



Building & Planning Department Annual Activity Report 2008



PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIVITY

Although the new housing market and development in general remained soft in 2008, a trend that began in late 2006, the Planning Commission's activity remained relatively consistent when compared to prior years. The bulk of the Commission's reviews and activities involved:

- Site plan reviews for commercial and industrial projects
- Conditional zoning certificate reviews for conditionally permitted uses.
- Review of proposed zoning text and map amendments

As expected in a down housing market, platting of new subdivisions remained low.

**TABLE I
MEETING SUMMARY
2004 - 2008**

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Number of Meetings	21	20	23	21	23
Total Time (Hours)	28	30	24	35	36
Average Meeting Length (Hours)	1.3	1.5	1.0	1.67	1.40
Staff Reports Prepared	90	121	92	135	115
Preliminary Plat Applications	3*	4*	1*	3	5
Final Plat Applications	1	5	0	4	7
Minor Lot Splits & Consolidation Plats	6	5	7	13	13
Conditional Zoning Certificates	10	9	7	17	8
Zoning Text Amendments	6	7	4	6	1
Zoning Map Amendments	3	3	5	4	6
Site Plan Reviews	7	10	12	16	10
Condominium Declarations	1	5	5	10	11

* Includes the re-approval of Southern Court Subdivision preliminary plat

**TABLE II
2008 SUBDIVISION REVIEWS**

SUBDIVISION NAME	LOCATION	CITY WATER	CITY SANITARY SEWER	PRELIM. PLAT APPROVED	FINAL PLAT APPROVED	BLDG LOTS PER FINAL PLAT
Westchester PUD Phase II	College St. and S.R. 57	YES	YES	PUD General Plan approved 8/8/05 (107 lots)	12/8/08	42

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

In recent years, BZA activity has declined following the trend in the housing market and development activities in general. In 2008, the number of applications reviewed was down by half since 2006 and by over 60% from 2005. This reduced activity is consistent with general market conditions, in that when building activity is low, so are requests for variances. However, the caseload breakdown by use type and the result of the BZA's decisions are consistent with the activity in recent years.

**TABLE III
MEETING SUMMARY
2004 - 2008**

Year	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
No. of Meetings	11	13	17	15	14
Total Variance & Appeals Applications Received	15	18	32	43	39
No. of Cases Withdrawn	0	2	2	1	0
No. of Cases Approved	13	14	27	39	37
Pct. of All Cases Approved	87%	78%	84%	91%	95%

**TABLE IV
VARIANCES BY LAND USE TYPE - 2008**

	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	PUBLIC – QUASI/PUBLIC	TOTAL
No. of Variance Cases	10	3	0	2	15
No. of Cases Approved	8	3	0	2	13
Approval Percentage	80%	100%	N/A	100%	87%

CONSTRUCTION AND PERMIT ADMINISTRATION

Residential construction represents the bulk of the City's permit activity and although the new housing market is still soft, a trend which reached the City in the last few months of 2006, the number of permits for new home construction actually increased from 2007. The permit reports also show that housing sizes and construction costs in 2008 have decreased from previous years. Revenues from most sources as well as construction valuation have likewise decreased as a result of market conditions.

**TABLE V
RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY
2004 – 2008**

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Ave. One Family Structure Cost	\$157,583	\$186,478	\$177,245	\$172,092	\$147,092
Avg. One Family Floor Area (sq. ft.)	1,948	2,312	1,990	1,999	1,975
Total Single Family Dwelling Units (including condominiums)	68	50	94**	145	205
Total New Dwelling Units – All Types*	68	194***	202	145	205
Approved Final Plats – No. of Lots	42	209	0	137	178

* Includes all single family, multifamily & special housing units (senior housing, congregate living, etc.)

** Includes 2 Triplexes – 6 units total

*** Includes 12 apartment building of 12 dwelling units per building (Stratford Crossings)

**TABLE VI
FEES COLLECTED
2004 - 2008**

FEES COLLECTED:	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Building Permits	\$50,052	\$46,094	\$70,647	\$109,101	\$57,753
Zoning Certificates	\$6,881	\$ 8,574	\$12,039	\$8,345	\$4,600
Development Permits (A)	\$4,474	\$ 9,324	\$15,511	\$3,912	---
Sanitary Sewer Capacity	\$141,426	\$264,499	\$330,320	\$384,995	\$356,100
HVAC Permits	\$17,556	\$19,252	\$26,044	\$24,700	\$6,830
Electrical Permits	\$23,000	\$22,949	\$35,731	\$41,977	\$29,864
BZA & Planning Commission Applications	\$2,350	\$ 5,810	\$4,416	\$4,100	\$2,604
Subdivision Review (A)	\$1,170	\$ 4,860	\$ 2,100	\$3,650	---

(A) Beginning in 2005, Subdivision Application Fees and Development Permits for commercial/industrial projects were accounted for individually. In the past these figures were included in Planning Commission Applications & Building Permits, respectively.

