



***City of Wooster
Planning and Zoning Division
2020 Annual Report***

January 26, 2020

Summary

The City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Division continued to facilitate and guide development in 2020. The Division worked to efficiently review and process permits, assist Planning boards and commissions, enforce the Planning and Zoning Code, and effectively conduct significant planning projects. Highlights for the Planning and Zoning Division in 2020 include:

- Continued operations throughout the Covid-19 pandemic with the implementation of measures to ensure the safety of Division employees. In 2020, the Division remained open and available to customers, experienced no delays in review times or inspections, and virtually conducted Board and Commission meetings.
- The consolidation of Design and Review Board, Planning Commission and Board of Building and Zoning Appeals meetings to a single evening each month to the benefit of applicants, the public and Division staff.
- The participation of the Division in numerous Countywide projects and boards including the Wayne County Land Bank, Wayne Trails Committee and the Wayne County Complete the Count Census Committee.
- The coordination of several significant projects reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals and/or Design and Review Board, including:
 - A 33,000 sq. ft. addition to the existing Daisy facility
 - A 16,000 sq. ft. office building for Rea and Associates and the construction of 10 condominiums on North Market Street
 - Major renovations to the Lowry Center and additional parking at the College of Wooster.
 - A 20,500 sq. ft. warehouse for Certified Angus Beef on Riffel Road and a 17,100 sq. ft. warehouse on Akron Road.
- The attainment of the Division's Goals for 2020.

Planning Projects and Operations

The Planning and Zoning Division worked on the following significant planning projects in 2020:

- **Covid-19 Operations** – In 2020, Covid-19 spread throughout the world and became a public health emergency. All facets of typical daily life were affected, including the City's Planning and Zoning Division operations. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Division:
 - Protected employees by following City of Wooster and Wayne County Health Department policies and guidelines.
 - Remained open and available to customers and experience no delays in review times or inspections.
 - Continued to process administrative applications and safely conduct inspections through the City's Online ViewPoint Cloud permitting system and the use of Zoom.
 - Conducted live virtual meetings of the Design and Review Board, Planning Commission, and Board of Building and Zoning Appeals. The virtual meetings allowed the Boards and Commission to meet and safely consider applications in a timely manner. The public was also welcome to participate in meetings via YouTube and submit comments prior to meetings.
- **Board and Commission Meeting Consolidation** – In the past, the three City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Boards and Commission 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 2020, the meeting format was changed to hold all three City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Boards and Commission meetings on the first Thursday of the month. The revised format resulted in the following benefits:

- Applicants requiring approval from multiple Boards and the Commission only needed to present for one evening. In addition, there were occasions where an attorney representing different applications benefited from having the meetings on the same evening.
 - Applications were reviewed in a more expedited manner as an applicant was not required to wait until the next meeting date for review of their application.
 - Administrative costs were reduced as public hearing notices were combined each month for the Boards and Commission.
 - Meeting dates, deadlines and notice requirements were simplified and conducted in a more manageable schedule. Rather than nine different dates spread throughout each month, there was a one meeting date, one deadline date, and one notification date for each meeting. This format reduced staff time, the duplication of efforts and the possibility for administrative errors.
- **Residential Development Handout & New Business Guide** – In 2020, the Division created two documents to facilitate residential and commercial/industrial development. Both documents were distributed to interested parties and are currently available on the City of Wooster website at <https://www.woosteroh.com/planning/planning-documents-maps-and-examples>.
 - Residential Development Handout – In response to documented demand for new residential development and redevelopment, the Planning Division created a residential development handout. The handout outlined recent residential trends in the City of Wooster and provided an analysis of areas with potential for residential development.
 - Quick Guide for New Businesses – A guide was created for new businesses locating in the City of Wooster occupying a tenant space or requiring minor alterations. The handout addressed processes and requirements from the City’s Planning and Zoning, Building Standards, Fire, and Economic Development Divisions and the Wayne County Health Department.

