



**TO:** Charlotte Planning Commission

**FROM:** Bryan Myrkle, Community Development Director

**SUBJECT:** 2022 Annual Report

**DATE:** January 12, 2023

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*The following is a basic report of activities of the Planning Commission and Zoning Administration for the year 2022 as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.*

### **Planning Commission**

- The City of Charlotte Planning Commission held 10 meetings in 2022. This is the highest number of meeting for this body in several years. Attendance by members was consistent, and with a full or nearly-full slate of Commissioners, there were no issues related to quorums or the ability to conduct business.
- Activity highlights for this past year include site plan approvals for Meijer and Hutson, a comprehensive sign plan approval for a commercial property at 328 Lansing Street, lot combinations on Court Street and West Seminary Street, a rezoning action at 243 State Street, several ordinance revisions, and a dedicated training session in March.

### **Zoning & Code Administration**

- City staff worked with the Planning Commission and City council to update several sections of the City Code, including those dealing with signs, home occupations, fences, medical marijuana production, and property maintenance.
- City staff processed approximately 80 applications for zoning approval for those projects that require a building permit from Eaton County. This is a significant increase from the year before, when staff processed approximately 50 zoning referrals for permitting.



- Staff also processed approximately 45 zoning applications for projects like small sheds and fences that do not require additional permitting. This is also an increase from 2021.
- City staff assigned new or changed street addresses for four properties.
- The City of Charlotte added a new, 30-hour per week staff position – Code Enforcement Officer. The opening was filled by Cheri Cummings who has worked in this capacity for approximately one year.
  - In 2022, Ms. Cummings worked to address a total of 256 code complaints. 195 of which were successfully closed without punitive enforcement. 61 of the complaints remain open after a minimum of two contacts. In 10 cases, Code Enforcement issued civil infraction tickets. In 8 of those cases, the situation remains unresolved and they have been turned-over to the City Attorney’s office for possible court action. In 9 cases that involved abandoned or non-running, non-registered vehicles, the police department issued tickets.
  - Ms. Cummings has identified 22 vacant homes she believes need attention. One of our goals for 2023 will be to make contact with these property owners, have them register the properties with the police department and determine their plans. Some may have to be dealt with through the City’s dangerous buildings ordinance.
  - There were 36 cases of garbage, refuse or other abandoned items left at the curb. The items are tagged and if not taken care of in 24 hours, they are removed and the property owner charged for the expense.
  - Code enforcement condemned 3 houses for uninhabitable conditions. All three homes have since been purchased and are being repaired for future occupation. In these cases, Ms. Cummings works closely with other agencies to find help and resources that can be used to avoid this circumstance.
- A related activity to Code Enforcement is the creation of a Residential Rental Registration and Inspection program. This is administered by Rental Inspector Patrick Kanuszewski. This is also a 30-hour per week position that began a few weeks after the Code Enforcement program.

- Mr. Kanuszewski has worked to establish contact with all landlords who own residential rental property in the City of Charlotte; and to register and inspect their rental units. The purpose of the program is similar to Code Enforcement, in the sense that it is intended to address negative property conditions.
- After approximately one year, Mr. Kanuszewski has successfully registered nearly every known rental unit in the City. We are down to a small handful of landlords who have thus far refused to cooperate. Those will be addressed by the City Attorney's office and the courts.
- Ms. Cummings and Mr. Kanuszewski often work collaboratively to address problem properties that are rentals. Typically, Mr. Kanuszewski is addressing interior issues and Ms. Cummings exterior issues.
- Ms. Cummings and Mr. Kanuszewski have set a goal for 2023 of facilitating meetings for local landlords with the hope that a local landlord network can be created to help them address issues of common concern, and to help identify resources and opportunities that may be helpful to them.
- Funds raised by residential rental registrations are used to fund both the Rental Registration program and Code Enforcement program.
- With these two major new initiatives launched in late 2021 or early 2022, it is safe to say that all employees within the Community Development Department learned a tremendous amount and will be able to use that experience to improve these programs moving forward.

## **Recommendations**

*The Charlotte Planning Commission makes the following recommendations for the upcoming year.*

- Continue to provide training for Planning Commissioners.
- Maintain a full membership of the Planning Commission.
- Initiate an update to the City's Master Plan