



City of Wooster
Planning and Zoning Division
2019 Annual Report

January 10, 2020

Summary

The City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Division continued to facilitate and guide development in 2019. The division worked to efficiently review and process permits, assist Planning boards and commissions, enforce the regulations of the Planning and Zoning Code, and effectively conduct significant planning projects. Highlights for the Planning and Zoning Division in 2019 include:

- Continued assistance to the Planning Commission, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals and Design and Review Board in their review of applications and a reconfiguration of meeting dates and times for 2020.
- The allocation of additional staff time for the enforcement of the Planning and Zoning Code resulting in a 70% increase in Zoning Enforcement cases.
- The adoption and implementation of updates to the Planning and Zoning Code and the processing, assistance and evaluation of property owner initiated amendments to the Zoning Map.
- The coordination of a number of significant projects reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals and/or Design and Review Board, including:
 - A 53 acre commercial development on Burbank Road, north of Smithville Burbank Road (Preliminary Approval)
 - A 52 unit Multi-Family building on Akron Road (Final Approval)
 - A 290 unit Multi-Family Development on West Milltown Road (Preliminary Approval)
- The attainment of the division's Goals for 2019.

Planning Projects

The Planning and Zoning Division worked on the following significant planning projects in 2019:

1. **Planning and Zoning Code Amendments** – In June of 2018, an amendment updating the City's entire Planning and Zoning Code and Zoning Map was adopted by City Council based on a recommendation to adopt by the Planning Commission. The 313-page Code incorporated many substantive and organizational changes from the previous code.

In late 2018 and 2019, staff identified a number of necessary amendments to the recently adopted Planning and Zoning Code. Needed changes included alterations, clarifications, corrections, and other similar items. The Division worked with the Planning Commission and City Council to adopt the amendments to the Planning and Zoning Code in 2019.

2. **Board and Commission Meeting Consolidation** – In the past, the three City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Boards and Commission have met at staggered intervals throughout the month. The regular monthly meeting dates had been the first Thursday for the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals, second Tuesday for the Design and Review Board, and fourth Wednesday for the Planning Commission.

In 2019, staff worked with the Boards and Commission to gain acceptance of a change to their meeting schedules in order to hold all meetings on a single night each month in 2020. The meeting format had the following identified benefits to both applicants and staff:

- Applicants that must receive approval from multiple Boards and Commission would only need to be present for one evening. Certain applications, particularly for larger projects, often had multiple individuals present who may or may not be from the Wooster area.
- Applications would be reviewed in a more expedited manner. When multiple Board and Commission approvals are needed, an applicant would not be required to wait until the next meeting date for review of their application.

- Administrative costs would be reduced by combining public hearing notices when applications must go before multiple Boards and Commission.
- Meeting dates, deadlines and notice requirements would be in a more simplified and manageable schedule. Rather than nine different dates spread throughout each month, there would be one meeting date, one deadline date and one notification date. This format would reduce staff time, the duplication of efforts and the possibility for administrative errors.

In late 2019, the Planning Commission and Design and Review Board adopted the proposed schedule to have meetings on one night a month. The Board of Building and Zoning Appeals did not meet in December of 2019, but the adoption of the meeting schedule occurred in early 2020.

- 3. Rezoning Applications** – In 2019, there were two Zoning Map Amendment applications submitted by property owners which facilitated development and redevelopment in the City of Wooster. The Planning and Zoning Division worked extensively with applicants and consulted other City divisions to evaluate, revise, and guide the following significant Zoning Map Amendment applications:
- 22 acres on Old Mansfield Road designated as I-2 (General Industrial) upon annexation into the City.
 - 0.14 acres on East Vine Street from R-T (Traditional Residential) to I-3 (Urban Industrial) to allow the expansion of an existing local business.

The noted Amendment applications were unanimously approved by City Council based on unanimous recommendations of approval from the Planning Commission.