Development Projects

There were several significant residential, commercial and industrial developments initiated in the City of Wooster in 2020. The following projects were assisted by the Planning and Zoning Division and approved by one or more of the aforementioned Boards and Commissions:

- **Daisy Additions** – A Final Development Plan was approved for additions of 23,000 sq. ft. and 10,000 sq. ft. to the existing facility on Daisy Way. The completion of the project is anticipated in mid-2021.
- **Lowry Center Addition/Reconstruction/Parking** – A Final Development Plan was approved for additions and the reconstruction of portions of the Lowry Center on Beall Avenue and a new parking lot on East University Street. The project is anticipated to be initiated in early 2021.
- **Certified Angus Beef Warehouse** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a new 20,500 sq. ft. warehouse on Riffel Road. The completion of the project is anticipated in early 2021.
- **Akron Road Warehouse** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a new 17,100 sq. ft. warehouse on Akron Road. The completion of the project is anticipated in early 2021.
- **Caliber Collision** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a new 12,500 sq. ft. auto body repair business on Akron Road. The completion of the project is anticipated in early 2021.
- **Tartan Ridge Final Phase** – A Final Subdivision Plat was approved for five lots in a cul-de-sac configuration at the end of Lochwood Glen. The project is anticipated to be platted in early 2021.

- **Unitarian Fellowship Additions** – A Final Development Plan was approved for 4,600 sq. ft. of additions to the fellowship on Burbank Road. The completion of the project is anticipated in mid-2021.
- **Downtown Projects**
 - A new 16,000 sq. ft. office building for Rea and Associates and 10 condominiums on North Market Street and North Walnut Street.
 - Building renovations at Farm Credit Mid America on West Liberty Street and Mairs Veterinary Hospital on West Liberty Street.
 - A new public parking lot on East South Street.
 - The location of several new businesses including Boo Bear’s Brews, The Leaf, Wippt, and Addison Scott Hair Company.

Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits

A total of **234 Zoning Certificates** were issued in 2020, which was slightly more than the 205 issued in 2019. Of the issued Certificates, the majority were related to single-family residential projects. Zoning Certificates were issued for **34 new residential units** in 2020 including 16 new single-family homes and 18 condominium units. A total of \$7,010 in Zoning Certificate fees was collected in 2020.

In 2020, 47 **Sign Permits** were issued in the City of Wooster, which was less than the 75 Sign Permits issued in 2019. A total of \$3,725 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 **26 requests** in 2020, encompassing a variety of topics. Of the 26 applications in which a decision was made, the BZA approved 22 applications and denied 4 applications. The BZA heard 25 area variance requests, and 2 use variance requests and 1 appeal in 2020. (some applications included both an area and a use variance).

BZA Decrease in Applications

From 2013 to 2018, the BZA reviewed an average of 40 applications per year. In the past two years, the BZA has heard 21 (2019) and 26 (2020) applications. 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 **31 requests** in 2020. In 2019, the Board heard 40 requests. The Design and Review Board approved all requests, at times with modifications or conditions.

Of the 31 requests heard by the Board in 2020, 14 were for signs. The remainder of the applications included new buildings, demolitions, additions, 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 received **23 requests** in 2020, up from 21 in 2019. Planning Commission applications included:

- 12 Development Plan applications
- 6 Conditional Use applications
- 2 Zoning Code or Map Amendment applications
- 1 Major Subdivision application
- 2 withdrawn applications

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 **101 Planning and Zoning Code violations** were addressed in 2020. The total is significantly less than the 201 violations addressed in 2019, however, the number is in line with the 118 violations addressed in 2018. In addition, due to an interdepartmental promotion of a Division employee, a full-time Property Maintenance/Zoning inspector was not available for the first half of 2020.

The majority of the issues addressed in 2020 were related to parking of recreational vehicles/trailers/commercial vehicles, parking surfaces, construction without a Zoning Certificate, chickens and roosters, and illegal or unpermitted signs. In addition, staff 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.

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

Status of 2020 Goals and Objectives

The following indicates the status of the Planning and Zoning Division's goals and objectives established for 2020:

Goal 1 – Attend the APA Ohio 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.

Status – Training was attended to satisfy half of the AICP maintenance requirements. The APA Ohio Conference was attended virtually and various other training opportunities were completed.

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.

