



**City of St. Joseph Michigan
Planning Commission
Annual Report
Calendar Year 2022**

**Approved February 2, 2023 by
City of St. Joseph Planning Commission**

Background.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires the Planning Commission to complete a report annually to the City Commission discussing three specific areas. Following are the three reporting areas and the Planning Commission's report for 2021

- A. The operations of the Planning Commission during the past year.
- B. The status of any ongoing planning activities.
- C. Recommendations regarding City Commission actions related to planning and development.

On January 5, 2023, the City of St. Joseph Planning Commission reviewed the draft Annual Report. After finding it to be appropriate, they directed staff to forward the finalized document to the City Commission.

Planning Commission Membership, Attendance and Training.

In 2022, all meetings were held in person after remote meetings in 2020 and a portion of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the February meeting did not take place due to a snow storm, the August meeting was cancelled due to no agenda items and the November meeting did not take place due to a lack of quorum.

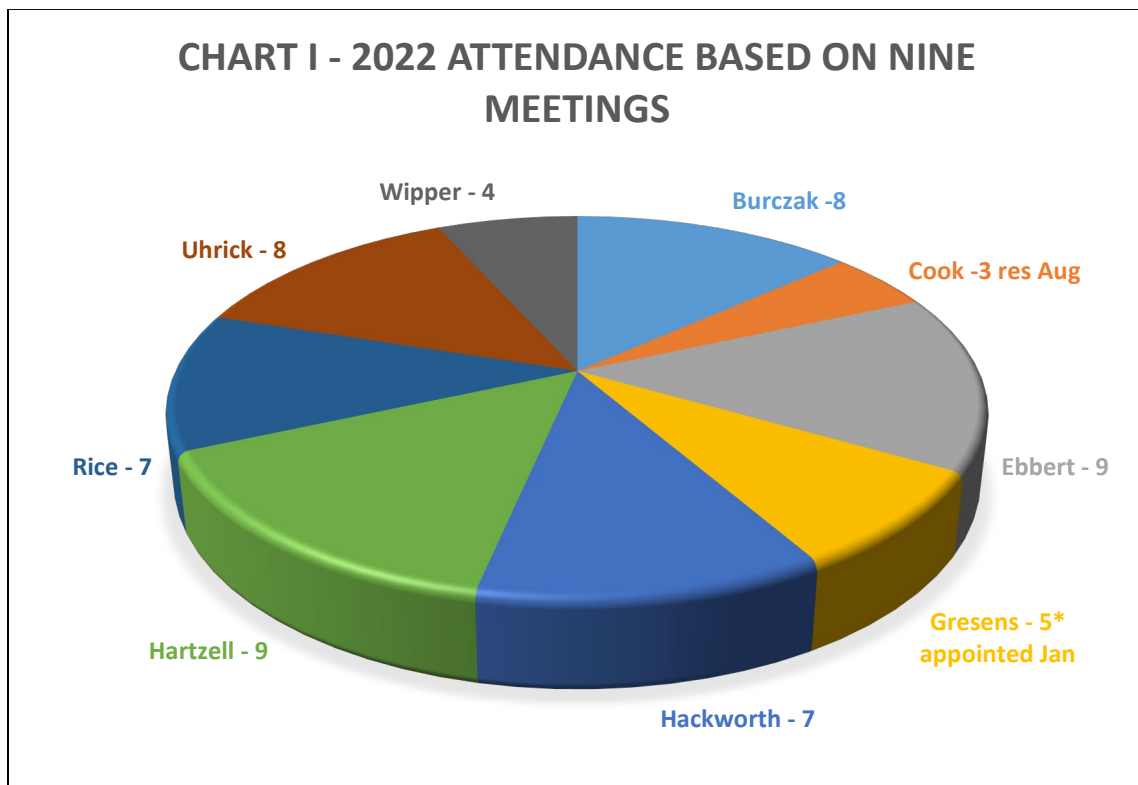
During portions of 2022 there have been two separate vacancies on the Planning Commission. Richard Gresens was re-appointed by the City Commission in January and attended his first meeting in February. Mr. Gresens previously served on the Commission in 2017 and 2018. Bridget Cook resigned due to moving out of town in August 2022. Work continues to fill the vacancy.

