

- AGENDA -

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION TO BE HELD AT THE WEST BRANCH CITY HALL, 121 N. FOURTH ST. ON TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023, BEGINNING AT 6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Public Hearing
- V. Additions to the Agenda
- VI. Public Comment – Agenda Items Only – 3 Minute Limit (general rule)
- VII. Approval of Minutes from February 21, 2023
- VIII. Site Plan review
- IX. Sign Permit
- X. Unfinished Business
- XI. New Business
  - A. Excuse member Fachting from February 21 meeting
  - B. Review of Annual Report
- XII. Communications
- XIII. Reports and/or comments
  - A. Chairperson Report
  - B. Member reports
- XIV. Public Comment – Any Topic – 3 Minute Limit (general rule)
- XV. Adjournment

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023.

Chairperson Cori Lucynski called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present: Bob David, Yvonne DeRoso, Josh Erickson, Mike Jackson, Cori Lucynski, and Rusty Showalter.

Absent: Kara Fachting

Others officers in attendance: Acting secretary/zoning administrator, John Dantzer

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All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**MOTION BY JACKSON SECOND BY DAVID, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETINGS  
HELD JANUARY 10, 2023 AND FEBRUARY 6, 2023.**

**Yes — David, DeRoso, Erickson, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter**

**No – None**

**Absent –Fachting**

**Motion carried**

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The Members watched the first part of a recorded webinar from the Michigan Association of Planners on the Planning Enabling Act as part of their annual training requirements. The Commission discussed when to hold the second portion. It was the consensus to watch the second portion during the April meeting as long as there wasn't much on the agenda for that night.

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Member Erickson discussed the lead service line replacement program going on throughout town.

Member DeRoso gave an update on the most recent EDC site selection committee meeting.

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Chairperson Lucynski closed the meeting at 7:56 pm

<u>Department</u>	<u>Project Description</u>	<u>Capital Costs</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>
Parks	Gathering place	\$400,000.00	\$400,000.00					
Parks	Irons Park ADA handicap addition	\$100,000.00				\$100,000.00		
Parks	Irons Park amphitheater	\$100,000.00			\$100,000.00			
Parks	Farmers Market	\$200,000.00					\$200,000.00	
Equipment	Backhoe	125,000.00		\$125,000				
Equipment	Generators at City Hall and PD	\$30,000.00						\$30,000.00
Equipment	Police Vehicle	\$150,000.00	\$50,000.00		\$50,000.00		\$50,000.00	
Equipment	Vactor Truck rebuild	\$100,000.00			\$100,000.00			
Equipment	Loader	\$150,000.00				\$150,000.00		
Streets	Wright St.	\$115,000.00	\$115,000.00					
Streets	Columbus	\$200,00.00				\$200,000.00		
Streets	N. 4th St.	\$200,000.00			\$200,000.00			
Streets	Progress St	\$250,000.00					\$250,000.00	
Streets	Houghton Ave streetscape	\$1,500,000.00		\$1,500,000.00				
Water	Houghton Ave. (Fairview to Court St.)	\$1,200,000.00		\$1,200,000.00				
Water	Iron Removal Plant	\$1,700,000.00		\$1,700,000.00				
Water/Streets	M-30 Development Extension	\$1,000,000.00		\$1,000,000.00				
Water	Tower Painting	\$200,000.00					\$200,000.00	
Water	Well 5 Rehab	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00					
Water	New water tower	\$2,000,000.00			\$2,000,000.00			
Water	Replace approx. 25,800lf aging main	\$6,500,000.00		\$2,250,000.00	\$2,250,000.00	\$2,000,000.00		
Water	Meter Change out	\$100,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00				
Sidewalk	Business loop sidewalk connection	\$55,000.00	\$55,000.00					
Water	Install new water main for looping	\$545,000.00		\$272,500.00	\$272,500.00			
Water	Install new meter to connect to Twp.	\$75,000.00		\$75,000.00				
Water	Install mixing valve in tower	\$50,000.00			\$50,000.00			
Sewer	Replace 4th St. river crossing	\$90,000.00				\$90,000.00		
Sewer	Repair manholes throughout City	\$100,000.00				\$100,000.00		
Storm Sewer	Replace undersized Storm sewer 4th St	\$1,000,000.00					\$1,000,000.00	
Water	Install water main to connect to Twp.	\$425,000.00		\$425,000.00				

We will need to Excuse member Fachting from the Feb 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. It was discussed during the meeting that she had called prior to the meeting to let me know that she was sick and unable to attend the meeting but we forgot to officially excuse her.



