

## **Building and Planning Department**

*Brock Hundt, Building Commissioner*

*Kenneth B. Prince, ASLA, AICP, Executive Director*

### **Overview**

The Building and Planning Departments are responsible for overseeing all aspects of city planning and providing oversight and coordinating private construction within the City of Mishawaka. These departments also serve in a limited capacity to support the Community Development Department. The Planning Department also serves as the lead City department relative to economic development initiatives and services. On a daily basis, the Building and Planning departments are 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 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 basis

## **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 2021, the Building Department conducted 3,227 inspections. This is significantly more than the 2,651 inspections that were performed in 2020. The increase was likely not just because of increased activity, but also the fact that 2020 was significantly impacted by the measures undertaken to control the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each inspector typically 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.

### **Planning and Community Development Staff Restructure**

In 2021, the Planning and Community Development Department was restructured with the addition of one position. In the last 20 years the number of staff dropped from roughly 12 positions to 7 total positions. This corresponded with a reduction in federal programs, a narrower focus on the City's use of federal funding, and the property tax caps which required the removal of positions from the City to meet budgetary constraints. In 2021, Ken Prince was made the Executive Director giving up the title of City Planner which he held for close to 20 Years. Derek Spier was promoted from Senior Planner to City Planner. Christa Hill was promoted from Associate Planner to Senior Planner. Lastly, we welcomed Shad Annis who joined the Department as Associate Planner.

### **Building and Development Activity**

The City of Mishawaka continued to grow in 2021. The City issued permits with a total estimated construction cost of \$121 million dollars. This is significantly more than the \$61 million dollars issued in 2020 where the measures undertaken to control the COVID-19 pandemic had a more severe impact on activities. In comparison, our largest construction year this past decade occurred in 2018 with a total estimated construction cost of 158 million dollars.

In 2021, permits were issued for only 40 new single-family homes, down from the 65 new single-family home permits that were issued in 2020. This drop was in part due to the lack of single-family home lots available in the City. Since the 2008 housing crisis, there have been very few new subdivision lots created. With the increased demand, multiple subdivision expansions were proposed in 2021 at Autumn Ridge, Reverewood, and Clover Valley (formerly Ridgmont Crossing). The potential for more single-family housing will increase as these additional lots become available.

As indicated in previous reports, the average number of new single-family home starts is still significantly lower than the starts that occurred prior to 2007. Our continued residential growth is still significant. This single-family home growth combined with the continued growth of multiple family housing that has grown over time and contributes to a healthy and diverse housing market in the City.

### **Continued Commercial Growth**

In 2021, commercial permits were issued with an estimated construction cost of 104.9 million dollars. This is much more than the 40.7 million dollars of commercial permits issued in 2020. Although this number can fluctuate significantly from year-to-year based on the timing of when permits are pulled for a few large projects, 2021 was unique in that there were multiple large City driven projects that represent the majority of the commercial construction. This was by design, in response to the COVID 19 pandemic, the City started 45 million dollars of construction projects that will take place over a three-year period.

By the numbers, 16 new commercial building permits were pulled for new freestanding buildings in 2021 which is significantly more than the 9 started in 2019. The three largest permits pulled in 2021 were all City projects. The single largest permit was for the new Juday Creek Water Treatment facility and wellfield for the Mishawaka Utilities Water Division with an estimated construction cost of \$30.8 Million. The second largest

Year	Estimated Construction Value	Dollar Change	Percentage Change
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%
2020	61.0 Million	-18.7 Million	-30.7%
2021	121.7 Million	+60.7 Million	+49.9%
<b>10-Year Total</b>	<b>913.6 Million</b>		
<b>10-Year Average</b>	<b>91.4 Million</b>	<b>+7.7 million / year</b>	<b>+3.3% / year</b>

permit was for the renovation of the former Liberty Mutual call center converting it into the new Mishawaka City Hall. This project has an estimated construction cost of \$20.2 million. The third largest permit was for the new City of Mishawaka Ironworks Skate/Event/Café project with an estimated construction cost of \$15.0 million. These three projects accounted for 66 million dollars of the 104.9 million dollar estimated construction cost for commercial permits in 2021.