During the annual organizational meeting in June, Ms. Hartzell was re-appointed to serve as Chair for the 2022-2023 term and Mr. Hackworth was appointed to be the Vice Chair.

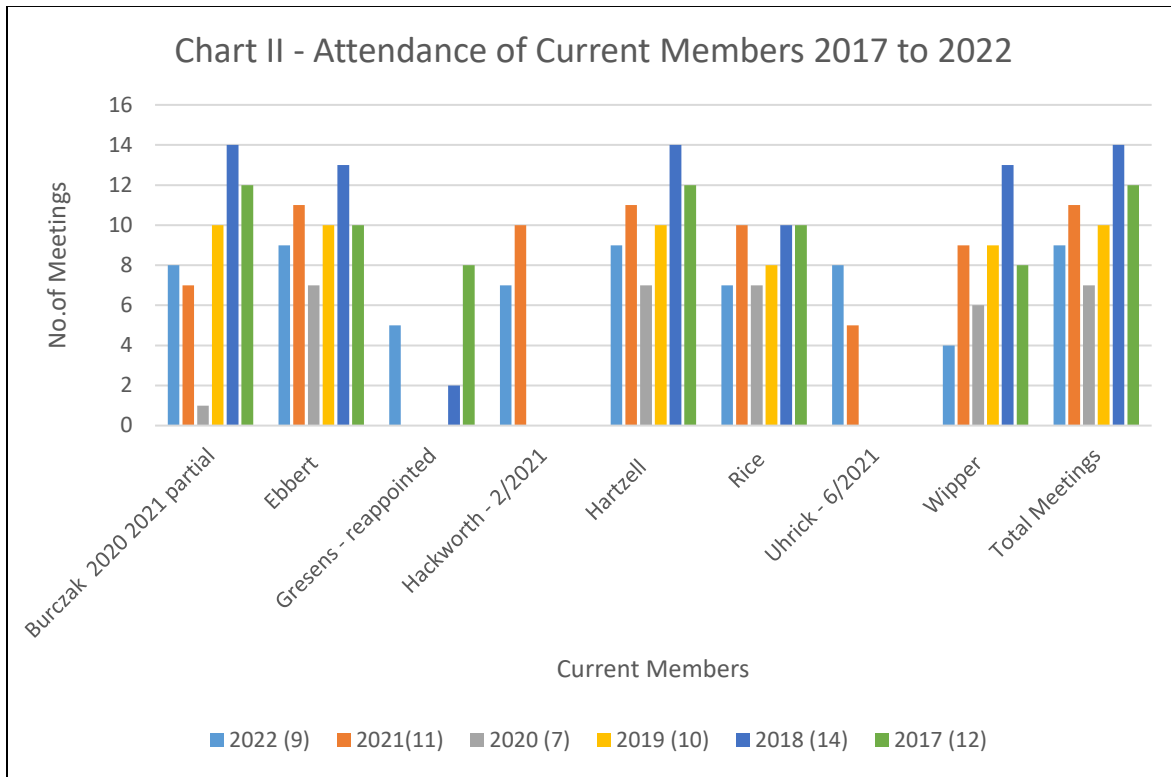
The nine meetings ranged from 0.5 to 1.75 hours for a total of 12.75 hours over the calendar year. Planning Commissioners spend additional time reviewing the agenda packets prior to the meeting and visiting the site. The overall member meeting attendance rate for the year was approximately 81%. Staff was informed of absences prior to the meeting.