# 2022 Annual Report



# **City of West Branch Planning Commission**

## **2022 Annual Report**

### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS**

	<i>Term Expiration</i>
<b>Michael (Mike) Jackson</b> , Planning Commissioner	Council Term
<b>Corine Lucynski</b> , Planning Commissioner Chair	11/30/25
<b>Rusty Showalter</b> , Planning Commissioner	11/30/23
<b>Josh Erickson</b> , Planning Commissioner	11/30/24
<b>Kara Fachting</b> , Planning Commissioner	11/30/23
<b>Robert (Bob) David</b> , Planning Commissioner Vice Chair	11/30/25
<b>Yvonne DeRoso</b> , Planning Commissioner	11/30/24



# **Purpose of the Annual Report**

In accordance with Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, the City of West Branch's Planning Commission provides a written report to the legislative body on an annual basis. This report reflects the Planning Commission operations and the status of planning activities and includes recommendations regarding actions needed by the legislative body related to planning and development. The Planning Commission serves to promote orderly development within the City. The purpose of this annual report is to communicate to the governing body and the citizens of the City of West Branch the activities of the Planning Commission, and the status of planning within the City.

## **2022 Meeting Schedule**

Meetings are held at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at West Branch City Hall on the second Tuesday of the month, and fourth Tuesdays, as needed.

During the calendar year of 2022, the City of West Branch Planning Commission had meetings on the following dates:

- January 11th
- February 7th
- March 22nd
- April 12th
- May 10th
- July 12th
- September 13th
- September 27th
- October 11<sup>th</sup>
- November 9<sup>th</sup>

## **What is Zoning**

Zoning is the public regulation of land use; it is the division of a community into districts or zones and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings. The regulations are found in the text of the zoning ordinance and the accompanying zoning map. The City of West Branch adopts local zoning codes to enforce regulations to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. The authority to adopt zoning is granted to local units of government through the state legislature via the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, set forth at MCL 125.3101, *et. seq.*

Zoning is adopted and enforced to ensure that natural resources are protected, to prevent nuisances, to ensure land use compatibility, to prevent overcrowding and to prevent the overuse of land. Zoning codes adopted must also conserve property values and natural resources.

## **Duties of the Planning Commissioners**

The Planning Commission is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Master Plan. The Master Plan identifies the current zoning districts and the future zoning districts as well as the goals and vision for the community. In addition, the Planning Commission is the authority in charge of approving special land uses, site plans, all land developments and provides recommendations to the legislative body on planning and zoning amendments and re-zoning requests. The Planning Commission is also tasked with the development of the Capital Improvement plan. The Planning Commission meets the second Tuesday of each month, and also meets the fourth Tuesday of each month when there is business to conduct. Regular meetings are held in the Council Chambers at West Branch City Hall, 121 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St., West Branch, MI 48661 at 6:00 PM. Special meetings are held at various times to accommodate the requests before the Commission. All meetings are open to the public and are posted on our City website at [www.westbranch.com](http://www.westbranch.com).