## Department Revenue

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 the administrative costs can be rolled into the project cost as a small percentage. In 2021 the Building Department collected fees totaling \$490,178. This is almost identical to the \$490,208 collected in 2020. 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.

Top 10 Permits by Estimated Construction Cost (2021)		
Juday Creek Wellfield	5801 Veterans Parkway	\$30.8m
Mishawaka City Hall	100 Lincolnway West	\$20.2m
Ironworks Skate/Events/Cafe	410 North Hill Street	\$15m
Gumwood Water Tower	300 Grandview Drive	\$6.9m
Wellpet Expansion	1121 West 11th Street	\$6.0m
Rivercrest Hospital Add.	1625 East Jefferson Boulevard	\$2.5m
TMJ Sleep Center	7221 Fir Road	\$2.0m
Haven Behavioral Health Remodel	215 West 4th Street	\$1.8m
Bliss Assisted Living	1410 Deer Run Drive	\$1.4m
Innova Credit Union	605 East University Drive	\$1.4m
Juday Creek Wellfield	5801 Veterans Parkway	\$30.8m

The Planning Department fee structure is designed to cover only a portion of the costs of running the department. Many of the functions of the department are directed at guiding individuals through the development process that the average person may have trouble navigating without professional assistance. In 2021, the Planning Department collected fees totaling \$47,095. This is down from the \$51,354 collected in in 2020.

## Construction Activity Analysis

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, the Beacon Health System expansion on Beacon Parkway, and now the proposed regional recreation facility off of the recently completed first sections of Veteran’s Parkway.

In 2021, the 121.7 million-dollar total estimated construction cost is roughly 25% higher than our 10-year average. This increase in construction can be directly attributed to City improvement projects including the stimulus bond that was executed specifically to address the impacts to construction we believed would happen as part of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our residential activity remained steady with remodels increasing by roughly 16%. This is in part driven by the general shift that has occurred which emphasizes working from home.

Although Mishawaka’s construction numbers were up in 2021 due to City projects, private commercial investment has remained relatively constant. The long-term construction forecast for the City remains promising. Industry analysts estimate that many consumer behaviors have likely permanently changed as a result of the pandemic. In Mishawaka, we have seen many businesses make changes on the fly to deal with more drive through, curbside pickup, and delivery services as part of normal operations. In 2022 and beyond there will continue to be a demand for reinvestment and growth as various entities will look again to make strategic investments.

With known projects being actively worked on, we anticipate that private investment should be up significantly in 2022. There will also be multiple smaller, but still significant City projects as part of the stimulus bond that will start construction in 2022. In 2022, we think it is reasonable to expect a year comparable to the level of construction in 2021.

New Single-Family Home Construction by Year	
2021	40 Homes
2020	65 Homes
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

### 2020 Planning and Building Permits

A summary of the 2021 permit activity is as follows:

#### Residential

- 16.8 million in estimated construction costs (\$3.5 million less than 2020)
  - 40 new single-family homes
  - 808 residential alterations/additions

### Multi-Family

- No permits for new buildings occurred in 2021, for reference no permits were issued in 2020 either

### Commercial / Industrial

- \$104.9 million in estimated construction costs (\$64.2 million more than 2020)
  - 16 new commercial buildings
  - 165 alterations/additions (107 in 2020)

### **Annexations**

The City continues to grow in a steady and orderly fashion. There were four voluntary annexations, adding approximately 36.3 acres to the City in 2021. This represents an increase of 0.06 square miles. In comparison, the City grew by 13.2 acres in 2020. The existing area within the City limits, according to our Geographic Information System, is now 18.31 square miles.