Below is a list of the members with attendance rate, appointment dates, years of service and term expiration dates.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Attendance</u> 2022	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Years' Service</u> as of Dec 2021	<u>Term</u> <u>Expires</u>
Kathy Burczak	89%	4/2021	9 (includes previous)	2024
Sean Ebbert	100%	3/2007	15	2025
Richard Gresens (Feb 2022)	83%	1/2022	4 (includes previous)	2024
Thaddeus Hackworth	78%	1/2021	2	2025
Patsy Hartzell (<i>Chair</i>)	100%	7/1985	37	2023
Becky Rice	78%	2/2006	16	2025
Anthony Uhrick	89%	5/2021	2	2024
Ceile Wipper	44%	3/2017	6	2023
Vacant				2023
Resignations during 2022				
Bridget Cook	100%	1/2021	1	2023



Below is Chart II which depicts attendance for the current members since 2017. It shows that members are consistently attending meetings and understand the commitment when accepting appointments.



All members of the Planning Commission are encouraged to participate in additional learning opportunities. In past years, on-site training has been provided through the Michigan Association of Planning, unfortunately no on-site training was provided in 2022. All members have completed the MSUE Citizen Planner course. Money is budgeted annually for members to complete additional training. There are several organizations that provide on-line training free of charge or at reduced rates. In addition, many previously recorded training opportunities can also be found on YouTube for viewing.

Ms. Burczak has maintained her designation as a Master Citizen Planner through Michigan State University Extension and is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Educational opportunities in 2022 included: Southwest Michigan Coastal Leadership Academy (January and February 2022 – 9 hours); Design Professional Liability Education Program – Dynamic Delegation and Feedback (May 2022); From Local to Global: Examining the Different Scales of Resilient Design (September 2022); Reinvented America’s Public Spaces (October 2022) and Japanese Knotweed Phragmites – Invasive Species Identification, Removal Decontamination Etc (2022).

Staff Support and Packet Creation.

In 2022 the Planning Commission was staffed by Kristen Gundersen, Community Development Director/Zoning Administrator; Laurie Schmidt, City Attorney; Trudy Wilder, Building Official, Tony Riegel, Building Inspector before he left the city in August 2022 and a new Building Inspector Caleb O'Toole, who joined the city October 2022.

All packets were created using the Granicus Legislative Management Software. Once completed, packets were typically delivered to each member the Friday before the scheduled meeting and are posted to the City of St. Joseph's "Public Hub" website section the Monday before the meeting. By utilizing the software-package it has allowed for the packets to be available to the public prior to the meeting in an easily searchable format that also includes the City Commission packets and other appointed Boards and Commissions.

The Community Development Director/Zoning Administrator attended the following training and workshops:

1. Indiana State Floodplain Virtual Annual Conference in September 2022. Obtained continuing education credits necessary for designation as a Certified Floodplain Manager.
2. Michigan Downtown Association Virtual Spring Workshop in March 2022.
3. Michigan Association of Planning – State Conference in October 2022. Obtained continuing education credits necessary for AICP membership and moderated a session.
4. Michigan Downtown Association State Conference, virtual conference in November 2022 in Detroit.
5. Completed the Asset Management Champion Program through the Michigan Infrastructure Council in July 2022.
6. In addition, numerous other virtual webinars to maintain membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners, Certified Floodplain Managers and to gain additional knowledge regarding downtown development.

The City Attorney attended the Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys Winter Board Retreat along with the Advanced Institute and the Government Law Section Summer Conference. In addition, the Risk Management Planning of Special Events and Risk Transfer and Insurance Requirements for Property Leasing/Rental sponsored by the MMRMA. Obtained Level II Certification from the Michigan Association of Public Employees Retirement Systems and attended both the Spring and Fall Conferences. Attended webinars on diverse topics including mental health issues in the workplace, employee benefits, tax tribunal and sign regulations.

The Building Official and Inspector attended several on-line training opportunities. In person annual training held by the State of Michigan to help obtain continuing education credits was attended as necessary. In November 2022, the new Building Inspector received the Certified Commercial Building Inspector designation and has also completed the Citizen Planner class.

