

Building and Planning Department

Brock Hundt, Building Commissioner

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Overview

The Building and Planning Departments are responsible for overseeing all aspects of city planning and private construction within the City of Mishawaka. This department also serves in a limited capacity to support the Community Development Department. The Planning Department also serves a lead function relative to economic development initiatives and services. On a daily basis, the department is responsible for the issuance of permits for virtually all new construction including residential, commercial and industrial. The Department also evaluates and approves smaller projects such as the modification of signs, fences, sheds, decks, and garages. Although separate departments, the Building and Planning Departments work together to efficiently provide the best possible service to our City. Responsibilities and duties include:

- Work with developers who have an interest in developing projects in, or adjacent to the City. This includes working with developers in the design of site plans to ensure that they are consistent with the City's ordinances, goals, objectives, and policies.
- Issue and track all building permits, including electric permits, plumbing permits, HVAC permits and other miscellaneous permits. In addition, all Adult Care Homes are inspected annually.
- Provide information to the public on matters relating to zoning, rezoning, annexation requests, vacations of public right-of-way, subdivision regulations, sign control, historic buildings, and obtaining building permits.
- Work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG). The City Senior Planner serves as a member of the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee on transportation projects, including alternative forms of transportation.
- Preparation and adoption of long-range planning projects. Projects include various elements of the Comprehensive Plan including: land use, housing, historic preservation, transportation, capital improvements, annexation, and parks and recreation.
- Administer the issuance of Improvement Location Permits for construction within the City, including evaluating construction projects relative to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- Day-to-day administration of the zoning ordinance. The zoning administrator is responsible for interpreting City codes and ordinances related to development. The Department enforces the zoning and sign ordinances of the City including issuing citations and stop work orders.
- Preparation of fiscal plans associated with annexations. Fiscal Plans require coordination with all applicable Departments including utilities, police, fire, emergency medical, engineering, parks and finance.
- Coordination with the Information Technology Department on the implementation and continual maintenance of the City's Geographic Information System (GIS).

- Prepare revisions and updates to land use codes and ordinances. Responsible for preparing Historic Preservation Districts including ordinances, maps, preservation guidelines and standards.
- Prepare budgets, work program and annual report for the Department. Annual evaluation of the previous year, identification of development trends, identification of future projects and funding allocations.
- Work with industry and businesses on tax abatement requests and compliance reporting. Makes recommendations to the Mayor, Redevelopment Commission and Common Council concerning economic development issues.
- Provide staff support to the City Redevelopment Commission including the drafting of development agreements with other public and private entities. Review and prepare amendments to Tax Increment Financing Districts.
- Manages Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District funds. Works with the Mayor and City Engineer to determine funding priorities to be presented to the Redevelopment Commission concerning the expenditure of TIF funds on a yearly

Building Department

Whether we are in our homes, workplaces, schools, or places of entertainment, we rely on the safety of the structures that surround us. This underscores the importance of modern building codes and their enforcement. The structural integrity of a building, the means of egress, fire suppression systems, smoke alarms, safe electrical wiring, proper sanitation, safe heating, and the energy efficiency of buildings are ensured by building code requirements.

Residential building codes are for the personal safety of your family and guests invited into your home and to ensure the economic well-being of the community by reducing the potential for spread of fire and disease, the conservation of energy and to protect future home purchasers who deserve reasonable assurance that the home they buy will be safe and secure.

Commercial building codes help to provide safe means of egress, structural integrity, reduced risk of the spreading of fire or disease and provide safety to all public who enter a commercial building. Most aspects of building construction, whether electrical, HVAC, plumbing, fire suppression or structural integrity represent a potential hazard to building occupants and users. Building codes provide safeguards to help reduce those risks. Although no code can completely eliminate risk, reducing risk to an acceptable level is the goal of building codes. The Building Department helps to ensure codes are followed and helps the builder, owner or tenant meet code requirements. Most of this is done through the inspection process.

In 2019, the Building Department conducted 2,703 inspections. Each inspector conducts 4 to 7 inspections per workday. Approximately 40 to 60 minutes are spent per inspection. Other building department duties include review of building design drawings and meetings with contractors, owners, and tenants to explain and help with building code interpretation and enforcement.

The Building Department continues to become more knowledgeable in the evolving building code. All inspectors have been trained to become combination inspectors, better serving the community and the public.

By enforcing building code requirements, the buildings and homes in the City of Mishawaka will be structurally and mechanically sound. The Building Department will continue to become more efficient in the inspection process, as well as more knowledgeable and accessible to our clients.

Building and Development Activity

In 2019, the City continued to see significant new construction. Permits were issued for 58 new single-family homes in 2019. This is two more than the 56 home permits that were issued in 2018. As indicated in previous reports, this is still significantly lower than the number of single-family home starts that occurred prior to 2007, but our continued modest single-family home growth is still significant. This single-family home growth combined with the explosive growth of apartments, provides for a healthy and diverse housing market in the City.