Status – Planning and Zoning Division staff was involved in the Wayne County Complete the Count Census Committee and attended numerous meetings. The Division led the committee's efforts to involve to School Districts in Wayne County. The Planning and Zoning Division also participated in creating the Wayne County Land Bank and was appointed to the Land Bank's Board.

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.

Status – All Board and Commission meetings were held on the same night every month in 2020 without issue. The Boards and Commission met via Zoom for the majority of 2020, which did not result in the delay of the review of any applications.

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.

Status – Zoning Code and Property Maintenance input forms were revised for easier use. The Planning and Zoning Division also worked with the Law Director and Deputy Director of Law on code enforcement matters.

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.

Status – Inspections were conducted within 24 hours of their request and unscheduled inspections were conducted promptly. All outstanding Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits were closed out or otherwise addressed by the end of the year.

2021 Goals and Objectives

In 2021, the Planning and Zoning Division will continue to guide development and sensibly regulate land use. The following goals and objectives for 2021 and in the next five years through 2025 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 training from the American Planning Association (APA) and other related training throughout the to maintain AICP certification requirements

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

Objective 1B – Attend training throughout the year, which may include the APA Ohio Conference, APA National Conference and other available opportunities.

Goal 2 – Revise the City of Wooster Bike Path Plan (2015)

Objective 2A – Identify areas of the plan in need of updating by July.

Objective 2B – Create a draft of the revised plan by September.

Objective 2C – Produce a final revised Bike Path Plan by the end of the year.

Objective 2D – Receive feedback and guidance from the Bike Wayne Committee and other City Divisions throughout the process.

Goal 3 – Work with Wayne County to advance the County Land Bank and review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster

Objective 3A – Attend regular Land Bank meetings throughout the year and advance the acquisition of qualifying properties in Wayne County and the City of Wooster.

Objective 3B – Provide technical assistance to the Land Bank, as needed.

Objective 3C – Work with the Wayne County Planning Department to review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster, as needed.

Goal 4 – Refine and improve the virtual meeting format for Board and Commissions

Objective 4A – Become proficient with utilizing Zoom, including the use of screen sharing, break-out rooms, and other tools by April.

Objective 4B – Communicate all correspondence received from the public to Boards and Commissions prior to every meeting. Evaluate the use of Curio to distribute communications from the Public by April.

Goal 5 – Facilitate the development and redevelopment of new housing options

Objective 5A – Distribute the Residential Development Handout to developers and interested parties by the end of January.

Objective 5B – Provide information regarding housing needs and current trends to the Planning Commissions by February and make the information publically available.

Objective 5C – Work with developers, residents and other parties to assist in taking proposed residential developments through the Planning review process, as needed.

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 and participate in regional issues

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

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

Objective 3B – Participate and assist the Wayne County Land Bank and Wayne Trails.

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

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 identify 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 2023.

Goal 5 – Complete and Update of the City of Wooster Comprehensive Plan

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 by the end of 2023.

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

Objective 5D – Complete an update of the plan by the end of 2024.

Appendix – Tables and Charts

Table 1: Planning and Zoning Applications 2020

Month	Zoning Certificates	Sign Permits	Minor Subdivisions	Building & Zoning Appeals	Design & Review	Planning Commission	Total
January	8	3	5	1	0	0	17
February	4	4	2	1	4	3	18
March	17	4	0	3	0	0	24
April	22	3	0	0	2	4	31
May	32	5	5	3	5	3	53
June	27	3	2	1	1	2	36
July	24	2	0	4	5	5	40
August	33	6	1	3	1	0	44
September	28	7	2	3	4	2	46
October	17	3	2	4	4	0	30
November	11	2	2	1	2	2	20
December	11	5	1	2	3	2	24
Total*	234	47	22	26	31	23	383
Total Fees	\$7,010	\$3,725	\$550	\$2,600	\$0	\$2,400	\$16,285
2019 Total	205	75	34	21	40	21	396
2019 Fees	\$6,215	\$6,200	\$775	\$2,100	\$0	\$2,400	\$17,690