2021 annexations included:

1. **MOE AN LLC & Blair Hills Community Association Inc. (Owners) / Westview Capital LLC (Contingent Purchaser/Developer) – Vacant Land North of the Autumn Ridge Subdivision**  
19.9 acres annexed and zoned R-1 Single-Family residential to allow for the expansion of the adjacent Autumn Ridge subdivision. The development will include new streets, utilities, storm water drainage infrastructure, and other required improvements. A subdivision plat for Phase IV was submitted in early 2022 that includes 39 new single-family residential lots within the annexation area. Phase III, Sections 1 and 2 are anticipated for development to the south prior to commencing construction within the newly annexed area. Construction will include multiple phases with the initial phase to begin in early 2022.
2. **All Secure Storage County Road 17 LLC – 16996 State Road 23**  
5.24 acres annexed and zoned I-1 Light Industrial to allow for the construction of a mini-self storage facility. The development is proposed to include 13 mini-storage unit buildings, a parking area, access drives, and storm water retention area. The first phase is anticipated to include eight buildings with construction to begin 2022. The remaining building are planned for 2024 or 2025.
3. **Diroll Investments, LLC – Vacant Land East of 1420 Industrial Drive**  
9.15 acres annexed and zoned I-1 Light Industrial for the expansion of an adjacent manufacturing business. Jamil Packaging Corporation occupies a multi-building facility west of the annexation area and has future plans for a building addition. No anticipated date for construction was given.
4. **Wennigsen LLC & Fox Fire Safety Inc. – 12452 (4525) & 12434 (4605) Lincolnway East**  
1.9 acres annexed and zoned C-1 General Commercial for a carry-out/delivery pizza restaurant and I-1 Light Industrial for a fire safety equipment and service business. Fox

Fire Safety plans to purchase the rear part of the west parcel for a future building expansion. The parcels will continue to be used and occupied as is, with no immediate plans for additional improvements or redevelopment.

## **Downtown Development**

### *Ironworks Skate/Events/Café Building*

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 that connects thousands of homes to 7 City parks located along the St. Joseph River.

For almost two decades 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.

Once completed, we believe that the Ironworks Skate / Café / Events building, will turn Beutter Park into a year-round attraction and will become one of the signature places to visit in the South Bend/Elkhart region.

### *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 proximity of other restaurants, the downtown, and the Riverwalk, the amenity has the ability to attract people even if they are not directly participating in skating. We loved Elkhart’s NIBCO Park when it was created and wanted to use a similar theme but place it in an environment where diverse downtown uses add to the attraction.

We are looking at this as a Mishawaka’s scaled down version of Rockefeller Center. The urban setting, the café, the art, the immediately adjacent housing, the Riverwalk, and restaurants all contribute to the activity. The building required a unique design containing three distinct uses: a café, the rink, 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.



*View from the Ironworks “Events” space under construction, picture taken in early February 2022*

This proposed rink facility is intended to replace the City’s current rink in Merrifield Park which is at the end of its useful life. The event space was added to take advantage of the geographically prominent position of the building and to fulfill a need for event space that has been identified by the City Parks Department. Compared to other venues in our park system, the event center will be “high end” space available for rental. This event space will provide perhaps the best views of the St. Joseph River and Beutter Park in the City.

### Signature Café

One of the elements that separate the proposed Beutter Park improvements from other park venues is the type of café envisioned. Although the café building will be owned by the City, the space is intended to be leased to a private entity, likely at a below market rate in order to incentivize providing the desired unique eatery/coffee house/dessert/evening drink destination. The City will undertake a request for proposal process this spring with the hope of having an operator in place for the opening of skating season. The space will have a modern décor of glass, steel and wood with stone accents. The café will have its own outdoor seating area and will contain an indoor/outdoor fireplace contributing to the winter ambiance.

### Ironworks Plaza

The proposed 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 in the summer will be used for a variety of activities including registration for runs, outdoor performances, markets, and even weddings. In the winter, the main portion of the plaza will be used for skating, and the small stage will be used to display the City Christmas tree.

### 2021 Progress

In 2021, the City bid and entered into a contract with Weigand Construction to construct the building and rink components of the project. The total project costs are estimated at 20 million dollars and was funded as part of the tax increment financed stimulus bond that was approved in the summer of 2020. We are excited that the building has taken form and we can see the change in the downtown landscape. In 2022 we have already ordered the furnishings for the building. The new Zamboni has been ordered. The skates and skating accessories, including bumper cars have been ordered. We are very excited to see this facility open at the end of 2022!