**TABLE VII
CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY
2006-2008**

	NUMBER OF PERMITS			\$ VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION		
	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006
RESIDENTIAL						
Single Family	66	50	91	\$10,448,116	\$9,323,918	\$16,188,590
Two Family**	2	0	0	\$220,000	\$0	\$0
Multi-Family*	0	12	12	\$0	\$6,300,000	\$4,725,000
Remodel/Alteration	67	62	40	\$518,685	\$695,527	\$423,635
Additions/Garages	70	85	113	\$834,582	\$719,833	\$1,086,595
Demolition	5	2	1	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	210	211	257	\$12,021,383	\$17,039,278	\$22,423,820

* 2006 - includes 2 Triplexes (6 units) & **9 Bldgs** x 12 apts (108 units); 2007 - **12 Bldgs** x 12 Apts. (144 units)

** 1 Duplex - 2 Separate Permits

	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006
COMMERCIAL						
New Construction	5	3	14	\$9,328,416	\$1,525,000	\$13,545,500
Additions/Alterations	2	0	2	\$53,700	\$0	\$270,000
Demolition	1	1	1	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL COMMERCIAL	8	4	17	\$9,382,116	\$1,525,000	\$13,815,500
TOTAL-ALL BLDG PERMITS	219					
Less Demolition Permits	212					

	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006
INDUSTRIAL						
New Construction	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Additions/Alterations	0	1	2	\$0	\$1,200,000	\$1,102,200
Demolition	1	0	0	N/A	\$0	\$0
TOTAL INDUSTRIAL	1	1	2	\$1	\$1,200,000	\$1,102,200

	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006
PUBLIC/QUASI PUBLIC						
New Construction	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Additions/Alterations	0	1	3	\$0	\$1,200,000	\$1,535,299
Demoliton	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL PUBLIC	0	1	3	\$0	\$1,200,000	\$1,535,299

TOTAL -ALL BLDG PERMITS	219	217	384
Total - Less Demo Permits	212	214	372

	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006
Building&Zoning Permits	324	362	452	\$21,403,499	\$20,964,278	\$38,826,319
HVAC Permits	124	141	156			
Electric Permits	155	177	223			
TOTAL PERMITS	603	680	831			
Electric Inspections	510	479	723			
Building Inspections	925	875	1380			

Demolition Permits:

SF (1) 440 South Blvd.; Residential Garages (4); Commercial Rest/Bar (1) 127 Broad St.; Industrial Whse (1) 300 First St.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Table IX is a categorized comparison of the type and number of code violation issues addressed in the year 2008 relative to previous years. Based on recent years' averages, 71% more code violations were issued in 2008 than in the previous five years. A review of the table shows that:

- There was an increase in 2008 Building Code violations issued for dated projects lacking final inspection approval, but the total is less than the five year average.
- There were 127 more 2008 violation letters sent than in 2007. Generally, the increase in weed notices accounted for the overall increase in code violation activity.
- Zoning violation notices were about average in 2008. The majority were issued for the change of use of premises without zoning approval. Sign violations and unlicensed vehicle notices were also issued.
- Property maintenance code activity was substantially higher for the year due to increased complaints and code enforcement responses. The residential violations encompassed a wide range of issues,
- There were 5 Public Nuisance violations that were resolved with the owners' cooperation. Items in the Public Nuisance category for 2008 include fire damage, unsafe structures, and a sewage issue.
- Weed notice totals were record high. Increased public awareness of the ordinance, combined with an abundance of abandoned residences created the high number of complaints. The largest contributing factor to the increase however, was the number of un-mowed vacant lots in newer subdivisions.

Overall, approximately 85% of code violations were satisfactorily resolved.