Continued Commercial Growth

In 2019, commercial permits were issued with an estimated construction cost of 62.7 million dollars. Although much less than the 110.5 million dollars of permits issued in 2018, this number is more consistent with historical average City growth. It is also important to note that this number can fluctuate significantly from year-to-year based on the timing of when permits are pulled for a few large projects. By the numbers, 9 new commercial building permits were pulled for new freestanding buildings in 2019 compared to 15 in 2018. The single largest permit was for the Hellenic Senior Living Center at 1540 South Logan Street. This permit had a 17.5 million dollar estimated construction cost. Another large project for 2019 included the Beacon Health Systems administrative headquarters building located at 3245 Beacon Parkway. This permit had a 12.1 million dollar estimated construction cost.

The City of Mishawaka continued to grow had significant investments were made in 2019. The City issued permits with a total estimated construction cost of \$79.7 million – although significant investments occurred, this is significantly less than the 158 million dollars of total estimated construction cost 2018.

The fees generated by the Building Department are intended to significantly cover the costs of administering development in the City. The City through its fee structure has determined that the fairest way to assess a fee is when a project is being constructed and that cost can be rolled into the project cost as a small percentage. In 2019 the Building Department collected fees totaling \$619,685. On average, the fees charged by the Building Department represent less than one half of one percent of estimated construction costs for a given project. In comparison, the Planning Department collected fees totaling \$49,235 in 2019.

Construction activity drops after 5 consecutive years of double-digit percentage growth

From 2013 to 2018 the City experienced five straight years of double-digit percentage growth from year to year. In 2019, the 79.7 million total estimated construction cost fell back to a level consistent with dollar growth levels seen in 2014 and 2015 and is relatively consistent with the City's 10-year average.

As a City, Mishawaka continues to reap the benefits of our geographic location being centered in the region. The City has promoted development with long-term strategic decision making such as the continued investments made downtown, the extension of infrastructure to the Exit 83

interchange of the Indiana Toll Road, and the creation of a medical hub with the relocation of the St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, the construction of the VA Clinic, and the Beacon Health System expansion on Beacon Parkway.

Year	Estimated Construction Value	Dollar Change	Percentage Change
2010	43.0 Million	-10.0 Million	-23.3%
2011	45.0 Million	+2.0 Million	+4.4%
2012	52.0 Million	+7.0 Million	+13.5%
2013	53.4 Million	+1.4 Million	+2.6%
2014	67.8 Million	+14.4 Million	+21.2%
2015	85.2 Million	+17.4 Million	+20.4%
2016	98.4 Million	+13.2 Million	+13.4%
2017	136.4 Million	+38.0 Million	+27.9%
2018	158.0 Million	+21.6 Million	+13.7%
2019	79.7 Million	-78.3 Million	-98.2%
10-Year Total	818.9 Million		
10-Year Average	81.9 Million	+2.7 million / year	+3.3% / year

Even with this continued growth, the long-term forecast in construction remains promising but is still difficult to project based on the national and world economic influences that the City cannot control.

The continued trade war with China, the Coronavirus outbreak fear, and the presidential election will all likely impact general construction decisions made by larger corporations in 2020. Although as we indicated in 2019 that it would be overly optimistic to project a similar double-digit percentage year of growth in 2019, we think it is also reasonable to expect an average year of construction in 2020.

Construction in 2019 continued to come from many different projects and illustrates the solid economy of the region. A significant development that continues to grow is the Grandview Planned Unit Development. The owner of the property, Great Lakes Capital, pulled permits for significant additions in 2019 including new buildings with apartments and lower level commercial space adding to the existing apartment complex on the site that began construction in 2016.

The commercial portion of the development located at the northwest corner of the intersection of State Road 23 and Gumwood Road is still expected to follow in the coming years and represents a prime area for the continued development, enhancement, and growth of Mishawaka’s consolidated northern retail area. Bar Louie announced it is relocating to Grandview from the University Park Mall. Menards applied to amend the planned unit development to allow for outside storage which would have enabled them to relocate from their current location at Main Street and University Drive to Grandview. This request was withdrawn after receiving much opposition from residential groups predominantly located in unincorporated St. Joseph County.

As indicated in previous year’s reports, the City had two developers propose separate low income senior assisted living projects in 2017. Silver Birch of Mishawaka was constructed by Chicago, Illinois based Vermilion Development. Located just south of the southeast corner of Edison Road and Hickory Road it was substantially completed in 2018 and continued to be leased in 2019.

The second project, by AHEPA (Hellenic Senior Living), is located directly east of Marian High School at the northeast corner of the intersection of Logan Street and Dragoon Trail closed on their financing at the end of 2018 and began construction on the site in the beginning of 2019. The building rose in 2019 and the attractive building is a welcome new addition that will serve low income seniors for decades to come.