Development Projects

There were a number of significant residential, commercial and industrial developments initiated in the City of Wooster in 2019. The following projects were assisted by the Planning and Zoning Division and approved by one or more of the aforementioned Boards and Commissions:

- 1. Burbank Road Commercial Development** – A Preliminary Development Plan was approved for a 53 acre commercial development on Burbank Road, north of Smithville Western Road. The project requires Final Development Plan review, which is anticipated to occur in 2020.
- 2. Akron Children’s Hospital** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a 15,195 sq. ft. medical office building on Friendsville Road. The project is anticipated to be completed in early 2020.
- 3. Akron Road Apartments (Workforce Housing)** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a 52 unit Multi-Family building on Akron Road. The project is anticipated to begin construction in early 2020.
- 4. West Milltown Road Apartments (Market Rate)** – A Preliminary Development Plan was approved for a 290 unit Multi-Family Development on West Milltown Road. The project requires Final Development Plan review, which may occur in early 2020.
- 5. Buckeye Corrugated Addition** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a 17,500 sq. ft. addition to Buckeye Corrugated on Long Road. The completion of the project is anticipated in mid-2020.
- 6. Downtown Projects**
 - Renovations and the expansion of second-floor apartments at 230 South Market Street.
 - Demolition of the condemned former Horn Nursing Home on North Market Street to facilitate private redevelopment.

- Demolition of dilapidated buildings on East Henry Street and South Bever Street to allow future expansion of City facilities and the demolition of structures on East South Street to accommodate a future public parking lot.
- The location of a number of new businesses including A Time to Craft, Graham and Burns, Undergrounds Café, Farmers State Bank, Your Pizza Shop, and Salsarita (opening early 2020).

Projects approved in 2018 that were under construction in 2019 include a Western Reserve Group expansion on Benden Drive, event center buildings at the Wayne County Fairgrounds, a Holiday Inn Express on Riffel Road, an AEP facility on Long Road, an Aldi on Burbank Road, and the re-utilization of a warehouse/office building on Old Mansfield Road.

Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits

A total of **205 Zoning Certificates** were issued in 2019, which was slightly less than the 230 issued in 2018. Of the issued Certificates, the majority were related to single-family residential projects. Zoning Certificates were issued for **75 new residential units** in 2019 including 11 new single-family homes, 12 condominium units and 52 apartment units. A total of \$6,215 in Zoning Certificate fees was collected in 2019.

In 2019, **75 Sign Permits** were issued in the City of Wooster, the same number as in 2018. A total of \$6,200 in Sign Permit fees was collected.

A further breakdown of Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document.

Board of Building and Zoning Appeals

The Board of Building and Zoning Appeals (BZA) heard **21 requests** in 2019 encompassing a variety of topics. Of the 20 applications in which a decision was made, the BZA approved 19 applications and denied 1 application. 18 area variance requests and 4 use variance requests were heard by the BZA in 2019 (some applications included both an area and a use variance).

BZA Decrease in Applications

In 2019, there was a **significant decrease** in applications to the BZA from recent years. In the past five years the BZA has heard 37 (2015), 42 (2016), 56 (2017), 42 (2018), and 21 (2019) applications. Though 2019 included slightly less development than recent years, staff's account for the notable decrease in applications is the implementation of the comprehensively amended Planning and Zoning Code. The effective Planning and Zoning Code appears to have reduced the number of unnecessary and redundant variances and allowed staff to exercise flexibility when reviewing development applications.

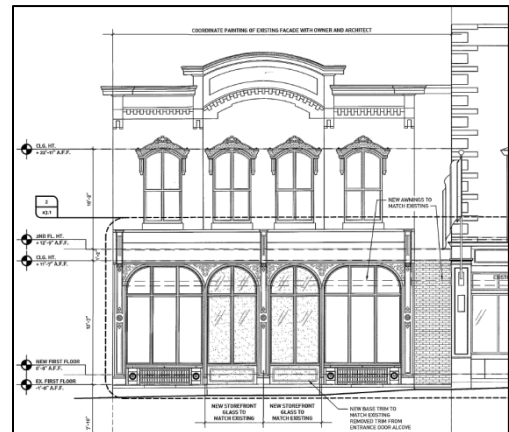
A further breakdown of BZA applications can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document.

Design and Review Board

The City of Wooster Design and Review Board heard 40 requests in 2019. In 2018, the Board heard 37 requests. The Design and Review Board approved all requests, at times with modifications or conditions.

Of the 40 requests heard by the Board in 2019, 21 were for signs. The remainder of the applications included considerations such as building demolitions, new building construction, exterior changes to building facades, and miscellaneous changes to features such as lighting, windows, doors, and awnings.

A further breakdown of Design and Review applications can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document.



Planning Commission

The City of Wooster Planning Commission heard 21 requests in 2019, down from 29 in 2018. Planning Commission applications included:

- 11 Development Plan applications
- 4 Zoning Code or Map Amendment applications
- 4 Conditional Use applications
- 2 Major Subdivision application

The Planning Commission approved all requests, at times with modifications or conditions.