*Ironworks Skate/Events/Café Building- under construction, February 2022*

### 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, and the Architectural design is being performed by Spalding Design Group of Mishawaka.

We are excited about the potential project that will bring additional 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. Although the project was supposed to break ground in 2020, it was delayed in part because of the uncertainties associated with the pandemic. Based on recent discussions with this development group, we expect that a revised development agreement will be presented to the Redevelopment Commission in early 2022 and that construction could start later in the year.

### 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. Unfortunately, the pandemic dealt a crushing blow to the hospitality industry as a whole. In January of 2021, the City Redevelopment Commission and the Barak group modified our previous agreement to provide the developer more time to complete the project. In 2022, we expect that the Barak Group will either move forward with the hotel, or that a decision will be made to conclude the agreement and remarket the property.

### Riverwalk Apartments

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. The principals involved in the Riverwalk Apartment project met with the staff in early 2022 and have indicated that they would still like to potentially proceed with a reconceived project in 2022 despite being delayed in part due to the pandemic. We anticipate that the developer will either present reconceived plans by the summer of 2022 or that the agreement will be concluded to allow the City to remarket the property.

### Beacon Health

In 2021 the City entered into a development agreement with Beacon Health Systems for a multi-phased Health services building that will be located at the north east corner of Lincolnway and Church Street. The agreement included the sale of the Mishawaka Utilities Business Office located at 126 North Church Street. This is a significant redevelopment project and exactly what the City was looking for as part of our ongoing redevelopment efforts for downtown.

Phase 1 of the project is an estimated 12.5 million-dollar investment. Phase 2 which would include the property that currently houses the Mishawaka Utilities Business Office is estimated to be another 8 million dollars for a total 20.5 million-dollar investment. Construction will begin in the spring of 2022 and will start with the demolition of most of the existing office building.



*Rendering of proposed Beacon Health Medical Offices*

The foundation walls located along Church Street will be retained because of the close proximity to the road. Part of the agreement includes the shared use of a portion of the surface parking that has been proposed. Since the use of medical offices will primarily be during the day, there is an opportunity that the surface parking can also be used by patrons utilizing the Riverwalk or attending other downtown parks or restaurants on nights or weekends.

### **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 2021, the Planning Department was responsible for directing private engineering and architecture 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. Since that approval, given the use and timeframe associated with federal funds, construction is 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 were required to make this Riverwalk connection.

Over the course of 2021, the City was able to obtain the last two additional properties required for this connection. The lack of response from a mortgage company required the City to obtain a right of access agreement on one of the properties to allow the project to proceed with the actual closing on that property to occur at a later date.

In early 2022 the City bid the project for construction. We only received one bid for close to 6.1 million dollars which was almost double the engineers estimate of 3.3 million dollars. We rejected the one bid and have worked with our engineering consultant DLZ to modify the project to both reduce project costs and to increase the potential number of bidders. In reviewing the project with contractors, the limited workspace, the specialty work within the river, a reduced number of firms capable of performing the work, and a lot of State work being bid at the same time all contributed to the much higher bid price. We plan to rebid the project in the spring of 2022 and hope to be under construction later this year.

### Founder's Circle

In 2020, the City contracted with the Robert Henry Corporation to build Founder's Circle in Beutter Park. When the park was designed and constructed in 2004, an area of the park was reserved for a future art installation. As constructed this area of the park had been lawn area that was surrounded by a circular crushed granite path. This path and area remained unfinished until now. Founder's Circle was created to memorialize the founding of our city and memorialize key figures in our history. The City of Mishawaka's early history was shaped by industrialists, politicians, and even the clergy. The most significant of them are memorialized in "Founder's Circle".



*Founder's Circle at Beutter Park, following plaque installation*

In 2021 plaques were installed by US Signcrafters and official ribbon cutting occurred that included some of the relatives of our Founders. It is now also the now permanent home of the City's Perkin's Windmill which was previously temporarily displayed at the traffic circle at the intersection of Front Street and Spring Street. This space was chosen because the windmill was

actually made on this site where the former Perkin’s Windmill factory once stood. Founder’s Circle another special unique space that has been created within Beutter Park.

