

CITY OF WOOSTER

DIVISION OF PLANNING/ZONING

2011 Annual Report



Merchant's Block

Prepared by:  
Rebecca Leitschuch, AICP  
City Planner

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## 2011 Zoning Activity

Commercial Permits – 68

Residential Permits – 101

Design and Review Board Applications – 36

- Signage - 17
- Building - 14
- Noteworthy
  - Historic Sloane home renovation started
  - Amster Frick building renovation
  - Merchants Block reapproval
  - St. Paul Hotel renovation
  - Landmark districts added new properties

Planning Commission Applications - 21

- Conditional Use – 4 (1 tabled)
- Development Plan Review - 10
- Subdivision Review- 2
- Planned Development Overlay District - 2
- Zoning Change – 3 (1 withdrawn)
- Noteworthy
  - Tartan Ridge PDOD
  - Merchant's Block
  - Wooster Products expansion
  - Games of Skill (increasing trend in C-5 District, temporary moratorium enacted by City Council on November 7, 2011)
  - College of Wooster Armstrong addition and amphitheater
  - Wooster Hospitality Partners

Board of Zoning Appeals – 24 (1 denied, 3 withdrawn)

- Noteworthy
  - Multiple requests for parking space reductions from 10' to 9' width
  - Multiple requests for allowing minor additions to homes in nonresidential districts
  - Expansion of manufactured home denied
  - Micro brewery approved in downtown
  - Community garden

Sign Permits – 88

- Consider requiring permits for temporary signage again (currently no effective way to enforce illegal temporary signage).

Revision to Planning and Zoning Code - In addition to the above activity, the department has been continuously working on a review of the Planning and Zoning Code, as adopted in 2007. We will present these revisions to Planning Commission in 2012 for their input and approval, and then to City Council. While our current code is an excellent document, we now have enough working experience with the guts of the document to identify small sections throughout that need adjustments. Some of these result from requests by the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals, some are minor corrections of word choice or spelling, and others are to provide further clarification to identified sections.

Certified Local Government (CLG) – We have rewritten the Landmark Ordinance, which controls the exterior appearance of buildings and sites and demolition plans in one of the three Landmark Districts, or for buildings independently designated. It prescribes how to nominate a building, site, or district to the list of landmarks. It also explains the role of the Design and Review Board and authorizes them to review signage in the appropriate district. Staff has nearly completed our final revision of the updated ordinance prior to sending it to the Design and Review Board for their comments, and later to City Council. Staff will propose to extend the downtown design review district further east so as to provide better architectural and design guidelines for future redevelopment. The proposed expansion reflects our downtown revitalization plans, and incorporates requests from Main Street Wooster, the Design and Review Board, and local developers. We must revise our Landmark Ordinance to meet the qualifying factors of a CLG, which will grant Wooster access to Federal funding made solely available to CLGs through the State Historic Preservation Office. It also gives us direct access with the state offices and the National Park Service for technical advice and provides the City more discretion when reviewing building plans for landmark properties.

TCSP Discretionary Grant – We applied for a Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP) grant, focusing on developing a multi-modal city-wide transportation plan. The grants will be awarded in June of 2012.

C-4 Design and Review Board Recommendation – We are enforcing section 1141.11 of the code which was added in 2007. It stipulates that any exterior change requiring a zoning certificate must attend Design and Review Board for their recommendation based off of criteria found in this section. Their recommendation is to be used by Planning Commission or the Zoning Administrator depending on the scale of the project.

Board Workshops – Held workshops for Planning Commission, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals, and Design and Review Board. The goal was to provide them with some basic history of their board in the larger field of planning and zoning, answer any questions, review procedures for public meetings and hearings, and make sure they comply with state law.

Scarlet Gray and Green Fair – Participated in fair at OARDC/ATI.

2010 US Census - Prepared ward population information from 2010 US Census data for City Council and Law Director to review when determining need for redistricting.

Appearances - Spoke about planning and zoning at College of Wooster, Wooster High School, Cornerstone Elementary, Women's Network "Lunch with a Notable Woman."

Anticipating New Ordinances –

Games of skill. A moratorium was enacted by City Council on November 7, 2011, not to exceed 180 days. The purpose of the moratorium was to allow the City ample opportunity to research and develop adequate land use regulations for this new use. Also, a bill was proposed at the state legislature which may make proposed city land use regulations obsolete. Things to consider adding to conditions are hours of operation, parking distance between similar businesses, and perhaps a substantial registration fee to monitor the legality of these businesses.

Mixed use zoning. There is an increasing need for mixed use development in our community. Commercial districts, beyond the C-4 District, may want to build new developments with living accommodations above the ground floor. While we may allow for this with a Planned Development Overlay District, by creating a general mixed use overlay district we could allow independent buildings to create these mixed uses instead of entire developments.

Sign picture inventory. Will need to perform inventory of all illegally installed signs, and legal nonconforming signs. Come 2022, all nonconforming signs will be required to come into compliance with current code.