commission began the process of developing a sub-area plan for the current Sparrow Ionia Hospital Property. As part of developing the plan, the Planning Commission conducted an on-site visit/tour of the existing hospital facilities/properties and hosted a neighborhood workshop to solicit resident input. The Planning Commission's efforts to develop the plan concluded with City Council's approval of the Lafayette/East Washington Sub-Area Plan at its January meeting.

Looking Ahead to 2016

As the Planning Commission looks ahead to its tasks for 2016, items on the task list include:

- Assessing possible changes to the City's sign ordinance based on a recent United States Supreme Court decision regarding sign content regulations;
- Working with the Downtown Development Authority in the preparation of a wayfinding sign plan and associated sign design;
- Monitoring a bill in the legislature regarding donation drop boxes which, if approved, will require revisions to the City's current donation drop box standards contained in the City Code.

2015 Planning Commission Members/Officers and Attendance

The Planning Commission held 9 meetings during 2015.

<u>Commissioner</u>	<u>Attended</u>
Dave Cook	9/9
Boomer Hoppough	4/9
Mark Jennings	4/9
Gordon Kelley	8/9
Tim Lee	8/9
Evonne Ulmer	5/9
Chris Young	9/9

As approved by the Planning Commission at its February 10, 2016 regular meeting.