As identified last year, Vibra Hospital and Beacon Granger Hospital were two of the larger project permits that were issued in 2018. In 2019, Vibra Hospital which is an acute long-term care facility, that is intended to provide care for living that traditional hospitals are not designed for, neared completion.



Vibra Hospital nearing completion, February 2020

Beacon’s Granger Hospital is a small hospital concept that opened in the fall of 2019. The hospital has only 8 in-patient beds and is being built to handle the traditional emergency room visit, the vast majority of which do not require an overnight stay in the hospital. Although it is a fully equipped hospital, including operating facilities, it also has an ambulance on-site to allow for the transfer of patients who require more specialized treatment available in larger hospitals. Both of these facilities will reduce the demand for rooms at the St. Joseph Regional Medical Center that at times have asked for elective surgeries to be postponed based on the lack of available beds.

Beacon continued to grow on the north side of Mishawaka in 2019 with a 12.1-million-dollar administrative building which was constructed just south of the Health and Wellness facility on Beacon Parkway adjacent to the Indiana Toll Road. We are proud that Beacon has chosen this site to consolidate their operations and has been a great partner for the City. As part of this project Beacon built a walking path that surrounds the campus. Rather than wait for the City to install a multi-use path on Beacon Parkway, they decided to incur the expense of installing a public walk along the frontage of their campus. This installation was completed at the end of 2019.



Beacon Granger Hospital



Beacon Administrative Facility, February 2020

In 2019, the Center for Hospice Campus completed the Ernestine M. Raclin House care facility that began

construction in 2018. This 12-bed facility was an additional 10-million-dollar investment in the campus. The Center for Hospice Care continues to be an integral partner as part of the City’s vision for growing and diversifying the central part of the City.

Remodels and continued investments in existing facilities continued to be a theme in 2019. Target started a 4-million-dollar remodel of their existing store located at the intersection of Main Street and University Drive. Costco on University drive performed a 1.6-million-dollar upgrade that including adding additional fueling pumps. Chick-fil-A performed a 1.5-million-dollar renovation of their Main Street restaurant north of Douglas Road.

2019 Planning and Building Permits

A summary of the 2019 permit activity is as follows:

Residential

- 17.0 million in estimated construction costs (a \$1.5 million decrease compared to 2018)
 - 58 new single-family homes
 - 640 residential alterations/additions

Multi-Family

- No new permits, although significant construction (carried over from 2018)
 - 13 new buildings were started in 2018

Commercial / Industrial

- 62.7 million in estimated construction costs (\$47.8 million less than 2018)
 - 9 new commercial buildings
 - 209 alterations/additions

New Single-Family Home Construction by Year	
2019	58 Homes
2018	56 Homes
2017	78 Homes
2016	36 Homes
2015	47 Homes
2014	43 Homes
2013	39 Homes
2012	28 Homes
2011	22 Homes
2010	22 Homes
2009	32 Homes
2008	46 Homes
2007	112 Homes

Annexations

The City continues to grow in a steady and orderly fashion. There were two voluntary annexations, adding approximately 6.6 acres to the City in 2019. This represents an increase of 0.01 square miles. In comparison, the City grew by 140 acres in 2018. The existing area within the City limits, according to our Geographic Information System, is now 18.24 square miles.

2019 annexations included:

1. **FHS Investment LLC (d/b/a Indiana Pain & Spine Clinic) – 53013 Fir Road**
3.2 acres annexed and zoned C-6 Linear Commercial to allow for the expansion of the adjacent medical office use. Preliminary development plans include an approximate 6,000 sq. ft. office building, parking lot, landscaping/screening, stormwater retention basin, and other related infrastructure improvements.
2. **Don Jr. & Jennifer Shaum, and DJSJ, LLC – 16525 Arthur Street & 52781 Grape Road**
3.39 acres annexed and zoned R-1 Single Family Residential and R-3 Multi-Family

Residential to allow residential development. Conceptual development plans include six single-family residential lots and a three-story building with seven town home units.

The effective date of both the above annexations was January 1, 2020. Municipalities are not permitted to annex property during the year preceding a federal decennial census.

Downtown Development

Regional Cities Initiative/Flaherty and Collins

As identified in previous annual reports, in 2015 the State of Indiana, led by former Governor, and now Vice President Mike Pence, proposed an initiative to help thwart the on-going brain drain occurring in the State of Indiana. Specifically, the trend has been that a disproportionate number of Indiana’s college graduates end up leaving the state to find work or pursue a career in cities such as Chicago and other large metropolitan areas. They are leaving not just to find work matching their education, they are leaving seeking a specific quality of life.

In the Regional Cities Initiative, the State program formed a competition for regions of the State to develop plans to fund projects that will help combat this trend. Ultimately, the North Central Region, which includes Elkhart, Marshall, and St. Joseph counties, was awarded one of the \$42 million awards.