## **Planning Commission Members**

The City of West Branch Planning Commission is made up of seven (7) members, serving three (3) year terms [with the exception of the City Councilmember representatives on the Commission, who serve as long as their Council term]. The seven members are appointed by the Mayor of the City of West Branch, subject to approval by a majority of the City Council. The membership has adopted By-Laws and Rules of Procedure, which outline their operations. Residents wishing to serve as Planning Commission Members may submit an application to the City of West Branch Clerk and said applicants will be considered as terms expire and/or when an opening has occurred. The makeup of the City of West Branch Planning Commission during the 2022 calendar year was as follows:

Name	Segment	Phone	Term Expiration	Email
Mike Jackson	Government	(989) 345-0500	Council Term	jacksonwbcouncil@westbranch.com
Corine Lucynski	Health	(989) 345-0500	11/30/22	lucynskiwbplanning@westbranch.com
Josh Erickson	Education	(989) 345-0500	11/30/24	ericksonwbplanning@westbranch.com
Rusty Showalter	Recreation	(989) 345-0500	11/30/23	showalterwbcouncil@westbranch.com
Yvonne DeRoso	Transportation	(989) 345-0500	11/30/24	derosowbplanning@westbranch.com
Kara Fachting	Residential	(989) 345-0500	11/30/23	fachtingwbplanning@westbranch.com
Bob David	Industrial/ commerce	(989) 345-0500	11/30/22	davidwbplanning@westbranch.com

## **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEMBERS**

The Zoning Board of Appeals is responsible for hearing appeals on administrative planning and zoning decisions and/or Planning Commission decisions. They are the final board of appeal within the City. All meetings are public and are scheduled as needed. There was one (1) Board of Appeals meeting in 2022. The Board reviewed and updated new bylaws. Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals include:

Name	Office	Phone	Term
Kara Fachting	Chair, Planning Commission	(989) 345-0500	Planning Term
Mike Jackson	City Council Member	(989) 345-0500	Council Term
Jozann Burgin	Member	(989) 345-0500	08/15/25
Thom Jones	Member	(989) 345-0500	08/15/24
Glenda Colclasure	Member	(989) 345-0500	08/15/23



## **Training of Planning Commissioners in 2022**

- Rusty Showalter attended the MML conference.
- Because of the amount of business that had to be taken care of during the 2022 calendar year, including the update required for the zoning ordinance to allow for marihuana facilities, the Commission was not able to complete any group trainings during the year. The Commission will look to hold training sessions hosted by the Michigan Association of Planners during 2023.

## **Development Reviews by Planning Commission in 2022**

Site Plan Review	Riegle Exteriors	Commercial building	Approved with conditions	4/12/22
Site Plan Review	GLD Management	Approve site condo plan change	Approved as submitted	9/13/22
Site Plan Review	Dr. Mark Lewandowski DDS	Addition to dental office	Approved with conditions	9/27/22
Special Use	Dr. Mark Lewandowski DDS	Addition to dental clinic in the CBD district	Approved	9/27/22
Site Plan Review	Brian Rang	Changes to plan for storage facility	Approved as submitted	9/27/22
Special Use	Dr. Mark Lewandowski DDS	Additional Addition to dental clinic in the CBD district	Approved	11/9/22
Site Plan Review	Dr. Mark Lewandowski DDS	Additional addition to dental office	Approved with conditions	11/9/22

## **Variances by Planning Commission in 2022**

Sign Variance	Dunham's Sporting Goods	Height and size variance	Approved as submitted	7/12/22
Sign Variance	Ace Hardware	Size and digital sign variance	Approved as submitted	10/12/22

## **Actions by Legislative Body in 2022**

- The Commission reviewed the zoning ordinance and developed changes to account for the allowance of marijuana related businesses in the City. The public hearing to take comment on the changes was held on March 22<sup>nd</sup> during a special meeting. After the close of the public hearing, the Commission approved the recommendation of Ordinance 22-01 of 2022 to incorporate marijuana facilities into the City. The ordinance was officially enacted by Council on April 18<sup>th</sup> with it taking effect on May 4<sup>th</sup>. A summary of the changes to the zoning ordinance was as follows:
  - Section 2.2: (Specific Terms): Additions and changes to definitions.
  - Section 4.7 (Office Service District): Add provision center, marihuana retailers, and marijuana safety compliance facility to the table of permitted uses and special land uses.
  - Section 4.9 (General Business District): Add provision center and marihuana retailer to the table of permitted uses and special land uses.
  - Section 4.10 (Industrial District): Add provision center, marihuana retailer, marihuana grower, marihuana processor, and marihuana secure transporter to the table of permitted uses and special land uses.
  - Section 4.11 (Full Table of Permitted & Special Land uses): Changes to the Full Table of Permitted & Special Uses to include all of the above additions.
  - Section 7.26 (Marihuana Facilitates and Establishments) Changes to the General Standards and Submission requirements.