A further breakdown of Planning Commission applications can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document.

Zoning Enforcement

A total of 201 Planning and Zoning Code violations were addressed in 2019, which was a 70% increase from the 118 violations cited in 2018. The majority of the issues addressed were related to parking surfaces, parking on lawns, construction without a Zoning Certificate, parking of recreational vehicles or trailers, and illegal or unpermitted signs. In addition, the inspector also removed numerous signs located in the public right of way. As there was no formal notification or inspection logged in such instances, the removal of signs in the public right of way was not captured in the above figures.

Increase in Zoning Enforcement

The **significant 70% increase** in Zoning Enforcement cases can be attributed to increased focus on Planning and Zoning Code enforcement by a new full time Property Maintenance/Zoning inspector, Mark Wilson, hired in January of 2019. In addition, the Division worked with the City's Law Department to create a more expedited process for prosecuting unresolved violations.

A further breakdown of Zoning Enforcement can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document.

Status of 2019 Goals and Objectives

The following indicates the status of the Planning and Zoning Division's goals and objectives established for 2019:

Goal 1 – Attend the American Planning Association (APA) National Conference, other available training and meet AICP certification requirements throughout the year

- Objective 1A – Complete training to meet all of the AICP maintenance requirements for the current two-year session by the end of the year.
- Objective 1B – Attend training throughout the year including the APA National Conference and training provided by the Ohio Section of the American Planning Association.

Status – Training was attended to satisfy AICP maintenance requirements. The APA National Conference was attended and various other training opportunities were completed.

Goal 2 – Create bylaws for the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals, Design and Review Board and Planning Commission

- Objective 2A – Work with a consultant to create draft bylaws.
- Objective 2B – Incorporate feedback from Board and Commission members.
- Objective 2C – Adopt bylaws by the end of May.

Status – The Planning and Zoning Division worked with Compass Pointe Planning to create bylaws with input from Board and Commission members. All bylaws were adopted by March of 2019.

Goal 3 – Evaluate the updated Planning and Zoning Code and bring necessary changes and revisions to the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption

- Objective 3A – Maintain a list of all needed changes and revisions to the code.
- Objective 3B – Draft a documenting including all necessary amendments to the code.
- Objective 3C – Adopt amendments of the Planning and Zoning Code by the end of the year.

Status – Amendments to the Planning and Zoning Code were drafted and reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council. The amendments were adopted in October of 2019.

Goal 4 – Transition the anticipated new Zoning Inspector with little interruption in efficiency

- Objective 4A – Work with the new Zoning Inspector to ensure they are aware of their duties and comfortable in the workplace.
- Objective 4B – Communicate with the Building Standards Division to refine responsibilities and coordinate efforts.

Status – The Planning and Zoning and Building Standards Divisions worked to transition Mark Wilson to the Property Maintenance/Zoning Inspector position. Mark inspected numerous properties in the City in 2019 and addressed many violations.

Goal 5 – Work with the Building Standards Division and Police Department to evaluate public parking downtown

- Objective 5A – Conduct a parking survey to assist in assessing the parking permit program by July.
- Objective 5A – Evaluate current public parking need, restrictions and signage.
- Objective 5B – Implement any necessary changes by the end of September.

Status – A parking survey was conducted by the Planning Intern in the summer of 2019. The study showed the program was successful and efficiently regulating parking downtown. An adjustment was made to allow all day parking in the North Street lot and remaining spaces in the South Market Street lot.

2020 Goals and Objectives

In 2020, the Planning and Zoning Division will continue to guide development and sensibly regulate land use. The following goals and objectives for 2020 and in the next five years through 2024 will allow the division to better serve citizens and business owners, operate more efficiently, refine responsibilities, and update planning documents.

One Year Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 – Attend the American Planning Association (APA) National Conference, other available training and maintain AICP certification requirements throughout the year

Objective 1A – Complete training to meet half of AICP maintenance requirements for the first year of the current two-year session by the end of the year.

Objective 1B – Attend training throughout the year including the APA Ohio Conference and training provided by the APA.

Goal 2 – Work with Wayne County to contribute to the 2020 Census and a County Land Bank

Objective 2A – Attend Census Complete the Count training by the end of January.