The Mill – North Entry & Leasing Area

In 2016, the Regional Development Authority awarded Flaherty and Collins just over 5 million dollars to assist in building a new 233-unit high amenity mixed-use apartment building “The Mill” on the site of the former Uniroyal Complex south of Beutter Park in downtown Mishawaka.

In 2017, the City issued a Tax Increment Financing Bond for close to 11 million dollars to assist in funding the City’s contribution to the project. The public infrastructure included in the project included a public parking garage that provides the public the ability to park for up to three hours for free. In addition, Ironworks Avenue was be extended with on-street angled parking, and Hill Street, north of Front Street, was converted into a two-aisle parking area similar to Mill Street north of Front Street. We are excited that after 20 years, 4 acres of the former Uniroyal complex was made productive again and that it is now generating over a half-million dollars a year in local property taxes. The developer broke ground in late 2017 and the building, which is roughly 450,000 square feet, encompassing two city blocks, was substantially complete at the end of 2019!

Currently, the building already has 60 residential units leased, one commercial tenant, the Kalon Salon, with another tenant, Jack’s Donuts signed. Flaherty and Collins expects that full occupancy will take approximately one year.



The Mill – Inside Courtyard

Ironworks Plaza/Beutter Park Phase II

Beutter Park is already the City of Mishawaka’s signature urban park with the beauty of sculptures, 30,000 plants, and cascading waterfalls in the re-established mill race of the factories that once stood here. It is the past home to the summer concert series and is the centerpiece of the City’s park system located along the Mishawaka Riverwalk a multi-use path that connects thousands of homes and 7 City parks. There are on-going plans for expansion of the River Walk.

For the past 15 years in marketing downtown Mishawaka for redevelopment, one of the concerns that has been routinely brought up has been the apparent minimal activities that are available in winter. This is viewed as a negative, not only for Mishawaka’s downtown, but for the region as a whole. We routinely hear that the one thing we cannot change is the weather. One thing we can change is our collective attitude toward the weather and its impact on how livable our region can be.

The thrust of the request for Regional Cities funding is to address this need as part of the completion of the City’s signature urban park. If completed as envisioned, we believe that the park will be a year-round attraction and will become one of the signature “things” do in the South Bend/Elkhart region.

The design as currently envisioned includes a variety of components:

Signature Café

One of the elements that separate the proposed Beutter Park improvements from other park venues is the type of café envisioned. Although owned by the City, this would be leased to a private entity, likely at a below market rate in order to incentivize providing a unique eatery/coffee house/dessert/evening drink destination. A modern décor of glass, steel and wood with stone accents is envisioned. The Café will have its own outdoor seating area and will contain an outside fireplace contributing to the winter ambiance and activities.

Ironworks Plaza

In coordinating with Flaherty and Collins, the developer of the Mill at Ironworks Plaza project, the plaza, set in the middle of Beutter Park off of Ironworks Avenue is set up as a pedestrian friendly open area with a modern pavilion/event tent area that will be used for a variety of activities including registration for runs, outdoor performances, markets, and even weddings.

Skating Path / Winter Activity Area

One of the challenges in this region is embracing outdoor winter activities. The skating path winter activity area, not only provides an activity, but in connecting it to the Signature café, the close location of other restaurants, the downtown, and the Riverwalk, the amenity has the ability to attract people even if they are not directly participating in the skating. We love Elkhart's NIBCO park, and wanted to use a similar theme but place it in an environment with a diversity that adds to the attraction. We are looking at this as a Mishawaka scaled down version of Rockefeller Center. The urban setting, the café, the art, the immediately adjacent housing and restaurants all contribute to the activity. The building required a sensitive design which evolved in 2019. One building is now proposed that contains three distinct uses: a café, the rink functions, and an event center. The rink portion of the building will have lockers, warming area, skate rental, and room for maintenance, mechanicals, and Zamboni storage.

If constructed, this facility will likely replace the City's current rink in Merrifield Park which is at the end of its life and needs replacement. The event space was added to take advantage of the geographic position of the building and to fulfill a continued event space need that has been identified by the City Parks Department. This will be the "high end" space available for rental through the Parks Department.

Prior to adding this space, the building would have had the mechanical and storage space for the rink operations immediately adjacent to the river. Adding a second story for the event space provides for a more geographically sensitive approach by taking advantage of perhaps the best views of the St. Joseph River and Beutter Park in Mishawaka. This addition was made easier because of the long-identified need of the Parks Department to add rentable gathering and banquet space to the City's inventory.

Picnic Area / Beer Garden / Restrooms

The City felt that eating and drinking outside in an urban park was a critical component of our on-going park improvements. Serving liquor requires the area to be separated from the other areas during events, but on a year-round basis the area would be used for picnics and seating. Overhead lighting and the architectural theme of the café is envisioned to include glass, steel, and wood with stone accents. This will replace the existing temporary asphalt area with picnic tables that has looked unfinished since it was placed in the park more than a decade ago.