New City Hall

As was noted last year’s report, in January of 2020 the City acquired the former Liberty Mutual call center building located at 100 Lincolnway West in the heart of downtown to construct a new City Hall. The building will better serve the public by not only combining three separate buildings, City Hall, Police, and the Mishawaka Utilities Business Office, into one for efficiency, 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. The move also opens 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.

In 2020, we worked with Alliance Architects and a talented group of consultants to create construction plans for the renovation. Given the size and complexity of the project, the plans were completed in February of 2021. Also, in 2020, following an open request for proposal process, the City hired Weigand Construction to be the Construction Manager as Constructor (CMc) for the project. Construction began in 2021 and should be substantially complete in July of 2022. The building renovation costs are just over 20 Million dollars. In addition, the site improvements that include road, sidewalk, and utility work serving more than just the building, was bid and will be constructed by C & E Excavation. The cost of the site and utility work is just over 4 million dollars.



*Liberty Mutual Building, 100 Lincolnway West – Summer of 2019*



*New Mishawaka City Hall, 100 Lincolnway West,  
Under Construction February 2022*

Following the completion of construction, the furnishings will be brought into the building. A large quantity of the furnishings from Liberty Mutual have been refurbished and will be used by the City. All the cubicles will have a new skinned fabric. The chairs being re-used will have been cleaned and checked to be in proper working order.

Once the new furnishing and storage systems are assembled and in place, this will then be followed by the move of each Department the newly renovated building. Prior to Police Department move, we plan on having multiple open houses for the public to view the renovated facility. Once evidence storage is moved and police operations have started, the Police Station portion of the building will have security protocols that will prevent similar tours from happening once it is occupied.

We anticipate that the building will be occupied and open for business in the fall of 2022. Once completed, new City Hall will not only dramatically modernize and improve the image of downtown Mishawaka, but it should also increase activity that will benefit existing businesses and foster additional redevelopment.

## 2021 Activity of Commissions and Boards

### Plan Commission

A total of 64 petitions were filed before the Plan Commission in 2020. This is 1 less than the 65 petitions received in 2020. In comparison our filings are still significantly lower than the peak of 104 petitions filed in 2007. Petitions for 2021 included 21 rezoning/annexation requests, 23 final site plans and 20 Plats/Re-plats. In 2021, long time Commission member, and our then President of the Plan Commission, Matthew Lentsch stepped down as part of his move to run a not-for-profit out of the state. We wish Matt well and thank him for his many years of service!

2021 Plan Commission		
Christopher Tordi	President	Park and Rec. Board
Dale Freeman	Vice President	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.
Samuel Cressy	Member	Mayor Appt.
Dale (Woody) Emmons	Member	Common Council

### Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board of Zoning Appeals heard a total of 47 appeals in 2021. This is 12 less than the 59 appeals heard in 2020. Although this is a decrease when compared to 2020, the activity of the Board has historically varied and is not directly related to construction trends.

2021 Board of Zoning Appeals	
Marcia Wells	Chair
Christopher Tordi	Vice Chair
Larry Stillson	Member
Charles Krueger	Member
Joel Dendiu	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.

An overview of the 2021 activities and accomplishments are as follows:

For National Historic Preservation Month in May, the Commission distributed over 90-yard signs, promoting awareness. Also, in May, the Mayor led a tour of recently unearthed WPA work at Eberhart Golf Course.

For the third consecutive year, we were included in the Senior Night Out event, presented by the Parks Department.

There were no Certificates of Appropriateness applied for in 2021. We did learn about South Bend’s administrative procedure, but given the small number of requests we hear, decided not to pursue it.

Continuing with virtual educational sessions, Christa, Alan, and Jennifer attended Preserving Historic Places, Indiana’s statewide preservation conference. Several members had access to videos after the conference to keep CLG credits current. Jennifer also attended the CAMP (Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program) sessions. Indiana Landmarks provided presentations throughout the year, which were later posted on their website. The most watched, at least by Commission members, was “It’s the Real Thing: Bottleworks District Terra Cotta Restoration” about the former Coca-Cola bottling plant in Indianapolis which is now a hotel.