Chart 1: Planning and Zoning Applications 2020

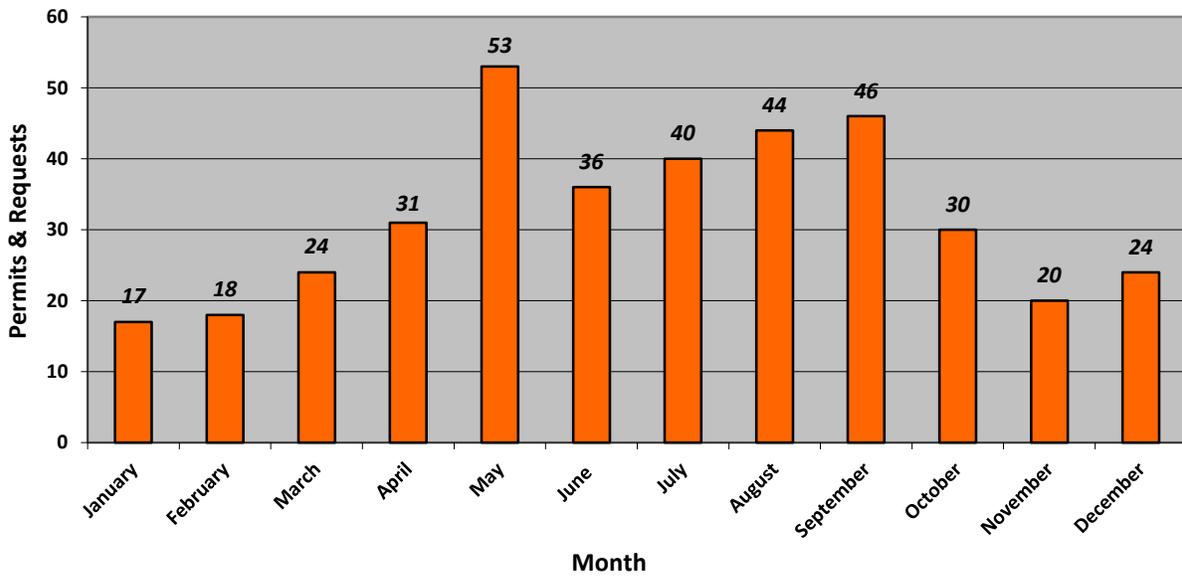


Table 2: Planning and Zoning Applications 2011-2020

Year	Zoning Certificates	Sign Permits	Minor Subdivisions	Building & Zoning Appeals	Design & Review	Planning Commission	Boards & Commissions	Total
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
2020	234	47	22	26	31	23	80	383
Total	2,046	792	168	329	381	260	970	3,197
Average	205	79	24	33	38	26	97	320