2019 Progress

In 2019, the City completed two phases of the design of Ironworks Plaza and started construction on significant infrastructure improvements and the Picnic Area/Beer Garden/Picnic Space that has now been branded as the "Ball-Band Biergarten".

As identified in last year's report, in August of 2017, the City applied to the Regional Development Authority to fund a second Regional Cities project in Mishawaka. Although over a million dollars was being requested, \$112,000 was ultimately awarded to the City.

Given the high cost of this signature project, the City phased the construction. Right now, the City envisions four total phases for the project. The first two phases are currently under construction. The first phase includes the extension of the Hill Street parking area, underground utilities, and shore improvements adjacent to the cable stayed pedestrian bridge. The cost of these improvements are roughly 5 million dollars. The second phase includes the proposed beer garden/picnic area at a cost of roughly 2 million dollars. This area will have seating for a few hundred people and contains a public restroom/concession building.

The first and second phases will be completed by Memorial Day 2020. Our intent is to have a christening event to open the space to the public honoring and celebrating former Mayor Bob Beutter's life who passed away in January. May, Bob's wife, indicated that one of the first public events they held was having a root beer social. We could think of no better way to open the Biergarten than having a root beer social to celebrate Mayor Bob.

Depending on the availability of funds, the City will proceed with phase three in late 2020 with lighting the cable stayed bridge cables. The last phase includes the café, rink, and event space which by itself is likely to exceed 14 million dollars. Right now, the City's plan is to limit expenditures and save tax increment financing dollars to minimize or eliminate any need for having to finance the project. Based on the size and large cost of this project, the number and size of other tax increment financed projects will be reduced in the coming years. Our current estimate is that this project will begin in late 2022 and will open for the 2023 skating season.



Biergarten under construction, February 2020

Front Street Opportunity Fund LLC

In 2018, the City Redevelopment Commission approved a development agreement with Front Street Opportunity Fund LLC. This is for the development of a mixed use commercial and residential building located on the block bordered by Front Street, First Street, Hill Street, and

Spring Street (between Mill Street and Jesus restaurant). The development team includes J. Patrick Matthews who has had success with many projects including student housing adjacent to Notre Dame, Joe Grabill Sr. who has extensive local commercial real estate and development experience, Stephen Studer with Krieg DeVault LLP is providing legal counsel, and the Architectural design is being performed by Spalding Design Group of Mishawaka. We are excited about the potential project that will bring new residential units and commercial storefront space to downtown Mishawaka. In 2019, at the request of the City, the developer worked on a modified design to allow for the widening of Hill Street. The City desires to widen Hill Street to provide for more on-street public parking. The Developer also has a desire to add more units. We expect that a revised development agreement will be presented to the Redevelopment Commission in 2020, and that construction will start on the project in 2021.

Barak Group Boutique Hotel

In 2018, the City continued a development agreement with the Barak Group concerning their interest to build a boutique hotel on the island property north of the City Police Station that used to house the former Uniroyal Power Plant and coal yard. The developer continued to work on refining plans in 2019. To move the project forward, the City is required, per our development agreement with the Barak Group, to pipe the western portion of the former mill race that provides the water supply for Beutter Park before turning the site over to the developer for construction. In 2019, through our consultant, Lawson Fisher Associates of South Bend, the City had multiple meetings with the regulatory authorities concerning the piping of the raceway. From a regulatory perspective, the raceway, although manmade, was determined to be an integral waterbody to the St. Joseph River and is permitted like it was a natural waterbody. As such, there is an extensive amount of work needed to be accomplished, as well as compensatory mitigation required, to allow for the piping of the raceway. The City plans on bidding this work in late spring of 2020 with a goal of being completed and out of the way of the developer who currently plans to begin construction in 2021. The City has viewed this piping project as essential to make the property viable for redevelopment.

Riverwalk Apartments

The principals involved in the Riverwalk Apartment project have met with the staff in 2019 and have indicated that they would still like to proceed with a reconceived project in 2020. Specifically, the developer currently desires to change the intended use from apartments to a condominium project. They believe that condominiums will be most successful in meeting current market demands. This project is located on a triangular shaped property south of Mishawaka Avenue, just west of where Sarah Street ends on the north side of the river. We expect that a new development agreement will be submitted in early 2020 that would allow for the change in use and updated project timelines if approved.

Public Works Projects

The City is committed to serving the Mishawaka community through its support of various public works projects designed to enhance our citizen's quality of life. During 2019, the Planning Department was responsible for directing private firms and assisting other City departments on several significant public works projects.

Mishawaka Riverwalk

The Mishawaka Riverwalk continues to be the cornerstone for many of the City’s redevelopment efforts. It connects neighborhoods and parks by taking advantage of the City’s greatest natural resource, the St. Joseph River. The Mishawaka Riverwalk also adds value to existing homes and neighborhoods and will undoubtedly be a source of pride for Mishawaka’s citizens for generations to come.