Objective 2B – Attend County Census committee meetings and take necessary actions to promote an accurate census count through June.

Objective 2C – Provide feedback and data as needed to assist the establishment of a Land Bank by the end of the year.

Goal 3 – Facilitate the incorporation of the Design and Review Board, Planning Commission and Board of Building and Zoning Appeals into one night per month.

Objective 3A – Facilitate adoption of Boards and Commission meeting schedules by the end of January.

Objective 3B – Each month, coordinate and adjust meeting times to provide the most efficient schedule.

Objective 3C – Work with applicants to provide the most expedited review of applications with projects being reviewed on one meeting night, if possible.

Goal 4 – Improve the Zoning Code and Property Maintenance enforcement process

Objective 4A – In ViewPoint Cloud, revise the input form to allow easier input by inspectors and increase the simplicity of violation letter creation by March.

Objective 4B – Work with the Law Department throughout the year to prosecute unresolved violations.

Goal 5 – Improve Efficiency of Conducting Inspections for Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits

Objective 5A – When inspections are requested, conduct inspections within 24 hours.

Objective 5B – When inspections are not requested and an inspection date is estimated, conduct inspections within one week of estimated inspection date.

Objective 5C – Close out all pending Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits by the end of the year.

Five Year Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 – Continue attendance at training and certification opportunities

Objective 1A – Maintain AICP certification, which includes yearly training requirements in specific areas such as Law and Ethics.

Objective 1B – Attend training including regional, state, and national conferences.

Goal 2 – Coordinate with other agencies

Objective 2A – Work with other area governmental agencies to forward City goals, share resources, and facilitate intergovernmental coordination.

Objective 2B – Work with non-governmental agencies and nonprofits agencies to benefit the community.

Goal 3 – Refine responsibilities of division staff

Objective 3A – Work with the Administrative Assistant, Planning and Zoning Enforcement Inspector and Residential Zoning Inspector to refine responsibilities based on workload and changing conditions.

Objective 3B – Incorporate the use of the ViewPoint Cloud permitting system in future matters, when advantageous. Incorporate input from staff regarding the use of ViewPoint Cloud and possible improvements or revisions.

Goal 4 – Conduct a detailed land use analysis report by the end of 2022

Objective 4A – Select a consultant to conduct a land supply and demand analysis.

Objective 4B – Work with the consultant, City staff, area agencies, and the public to identifying current land supply, demand for residential and nonresidential land uses, and forecast future growth.

Objective 4C – Create a land use analysis report by the end of 2022.

Goal 5 – Initiate an update of the Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2023

Objective 5A – Determine if a full update or a revision of the plan is necessary.

Objective 5B – Select a consultant for the project with the assistance of other City Staff.

Objective 5C – Initiate an update of the plan by the end of 2023.

Appendix – Tables and Charts

Table 1: Planning and Zoning Applications 2019

Month	Zoning Certificates	Sign Permits	Minor Subdivisions	Building & Zoning Appeals	Design & Review	Planning Commission	Total
January	9	5	4	2	3	3	26
February	5	4	4	2	4	1	20
March	12	4	2	1	3	1	23
April	22	5	3	1	3	2	36
May	24	6	2	2	3	5	42
June	22	11	4	4	1	0	42
July	24	9	1	3	4	4	45
August	16	7	1	0	4	2	30
September	16	5	5	2	2	0	30
October	19	11	3	1	1	2	37
November	12	3	1	3	7	1	27
December	24	5	4	0	5	0	38
2019 Applications	205	75	34	21	40	21	396
2019 Fees	\$6,215	\$6,200	\$775	\$2,100	\$0	\$2,400	\$17,690
2018 Applications	230	75	22	42	37	29	435
2018 Fees	\$7,655	\$6,475	\$500	\$4,100	\$0	\$3,050	\$21,780