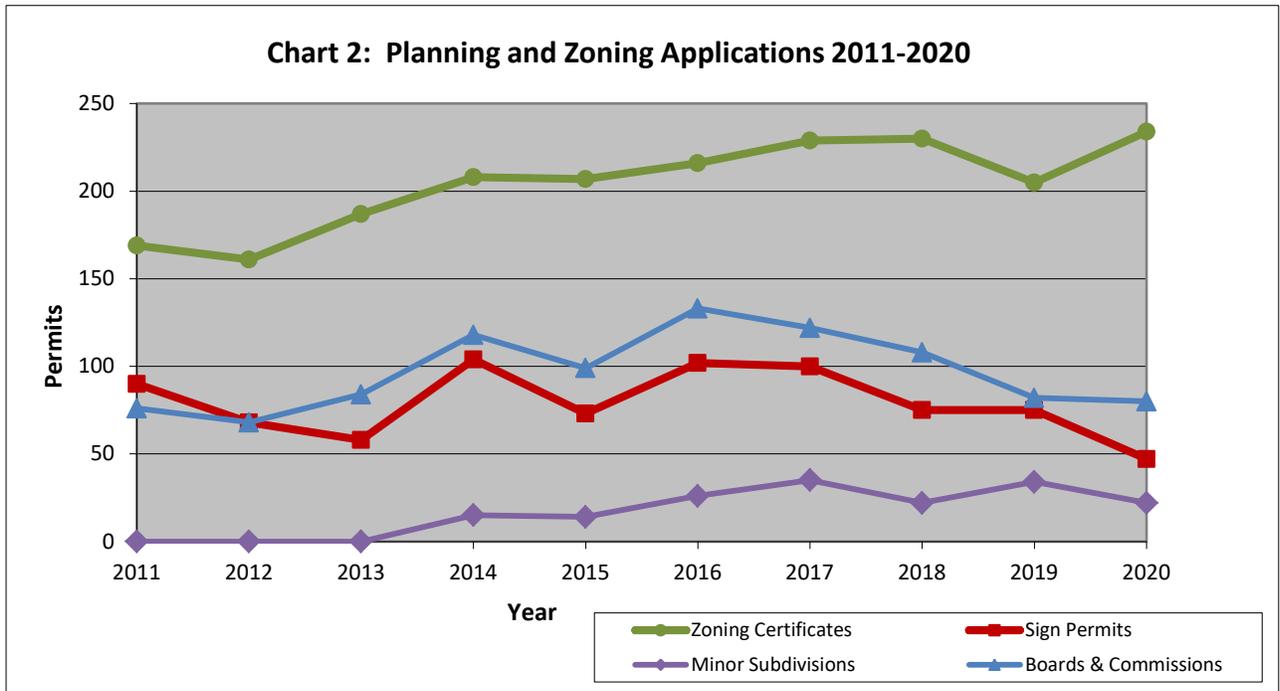


Chart 3: Board and Commission Requests 2011-2020

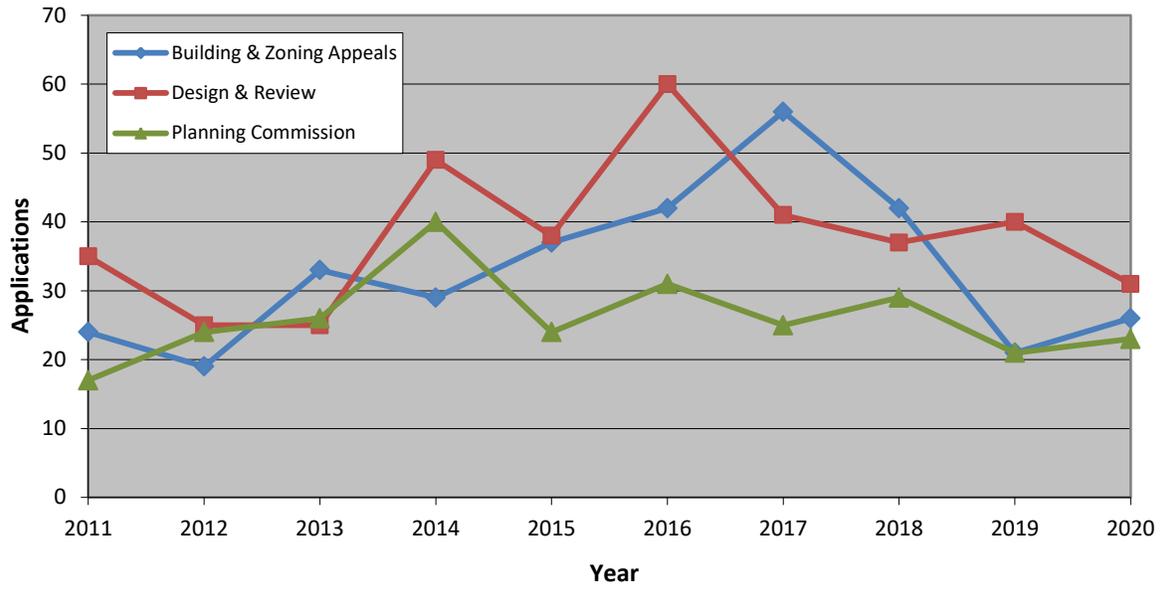


Table 3: Zoning Violations 2020

Violation	Number
Parking Trailers/RVs/Commercial Vehicles	32
Parking Surface	27
Zoning Certificate Required	20
Chickens/Roosters	9
Signs	8
Dumpster without Screening	3
Other	2
Total	101

Chart 4: Zoning Violations 2020

