



CITY
of
HARRISON
MI

Planning Commission 2022 Annual Report

Approved by the City of Harrison Planning Commission on February 7,
2023

1. Introduction

The Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals play a crucial role in the development and growth of the City of Harrison. The Planning Commission is responsible for creating and updating the City's master plan, which guides land use decisions and future development. They also review and make recommendations on proposed zoning changes and development projects. The Zoning Board of Appeals, on the other hand, is responsible for hearing and deciding on appeals of zoning decisions made by the Planning Commission and enforcing the City's zoning regulations.

This annual report provides an overview of the activities and accomplishments of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals during the past year. It includes information on new planning initiatives, zoning and land use changes.

2. Members

The City Planning Commission is a body of nine members appointed by the Mayor. The City Manager also serves as an ex-officio member of the Commission as well as secretary. The Commission elects a Chairman from among the appointive members. All members of the Commission serve without compensation.

Planning Commission Member	Expiration of Term
Ed Kerr	01/31/2023
Gabe Ambrozaitis	01/31/2023
Jeff Mustama – (Replaced by Tom Mondeau on 09/12/2022)	01/31/2023
George Muscott (Chairman)	01/31/2024
Tom House	01/31/2024
Robin Witkowski	01/31/2024
Don Patch	01/31/2025
Andy Saxton	01/31/2025
Brent Boulton	01/31/2025
Justin Cavanaugh Ex-Officio Member	Indefinite

3. Meetings Held in 2022

The City of Harrison Planning Commission held seven meetings during the year, exceeding the minimum required by the Michigan Planning and Enabling Act. The dates of the meetings were: (Click the link for a copy of the meeting minutes.)

- [January 18, 2022](#)
- [February 8, 2022](#)
- [March 8, 2022](#)
- [April 12, 2022](#)
- [June 14, 2022](#)
- [October 11, 2022](#)
- [November 1, 2022](#)

4. Master Plan Annual Review

The City of Harrison Planning Commission has reviewed the Master Plan adopted in 2017 and has determined that, while progress has been made towards the previously established goals, the plan itself is now outdated. In 2023, the Commission's primary focus will be to adopt a new Master Plan and undertake a comprehensive revision of the City's zoning ordinance.

5. Zoning Ordinance Amendments

Ordinance Number	Date Adopted by Council	Section of City Code Effected by Change	Brief Summary of Ordinance
2022-01	April 4, 2022	City Zoning Map	A revision of the City zoning map. Parcel 070-028-400-40,42,43 to PUD Parcel 070-028-400-08 to Light Industrial
2022-02	July 11, 2022	Allowing adult use recreational marijuana establishments	Add adult use recreational marijuana establishments as a permitted land use in all C1 & C2 districts within City limits.
2022-03	November 21, 2022	Section 16.003; & Article 6 Section 6..4	Defining requirements for any land division applications; and Adding a re-build clause for non-conforming properties

6. Development Reviews

The City of Harrison employs a comprehensive developmental review process to evaluate proposed development projects and ensure compliance with community master plans, zoning and land use regulations, as well as other relevant laws and regulations. This review process entails a thorough examination of the proposed project's design, layout, and potential impact on the surrounding community, as well as a review of any necessary permits or approvals. The process may include public hearings, site visits, expert analysis, and input from various stakeholders such as the developer, community members, and other government agencies. All site plans are reviewed by the Planning Commission, while Conceptual Reviews may be reviewed administratively or by the Planning Commission.

In 2022 The City of Harrison participated in the following developmental reviews:

Review Type	Location	Date of Review	Description	End Result
Conceptual Review Meeting	132 Hillcrest	January - June 2022	The property owner has a non-conforming property but has an interest increasing the size of her home.	After several months of discussion, a piece of case law was discovered that indicates building up and adding a second floor does not increase the non-conformity of a property and would be allowed.
Site Plan Review	1570 N. Clare Ave	February 8, 2022	Site Plan to Build Tractor Supply	Site Plan approved by Planning Commission
Site Plan Review	963 N First St.	March 8, 2022	Site Plan to renovate the building, add outdoor seating, and change layout of parking lot.	Site plan approved by Planning Commission.
Site Plan Review	373 N. First St.	June 14, 2022	Site Plan to demolish building next door and extend current building where demolished building sat.	Site plan approved by Planning Commission.
Conceptual Review Meeting	1408 Hillcrest	September - October 2022	Property owner wished to split their land in order to sell. Land is already non-conforming.	Property owner owns multiple parcels, while the land could not be split; a property lot line adjustment was completed to fulfill the property owner's request.
Conceptual Review Meeting	1431 Douglas Dr	October 11, 2022	Property owners are on a non-conforming property but have a dilapidated retaining wall	The initial request was denied administratively, however after further review the property owner was able to re-build

			that needs to be replaced. The replacement would extend footprint of property	under a special clause in the zoning ordinance that would allow the work to be completed if it was a safety concern. City zoning administrator worked with county building code official to confirm it was a safety issue, and the resident was granted permission to repair their retaining wall.
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7. Variances

A zoning variance is a legal mechanism that allows a property owner to request an exception to the zoning regulations that would otherwise prevent them from using their property in the way they desire. This can include exceptions to height, setback, or lot coverage requirements, among other things. Variance requests are considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals and require a showing of hardship, usually meaning that the property owner would face a significant financial or practical difficulty in adhering to the existing zoning regulations. The decision to grant a variance is discretionary and is based on the facts and circumstances of each case.

The City of Harrison heard the following variance cases in 2022:

Variance Type	Location	Description	End Result	Date of Action
Dimensional Variance	1220 Hillcrest	Property owner’s proposal maintains all required setbacks except minimum lot size. The parcel is less than 300 square feet shy of the requirement.	Variance Granted	November 21, 2022

8. Trainings

The Planning Commission places a high emphasis on ongoing education and professional development to ensure that its members are well versed and equipped to make informed decisions. During the past year, several training opportunities were pursued and successfully completed by members of the Commission.

During the past year, the Planning Commission received the following trainings:

- "Attainable Housing in your Community" through the MSU Extension Office on January 18, 2022
- Training relating to the duties of the Planning Commission on November 1, 2022
- Tom Mondeau completed the Citizen Planner class through the MSU Extension office.
- Ex-Officio member and Secretary of the Planning Commission Justin Cavanaugh completed the Citizen Planner class through the MSU Extension office

The Commission believes that by continuously investing in professional development, it can better serve the community by making informed and well-considered decisions on land use, zoning, and other planning matters.

9. Joint Meetings

In 2022, the Planning Commission and City Council jointly met on April 12 to continue discussions on amending the current zoning ordinance to allow adult use recreational marijuana as a permitted use within the City of Harrison. This was the only joint meeting held during the year. The meeting was a productive one, with both groups engaged in a constructive dialogue to explore the potential impacts and benefits of such an amendment to the zoning ordinance.