**TABLE IX
CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY
2003-2008**

	2008	<i>5 Year Average</i>	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Building	61	75	39	119	84	20	113
Zoning	18	19	13	17	43	12	12
Property Maintenance	50	30	29	29	25	38	28
Public Nuisance	6	3	2	0	2	5	5
Weeds	167	45	45	52	59	33	35
Total Notices	302	176	132	220	214	111	201
Total Resolved	257	129	95	151	164	87	149
% Resolved	(85%)	(75%)	(72%)	(69%)	77(%)	(85%)	(74%)

Table X summarizes the 2008 code violation notices by type (code chapter) and defines their status at the end of the year. This table reveals that:

- Building occupancy related notices resulted in 50% of non-compliant properties receiving final building approval. Numerous projects were not completed, other properties have changed ownership, and owners are reluctant to make compliance related improvements.
- Zoning violation notices achieved a 67% compliance rate.
- 84% of Property Maintenance code violation notices resulted in compliance. Three violations were forwarded to the Law Department.
- One residential structure, deemed a public nuisance, was demolished. A fire damaged downtown building was cleaned up. One other non-residential nuisance situation has been forwarded to the Law Department.

- Property maintenance and weed violations were up significantly over previous years, most likely as a direct result of an increase in vacant and foreclosed upon homes. As in previous years, enforcement of weed notices was time consuming, and required the services of private contractors to abate 10 of the nuisances. Weed notices dominate summer month code activity. All but one property were eventually mowed by the owners, or abated by the City. The great majority were vacant properties/lots.

Every effort is made to achieve compliance with all code violation notices without utilizing legal avenues.

TABLE X
2008 CODE ENFORCEMENT COMPLIANCE

Type of Violation	Total Violations	Referred to Law Dept.	Resolved by Law Dept.	Abated by City	In Non-Compliance	*Total Resolved	Percent Resolved
Building	61	0	0	0	30	31	50%
Zoning	18	0	0	0	6	12	67%
Property Maintenance	50	3	1	0	8	42	84%
Public Nuisance	6	1	0	0	1	5	83%
Weeds	167	0	0	10	1	166	99%
Totals:	302	4	1	10	46	256	85%

* "Total Resolved" Includes cases abated by the City and those resolved by legal action.

GRANT ACTIVITY

The Building & Planning Department currently administers two types of grants funded by the CDBG Program:

- 1) **Small Cities Formula Grant:** – This grant is awarded annually based on a “formula” established by the Ohio Department of Development. This is a non-competitive grant meaning that the City will receive a predetermined allocation provided that a grant application is submitted by the established deadline and the proposed projects meet a national objective of the CDBG program. CDBG formula funds have been used for water, sanitary & stormwater upgrades, street and sidewalk improvement, and improvements to various parks.

- 2) **CHIP Grant:** CHIP stands for Community Housing Improvement Program. It is a competitive housing rehabilitation grant that provides various forms of housing assistance to qualified low and moderate-income residents. CHIP grant awards have ranged from \$450,000 to \$600,000. The City has been awarded CHIP grants in 1993, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007. Since 1993, CHIP grant funds in excess of \$3.2 million have been used to provide repair and rehabilitation assistance to more than 50 households throughout the City as well as assist low to moderate-income applicants purchase their first home.

CDBG funds can only be used to assist low to moderate income residents or those census tracts where 50% or more of the household are below the area’s median income. This is determined by census data. Table XI summarized grant activity undertaken in 2008:

**TABLE XI
GRANT ACTIVITY - 2008**

Grant Name	Funding Source	Activities Undertaken	Grant Funds Awarded/Spent*
FY2005 CHIP	CDBG/HOME	Rehabilitation of owner occupied and rental housing; down-payment assistance for first-time homebuyers; and emergency repairs for income-qualified home owners. The bulk of the funds were expended in 2007. Program was completed and “closed out” in 2008.	\$596,080/\$115,584
FY2007 CHIP	CDGB/HOME	Similar activities to the FY2005 CHIP (see description above). Project to be closed out in 2009.	\$605,400/\$266,810
FY2007 Formula	CDBG	Replacing and relocating a sanitary sewer in and around the Conval Building near the intersection of Main and Pine Streets.	\$57,000/\$55,300
FY2008 Formula	CDBG	Approved application includes funding for slum & blight clearance of properties on Main Street and \$10,000 for general planning activities for downtown. Project activities anticipated to begin in 2009.	\$58,000/\$0

*Most grants are multi-year projects. Not all funds are awarded are expended in the same calendar year.