2022 Planning Commission Meeting Information and Agenda Items.

During 2022, the Planning Commission reviewed 5 requests. In addition, the Planning Commission began discussions regarding draft language associated with access and parking in the Zoning Ordinance along with solar energy and green/vegetative roofs.

Following is Chart III which lists the different types of action items along with special projects the Planning Commission reviewed in 2022.

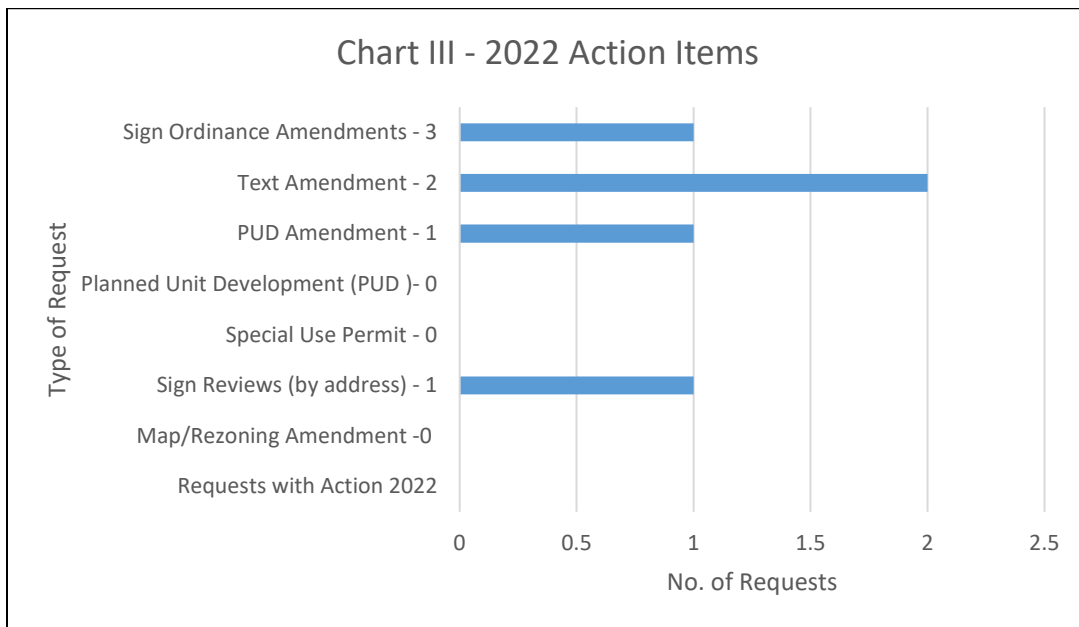
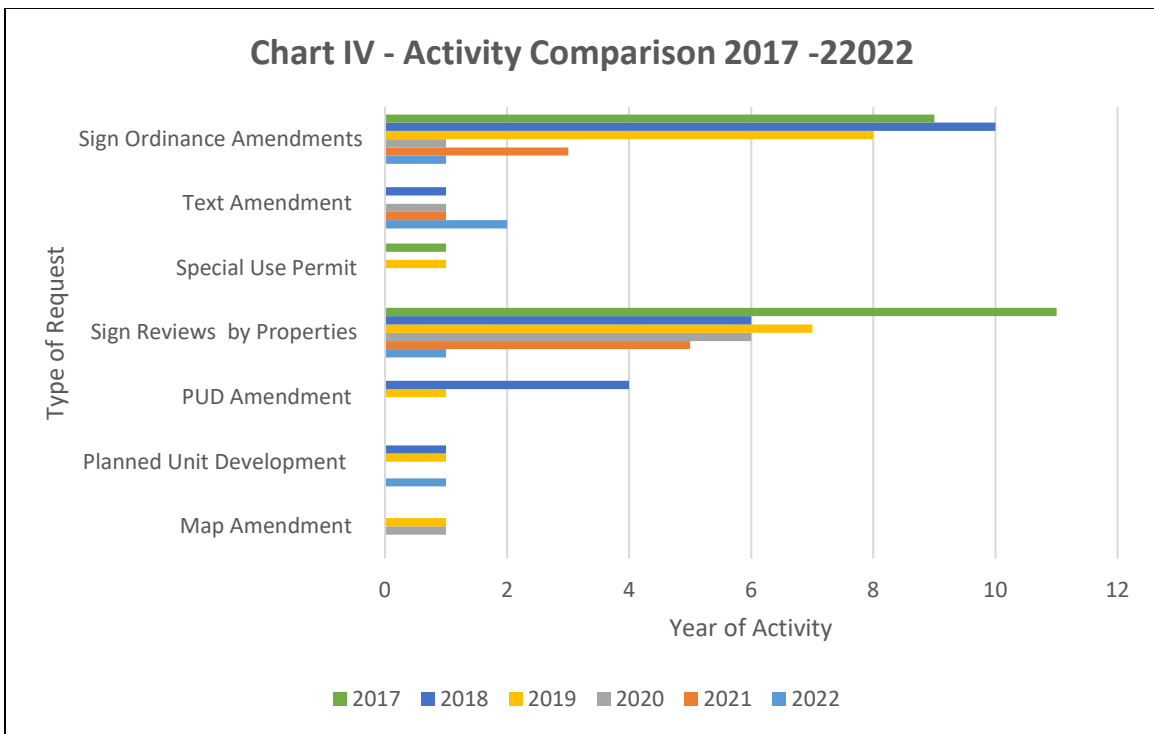