Chart 1: Planning and Zoning Applications 2019

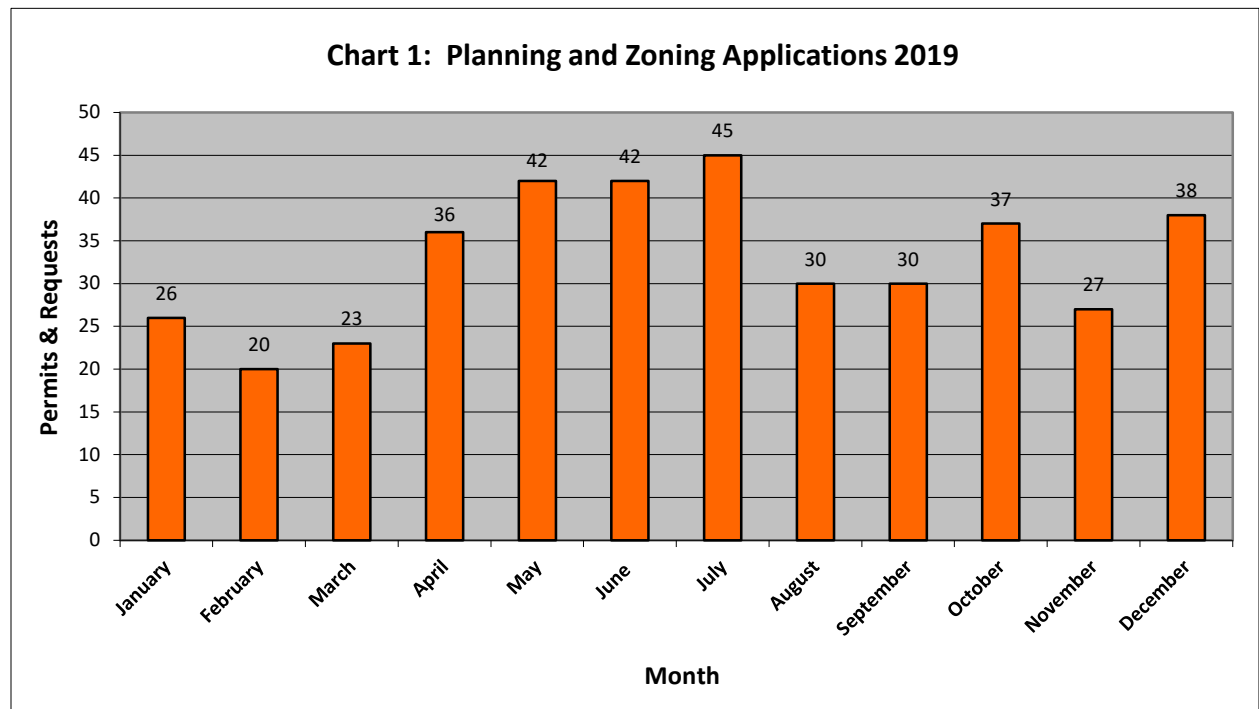


Table 2: Planning and Zoning Applications 2009-2019

Year	Zoning Certificates	Sign Permits	Minor Subdivisions	Building & Zoning Appeals	Design & Review	Planning Commission	Boards & Commissions	Total
2010	219	92	-	20	31	16	67	378
2011	169	90	-	24	35	17	76	335
2012	161	68	-	19	25	24	68	297
2013	187	58	-	33	25	26	84	329
2014	208	104	15	29	49	40	118	445
2015	207	73	14	37	38	24	99	393
2016	216	102	26	42	60	31	133	477
2017	229	100	35	56	41	25	122	486
2018	230	75	22	42	37	29	108	435
2019	205	75	34	21	40	21	82	396
Total	1,826	762	97	302	341	232	957	3,575
Average	183	76	24	30	34	23	96	358