## **Master Plan**

The Planning Commission completed an update to the Master Plan with the assistance of Denise Cline of the North East Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG). The final draft was approved by Council on March 4, 2019. The annual review of the Masterplan was completed on April 12<sup>th</sup>. A summary of the changes was as follows:

- Remove Chris Powley and Tiffany Schmieder-Kups from the City Council member list and add Carol Adair and Rusty Showalter.
- Remove Tiffany Schmieder-Kups from the Planning Commission member list and add Josh Erickson.
- Change Action Items 2,4, and 4.5 to ongoing.
- Change Action Items 3.14, 3.15, 5.6, 5.10, and 5.11 to complete.

## **6-Year Capital Improvement Plan**

The annual review of the CIP plan was completed on May 10<sup>th</sup>. A summary of the approved changes was as follows:

- Change the Gathering Place expected year of completion from 2021-2022 TO 2023-2024
- Remove Pocket Park bathroom upgrades from the list.
- Change Irons Park handicap area addition from 2022-2023 TO 2024-2025
- Remove addition of bucket truck from the list of equipment as it has been purchased.
- Remove pickup trucks from the list of equipment as they have been purchased.

- Remove 2021 purchase of police vehicle as it has already been purchased.
- Remove safe routes to school from list as it is no longer being considered.
- Change Wright St. expected year of completion from 2022-2023 TO 2023-2024.
- Change Columbus St. expected year of completion from 2021-2022 TO 2022-2024.
- Change business loop expected year of completion from 2020-2021 TO 2022-2023.
- Change Progress St expected year of completion from 2021-2022 TO 2022-2024.
- Change M-30 development expected year of completion from 2020-2021 TO 2022-2023.
- Change well #5 rehab expected year of completion from 2021-2022 TO 2023-2024.
- Add 2023 and 2024 to expected year for meter change out.

## **Community Vision**

Over the next 20 years, the City of West Branch will continue to develop a broader array of services available to residents, businesses, and tourists—with the aim of making West Branch a great place to live, work and play—while still maintaining West Branch’s small-town charm and original Americana hometown atmosphere. In working towards meeting these goals, the City of West Branch Planning Commission will continue to do all it can to improve the City of West Branch, by promoting a desirable residential community, making available a range of housing options, supporting a mix of both small and mid-sized businesses that serve residents and visitors alike, while also working to expand employment opportunities for residents of the City and the region as a whole. Parks and cultural facilities will be expanded, improved, and beautified. The City will continue to work with neighboring communities to provide more efficient services and improved facilities. In addition, the City will also work to maximize the potential of the great entrepreneurial spirit of the hardworking people in our region, as well as the enormous natural beauty that surrounds our area in abundance.

### **GOAL 1: REDEVELOP THE CITY’S DOWNTOWN INTO A REGIONAL SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION**

The City of West Branch Planning Commission, in collaboration with the City of West Branch Downtown Development Authority, City Council, the City Downtown Retail Merchants Association, and City Administration, as well as the Ogemaw County Economic Development Corporation and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation continue to make strides in this area, working towards projects such as a downtown gathering park.

### **GOAL 2: PROMOTE THE GROWTH OF INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE CITY AND SURROUNDING AREAS**

In 2016, with the support of the Planning Commission, as well as the City Industrial Development Corporation, the City Council for the City of West Branch implemented additional programs centered on allowing tax abatements to encourage development in the City of West Branch Industrial Park. In 2019, the City purchased a seven-acre vacant lot with the intention to expand the size of the park. The lot is currently being marketed to potential businesses. During 2022, the City welcomed the addition of a commercial building in our office/service park to house the State USDA and Social Security offices.