Chart IV provides a comparison of activity from 2017 – 2022. It appears that the number of requests being processed has remained relatively consistent over the last six years with the number of sign requests decreasing from highs in 2017, 2018 and 2019 all prior to the new Sign Ordinance being adopted in early 2020.



Following is a complete list of the applications acted upon in 2022. This list provides the address, applicant name, brief description of request, month of review and action taken by the Planning Commission. While the Planning Commission had few requests from property or business owners, several meetings were used to discuss pending text amendments.

Map Amendment (rezoning).

No requests.

Planned Unit Developments.

No requests.

Planned Unit Development – Amendments.

- Major Amendment to the 2000 S State Street PUD (Chapin Blvd) specifically to increase allowable lot coverage for 558 Chapin Blvd. Planning Commission recommended approval of the request on March 3, 2022. *City Commission approved the request on March 28, 2022.*

Special Use Permits.

No requests.

Text Amendment – Zoning Ordinance.

- Sections 2.3 and others along with Figure 2-8A associated with Corner Lots and Secondary Corner Lots. City of St. Joseph was the applicant. Planning Commission recommended approval on March 3, 2022. *City Commission approved first reading of the ordinance on March 14, 2022 and second reading of the ordinance on March 28, 2022.*

- Section 3.10 regarding allowance for stair and landing projections. City of St. Joseph was the applicant. Planning Commission recommended approval on January 6, 2022. *City Commission approved first reading of the ordinance on March 14, 2022 and second reading of the ordinance on March 28, 2022.*