Riverwalk – Race Street to Cedar Street Bridge

In 2018, we worked with our consultant DLZ to apply to receive federal funding for the widening of the Cedar Street Bridge to accommodate a wider protected walkway on the west side of the bridge. We received word that the funding for this close to four-million-dollar project was approved with construction estimated to start in 2024. In 2018, the City also began negotiating with property owners on the south side of the river between Race Street and Cedar Street on the south side of the river. A total of eight additional parcels are required to make this Riverwalk connection.

Over the course of 2019, the City was able to obtain four of the properties. Acquisition of the additional five properties is in process and is expected to be completed in 2020. Construction of this phase could begin as soon as 2021 and is dependent on the prioritization of available funding

Central Park Stage

In 2019, the stage project that started in 2018 in Central Park was completed by Ziolkowski Construction. The \$800,000 project was designed by Arkos Design and Lawson Fisher Associates. The stage is located at the south side of the looped walk surrounding the event lawn on the west side of the park. The goal was to have the platform portion constructed to allow the summer concert series to be held in Central Park. The project was successful and the artists performing on this stage have expressed a preference for this venue over any other in the City. Attendance in the summer of 2019 was great and the only real complaint we have received was the lack of shade. Unfortunately, given the southward facing slope, it will be many years before the trees that have been planted will provide any real shade to the area.



Completed Central Park Stage decorated for Christmas 2019

Crawford Park Master Plan

In 2019, the City contracted with DLZ to develop a master plan for Crawford Park. The impetus for this initiative was the planned combined sewer overflow separation improvements that required the center of the park to be torn up and required the demolition of certain existing park structures like the Lion’s Pavilion.

In October of 2019, the City sent hundreds of notices out to the adjacent neighborhood along with a copy of the plan, inviting everyone to a public meeting for input. Key components of the draft master plan include.

- Establishing a unique identity for the park. Thematically creating a “Nature Park” that would include man-made constructed wetlands.
- Moves major park elements like play equipment out of the floodplain.
- Creates an active play area that would include nature themed equipment and a water element for smaller children in the area of the current splashpad. The playground will feature inclusive components for children of any ability.
- Establishes a neighborhood lawn area for open play and special events like a movie or concert.
- The design accommodates the location of required combined sewer separation improvements that recently started construction.
- Build a new restroom building adjacent to the play area that would also be convenient for visitors to the Shiojiri Niwa Japanese Garden across the street.
- Construction of three new picnic shelters/pavilions to meet increased demand. One adjacent to the play area, one in the center of the park, and one adjacent to Niles Avenue. Installation of a small off-street parking lot at Niles Avenue south of the intersection of Linden Avenue to better meet the parking requirements for the proposed activities.
- Adds multiple sidewalks and board walks added in the park to improve handicapped accessibility to equipment/restrooms.

Given the cost of improvements, implementation will likely occur in phases as funding becomes available. At the public meeting there were extensive discussions regarding wetlands, the need to continue to have basketball courts, the location of parking, and the proposed restroom location. In the Spring of 2020, the City plans to send out an updated plan incorporating many of the comments received for further review and comment.



Public meeting at Castle Manor on the Crawford Park Master Plan – October, 2019

Lincolnway S.R. 933 Restriping

In 2018, the Planning Department led an initiative to develop a partnership with INDOT to restripe Lincolnway to provide for a uniform three lane road section between Capital Avenue and Logan Street. As noted in last year’s report, the City held a public meeting on this initiative in July of 2018 where hundreds of letters were sent to every property owner along this corridor informing them of the City’s desired change and inviting them to provide comments on the proposed project. Even with hundreds of letters being sent, only a handful of comments were received. Of the comments the City did receive, almost all were supportive with just a few raising concerns about speed and safety characteristics that are already inherent to the corridor.

This project was envisioned because even though it is a State Road that is maintained by INDOT, Lincolnway is one of the roads the City receives the most complaints about. Lincolnway is truly a Historic Roadway that has evolved over time and existed in part before the automobile. At one-

point downtown was serviced by a trolley that was located in the center of the street. The road passes through the historic downtown, neighborhoods, and past the Historic Mishawaka High School. Mishawaka Schools remain a “walk on” school district which results in many of the students being driven or using Lincolnway as a walking corridor.

This historic development and changes in the corridor over time have resulted in various road sections, sometimes the road width changes, as frequently as block to block. At points, many drivers had used it as a four-lane roadway even though it had been designed for only two lanes. The City contracted with the Troyer Group to develop a three-lane section (one travel lane in either direction and a center turn lane).