### **GOAL 3: ENCOURAGE MORE DIVERSE TYPES OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS**

In 2019, through the Project Rising Tide program, a target market analysis was completed and reviewed by the West Branch Planning Commission to help identify areas of need in housing in our community. In 2019, the City purchased vacant land off of M-30 and issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), looking for



developers to work with the City on a housing development. A developer was approved and during 2020, the City has continued to work with the developer with a ground breaking planned for 2022. Because of rising construction costs and supply chain issues, the development was pushed off until 2023.

#### **GOAL 4: IMPROVE CITY STREETS**

The City of West Branch Planning Commission, in conjunction with assistance from City Administration and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), is working to develop a comprehensive, multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for City Streets. This plan will continue to be worked on with a long-range focus on the reconstruction of Houghton Ave which was originally scheduled for 2023 and pushed back to 2024 due to supply chain issues. In 2022, the City replaced State St and a portion of N. First St.

#### **GOAL 5: IMPROVE CITY WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

The City began plans and applied for grants to build a new water treatment facility along with the drilling of an additional well. The City is hoping to release the request for bids during the 2023 calendar year. The City also began working with Fleiss and Vandenbrink engineering for the replacement of the main water line running under Houghton Ave that will coincide with MDOT's road reconstruction project scheduled for 2024. With the assistance from City Administration, the City Planning Commission continues to work on Water Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which is a requirement of the Michigan Environmental, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). The City also began work on replacing lead and galvanized service lines through out town. The City will look for grants to help update old, undersized, and failing water mains throughout the City.

#### **GOAL 6: IMPROVE CITY SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE**

The City Planning Commission with the assistance from City Administration, continues to work on the CIP or AMP for sewer infrastructure for the City of West Branch. The City is continuing to look at storm sewer concerns on N. Fourth St.

#### **GOAL 7: IMPROVE CITY NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

The City completed a major sidewalk replacement program of four blocks in the downtown area. The City is currently looking at the addition of a sidewalk that will connect the City's sidewalks to West Branch Townships sidewalks in 2023. This will allow for a complete non-motorized path that will connect the commercial area of West Branch Township to the City's downtown and commercial areas.

#### **GOAL 8: REDEVELOP EXISTING RESIDENTIAL HOUSING WITHIN THE CITY**

Started in 2016, the City Planning Commission continues to work with City Administration, City Council and the City's Third-Party Housing Administrator, to offer to all City residents, opportunities for free or low-interest programs to redevelop existing residential housing within the City limits, if the applicants met low-income requirements. In 2021, a grant was obtained to help cover repairs needed for homes for low income residents. The plan was extended into 2022.

#### **GOAL 9: AMEND ZONING CODE TO ALLOW FOR DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT, & INCREASED INVESTMENT**

The City of West Branch Planning Commission along with the Recreation Committee is scheduled to work on updating the current Recreation Plan to account for changes in the plan since its last update in 2014. The plan should be ready for approval in the beginning of 2023. The Commission completed an amendment to the zoning code to allow for marihuana related businesses.

#### **GOAL 10: PLAN FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND PROVISION OF CITY SERVICES**

The City of West Branch Planning Commission will continue to work on this issue more closely with City Administration in 2023



## **2022 Year in Review Summary**

The Commission's main project was the development and approval of an addition to the zoning code to allow for marihuana facilities within the City. The Commission also reviewed and make changes to the Masterplan and Capital Improvement plan. The Commission will continue their ambitious plans to work towards achieving the ten goals listed above.

- The City Planning Commission continued work towards the implementation of the Redevelopment Ready Communities program guidelines, pursuant to the Resolution of Participation in the RRC Program that was passed by the Planning Commission in November of 2015.
- The Planning Commission continued to hold joint annual meetings with both City Council and the DDA.
- The Planning Commission made changes to the zoning ordinance
- The Planning Commission reviewed and made changes to the Masterplan and Capital Improvement Plan.