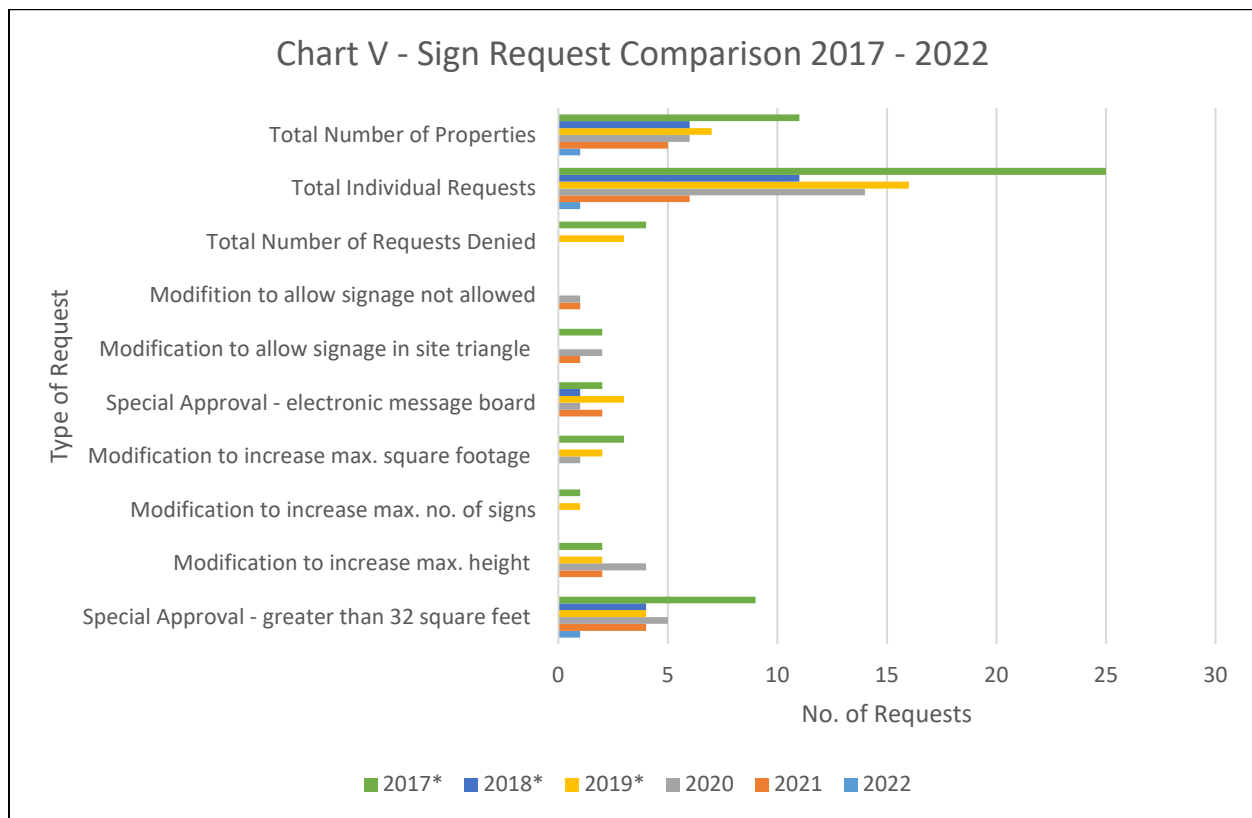
Text Amendment – Sign Ordinance.

- Chapter 25 Signs of Code of Ordinances changes associated with Storefront, secondary business as it relates to permitting requirements for wall and sandwich signs. Planning Commission recommended approval June 2, 2022. *City Commission approved first reading June 13, 2022 and second reading June 27, 2022.*

Sign Modifications and Special Sign Approvals (regulations found in Code of Ordinance).

- 2900 Lakeview – Area Agency on Aging – Special Approval of a Sign Greater than 32 sf (41.71 sf) and approval of – *Approved with July 7, 2022 with conditions.*

Following is Chart V, a comparison of sign requests from 2017 to 2022. The comparison does not reflect all types of requests prior to the adoption of the Sign Ordinance in January 2020.



Future Activities for 2023.

In addition to the applications submitted for review and action by the public and development community, the Planning Commission will continue working on the tasks found in the 2016 Master Plan. Future planned activities include:

1. Review of the Zoning Ordinance in the area of access management and parking; landscaping, buffering and fencing; and green infrastructure; and other areas as determined necessary.
2. Based on preliminary conversations, City staff believes there will be more property or business owner requests in 2023 than requests made in 2022 which will take priority with the Planning Commission.