In 2019, INDOT completed the resurfacing project and implemented the striping as requested by the City. Although the lane widths vary, the same three lane sections now exist between Capital Avenue and Logan Street. We believe that the striping plan as prepared by the Troyer Group has significantly improved traffic flow and safety through the corridor. Overall, the City spent only \$100,000 to prepare the plans, pay INDOT for the additional striping, and install two radar speed limit signs in residential areas of the project. We can think of no bigger bang for the buck project that the City has undertaken in the last decade! We are very appreciative of this partnership with INDOT and wish to thank them for their willingness to work with the City on this important local issue.

Battell Park – Veterans Plaza

In 2015, the Planning Department led the effort to develop an updated master plan for Battell Park. In 2016, the City contracted with DLZ to develop plans to create Rosemary’s Garden which was completed in 2017. In reviewing the park master plan, the next logical phase to complete was determined to be Veterans Plaza. The project includes relocating and restoring the Civil War Monument and creating a gathering place with a flag array honoring each branch of the military. Although the long term the plan is to build a memorial walkway, funding limitations narrowed the scope to just the monument restoration and creation of the plaza. The project started in the spring of 2019 and was substantially complete by Veteran’s Day with the exception of the monument. The estimated restoration time for the monument was approximately a year. Our plan is to be able to fully dedicate the newly restored monument and plaza on Memorial Day in 2020.



Veterans Plaza construction

Liberty Mutual – New Municipal Services Building

In the Spring of 2019, the City was contacted by Liberty Mutual following their announcement that they were vacating their call center located at 100 Lincolnway West in the heart of downtown to convert work at home positions. The City had previously attempted to work with Liberty Mutual to acquire two small parking areas they own south of First Street for years, so upon hearing the

announcement, we wanted to pursue those acquisitions. We then were asked by Liberty Mutual to consider the purchase of the whole facility.

Before we were willing to even express an interest, we hired Alliance Architects of South Bend to evaluate our existing buildings and needs, independent of the Liberty Mutual Building. Once our needs were identified, we then had them perform a conceptual layout of the Liberty Mutual building to determine if it would meet the City needs. Our basic goals in considering the building purchase were as follows:

- Facilities need to better serve the public!
- Must be consistent with or accelerate our continued redevelopment efforts.
- Bring the City up to date regarding technology.
- Any solution must provide for some flexibility to allow for growth and changes over time
- Create a long-term solution
- Be as efficient as possible on expenditures

Upon the conclusion of our studies and investigations, we concluded that if acquired and renovated, the building would provide a unique opportunity to better serve the public by not only combining three separate buildings into one for efficiency (Moving City Hall, Police, and the Mishawaka Utilities Business Office), but it would also better serve the public simply by its central location. It is directly across the street from the County Services building and a block away from the public library in the heart of our historic downtown. It also has the ability to open up hundreds of formerly private parking spaces for public use which is becoming more critical as we redevelop and bring new events and activities downtown.



Liberty Mutual Building, 100 Lincolnway West – Summer of 2019

Since it was built as a national call center with large open spaces for cubicles, incorporating technology could be easily addressed in the building's renovation. At over 90,000 square feet, the architects estimate that the building is about 5% larger than what is currently needed by the City allowing some room for growth over time. The building has a steel structure and masonry exterior. Once windows, HVAC, and roofs are replaced, the building could be set up to serve the City for decades to come without significant capital expenditures. The last issue, and one of the most

important is the cost. As part of the architect’s evaluation, the cost estimates for completing the renovation exceeded 14 million dollars. When considering the acquisition costs, the overall project cost started competing with new construction.

The City then contracted with NAI Cressy to negotiate the purchase price of the building. The acquisition price agreed to by Liberty Mutual was 2.35 million dollars, well below the appraised value which is just over 5 million dollars. With this revised purchase price, we felt that our established goals were met, and we decided to move forward with the acquisition. As part of the process, the City Council agreed that the purchase was in the best interest of the City, but also requested that the administration market the building for a brief period of time to see if any other large user would be interested in the building to bring more jobs to the City. Although it is unlikely that another large user would be interested, the Mayor agreed to both simultaneously market the building once we have title early this year, as well as continue to prepare plans for a combined City Services building.

2019 Activity of Commissions and Boards

Plan Commission

A total of 46 petitions were filed before the Plan Commission in 2019. This is 15 less than the 61 petitions filed in 2018. Although the activity is less than the previous few years, it is still steady. In comparison our filings are still significantly lower than the peak of 104 petitions filed in 2007. Petitions for 2019 included 20 rezoning/annexation requests, 17 final site plans and 9 Plats/Re-plats.

2019 Plan Commission		
Matthew Lentsch	President	Mayor Appt.
Christopher Tordi	Vice President	Park and Rec. Board
Dale Freeman	Member	BPWS
Chris Jamrose, PE	Member	City Engineer
Murray Winn	Member	Mayor Appt.
Nick Troiola	Member	Mayor Appt.
Chris Nebalski	Member	Mayor Appt.
Kathy White Gadacz	Member	Mayor Appt.
Dale (Woody) Emmons	Member	Common Council

Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board of Zoning Appeals heard a total of 51 appeals in 2019. This is 8 more than the 43 appeals heard in 2018. Although this is a slight increase when compared to 2018, the activity of the Board has historically varied and is not directly related to construction trends.