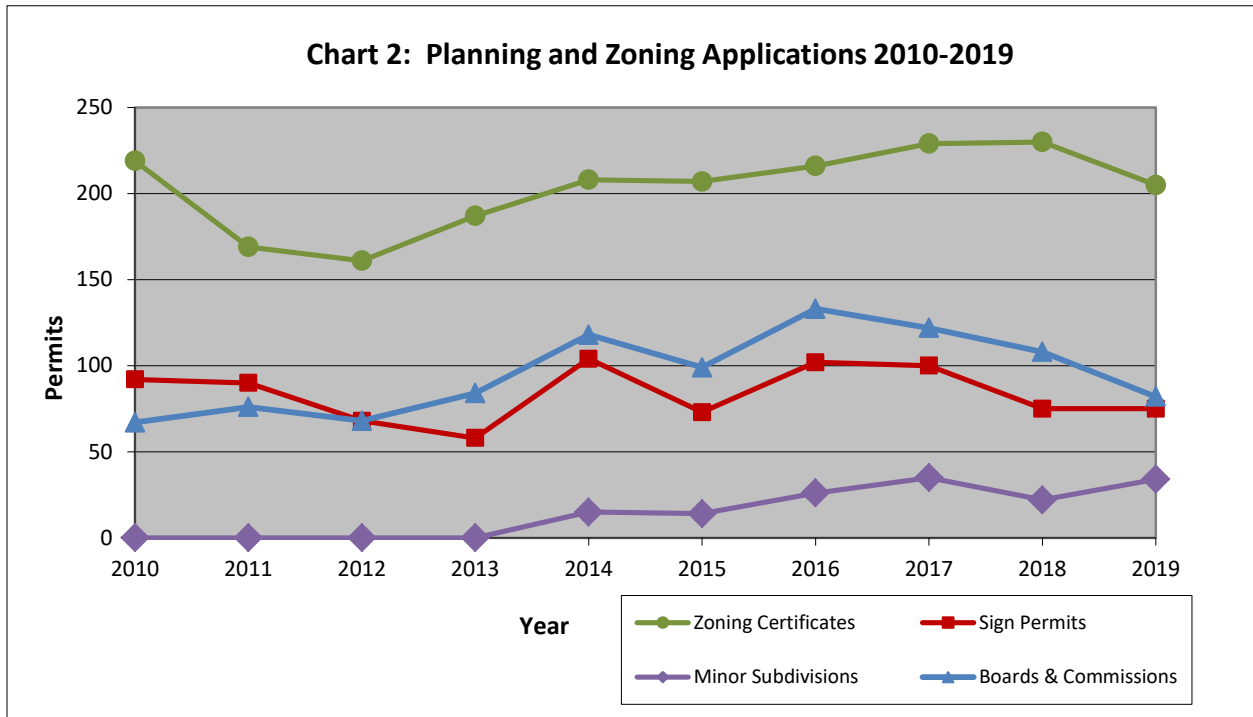


Chart 3: Board and Commission Requests 2010-2019

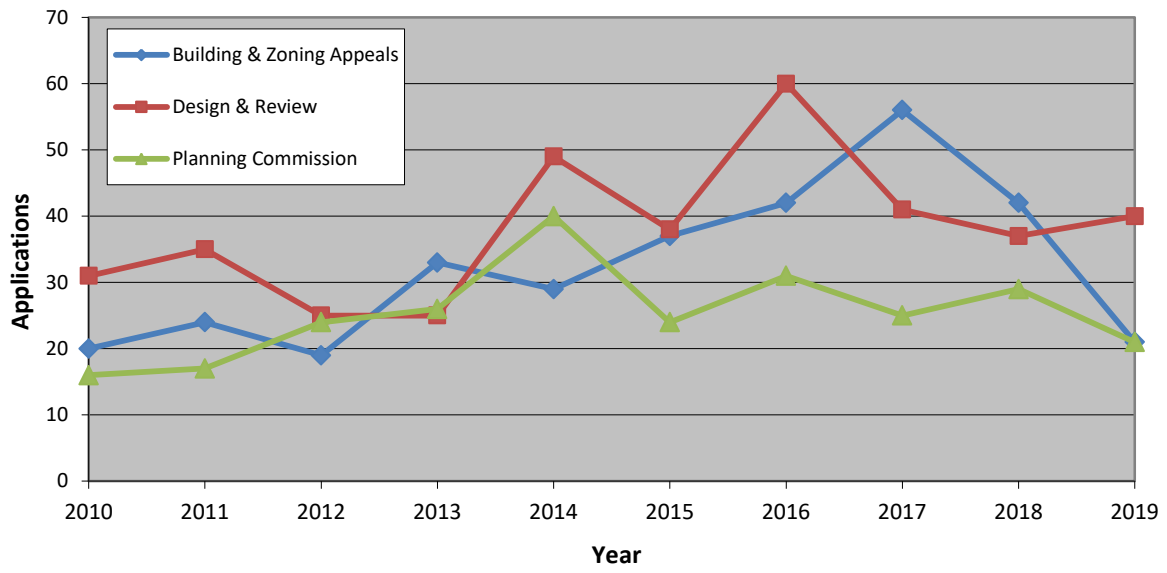


Table 3: Zoning Violations 2019

Violation	Number
Parking Lot Surface	35
Parking on Lawn	31
Zoning Cert. Required	26
Accessory Structure	15
Recreational Vehicle/Trailer	15
Signs	14
Use of Property	13
Nuisance	3
Other	49
Total	201

Chart 4: Zoning Violations 2019