2019 Board of Zoning Appeals	
Charles Trippel	Chairman
Christopher Tordi	Vice Chairman
Larry Stillson	Member
Charles Krueger	Member
Marcia Wells	Member

City of Mishawaka Historic Preservation Commission

The Planning Department serves as the staff for the City of Mishawaka Historic Preservation Commission. The Historic Preservation Commission, established in 1991, is charged with preserving and promoting the historical past of Mishawaka. The Commission, a nine-member appointed board, is responsible for the designation of local single and multiple site historic districts, the nomination of sites to the National Register of Historic Places, and the promotion of local historic preservation related activities and events.

Historic Preservation Commission Members	Advisory Members
Doug Merritt, Chairman	Matthew Crawford
David Eisen, Vice Chairman	Alan Grzeskowiak
Mike Bultinck	Shirley McAlister
Terry DeMaegd	Thomas Morris
Judy Gray	Jason Stoller
Jennifer Johns	
Nancy Seidler	
Faye Sullivan	
Kate Voelker (Common Council)	

An overview of the 2019 activities and accomplishments are as follows:

Two certificates of appropriateness were approved in 2019. The first COA concerned the creation of the new Veteran’s Plaza in Battell Park, specifically the moving of the Soldier’s and Sailor’s Monument. The other COA was for a fire damaged garage at 2729 N Main Street, in the Normain Heights Conservation District.



(l-r): Greg Lawson, current property owner; Pete Dekever, Mishawaka Historian Laureate; Capt. Richard Brenneman; Christa Hill, Secretary, Mishawaka Historic Preservation Commission.

Mayor Wood and Captain Brenneman

The third Mishawaka Historical Marker was erected at 1801 E. Third Street, honoring Captain Richard Brenneman. The marker was to recognize Captain Brenneman’s 5+ years spent in a POW camp during the Vietnam War. Mr. Brenneman, who retired from the Air Force in 1993, was present for the celebration.

During May, which is National Historic Preservation Month, the Commission distributed over eighty yard-signs, to promote awareness of historic properties and the value they bring to the community. Twenty of those signs were first time installations.

A plaque was installed at the Eberhart house, 732 Lincolnway East. Street toppers were installed at Riviera Place and Normain Heights.

The Historic Preservation Commission was invited to hold its March meeting on Bethel University's campus. This started a dialogue on how the university could highlight the architectural and cultural significance of the university and its founders.



Riviera Place Street Topper



Normain Hgts Street Topper

For the fourth year, the Historic preservation Commission was an exhibitor at the Mishawaka Heritage Festival. Visitors to our booth inside Castle Manor were encouraged to participate in a coloring contest of local landmarks.

Zoning Enforcement and Administration

Another responsibility of the Planning Department is the enforcement of our ordinances and responding to violations and complaints in a speedy and considerate manner. In addition to countless phone calls and personal contact with those in violation, the Department followed up by sending out letters addressing land use concerns, notices of violation and citation warnings. Welcome letters, with sign code information, were mailed to new businesses opening in Mishawaka.

Economic Development

The Planning Department is also responsible for organizing and implementing programs and initiatives aimed at retaining local businesses and assisting them to grow and benefit the greater community. In 2019, the City continued to work with the St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce to better clarify roles and responsibilities to help respond to State leads and responses to requests. The Chamber serves as the Lead Economic Development Organization (L.E.D.O. for St. Joseph County). In 2019, the Department continued to actively participate in the process for Regional Cities of Northern Indiana.

Tax Abatements

The City Planning Department is responsible for reviewing and administering the tax abatement program of the City. This includes performing annual compliance reviews and presenting applicable information to the Mishawaka Common Council.

The City of Mishawaka awards tax abatements on commercial real estate and personal property taxes to corporations involved in new capital investments and facility expansions that will further the economic development of the Mishawaka community.

One tax abatement was submitted and approved in 2019. Jamil Packaging Corporation, a manufacturer of corrugated paper boxes and distributor of shipping supplies, received a personal property tax abatement for a \$1.55 million capital investment in new manufacturing equipment. The abatement petition indicated that a new Flexo folder-gluer for converting corrugated board will be added to their production line in the second quarter of the year. The equipment will allow for increased production as customer demand had exceeded manufacturing capacity.

Since 1986, the City has approved a total of 60 tax abatements for 40 different companies. Currently, there are 10 active abatements in the City including the following companies: BD Development LLC (St. Joseph Hospital Medical Office Building), Long Term Care Investments LLC, WellPet LLC, Barak River Rock LLC, Patrick Industries, River Walk Development Group LLC, Jamil Packaging Corporation, and Lippert Components.