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

Kamm & Schellinger Brewery (100 Center) was named to Indiana Landmarks 10 Most Endangered list. Some positives that came from that listing was learning about funding and processes now available through Indiana Landmarks to potentially make much needed repairs.

The State Historical Marker Kamm & Schellinger Brewery was removed by the HPC for restoration, including powder coating and painting. The State Historical Marker for First Bridge was reinstalled at the southwest corner of Main Street and Mishawaka Avenue. It was removed during the demolition of Uniroyal and was stored at City Hall for many years.

Historical Markers were installed for the Candoli Brothers Walter “Pete” and Secondo “Conte” at 404 W Eleventh St. and Irene Vergauwen Vernon Rosenberg at 404 S Taylor Street. Pete and Conte were both established musicians with Pete playing Carnegie Hall and Conte as regular in Doc Severinsen’s N.B.C. Orchestra on the Tonight Show for 20 years. Both were Inducted into The International Jazz Hall of Fame. Born Irene Vergauwen in 1922, she took the stage name

Vernon. She is in the movie “The Sound of Fury”, and her most prominent role was portraying Louise Tate for 13 episodes on the television series “Bewitched”.



*Irene Vernon – 404 S Taylor*



*Candoli Brothers – 404 W Eleventh*

In January 2022, we lost HPC member Faye Sullivan suddenly. Faye was originally appointed to the HPC in 2015. At that time, Mayor Wood would drive by 124 S. Race Street to see the progress she and her husband were making in restoring their historic home. Faye’s passion for historic preservation of her own home was evident and she was a natural to be considered for the Mayor’s appointment. During her tenure on the Commission, she was dedicated, personally contacting businesses and homeowners to participate in the National Preservation Month sign program, and even designing a window sign for those who didn’t have a yard. This personal touch was extended to the tea parties she hosted at her home. The week before her death, she welcomed new advisory members to her home for a delicious lunch before discussing the various committee options. Her bubbly enthusiasm, warmth and grace, as well as her wonderful Christmas treats, will be missed.

### **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. Once the pandemic restrictions were lifted, the Department continued to reach out to businesses regarding “now hiring” signs.

### **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 2021, 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 2021, the Department continued to actively participate in the process for Regional Cities of Northern Indiana.

## **READI**

In 2021 the State of Indiana sought proposals to distribute 50 million dollars to 10 different regions. The initiative is called the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI). Our Regional Development Authority (RDA) is the South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership which managed the application process for our region. In the summer of 2021 the City both prepared project applications, and assisted/supported other requests from private developers and St. Joseph County on other project submissions. At the direction of Mayor Wood, Mishawaka's plan of attack for submissions was much different than the First Round of Regional Cities. For the first round of Regional Cities, we intentionally submitted one large project, the Mill at Ironworks Plaza in partnership with Flaherty and Collins. The project was funded but at a lesser amount than what was requested. Of the 40 million dollars provided to the region, a little over 5 million came to Mishawaka.

At the end of 2021, the State announced that the South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership did in fact receive one of the awards. The RDA is now being trained on the restrictions associated with the use of these funds. Once that is complete, we believe there will be a formal application process for our region and that the money will be awarded in summer or fall of 2022. Based on the projects that were emphasized in our RDA's submission to the State to receive the award, we believe that the three projects that will fare the best will be the Mishawaka Fieldhouse regional recreation facility planned off of Veteran's Parkway, Flaherty and Collin's Mill Phase II project downtown, and George Wilson Park Winter Activity Improvements.

## **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.

Two tax abatements, both for the same company, were submitted and approved in 2021. WellPet LLC, a manufacturer of premium dog and cat food, received a real property abatement for a \$14.7 million building expansion and a personal property abatement for a \$27.9 million capital investment in new equipment. The abatement petitions indicated that an approximate 8,100 sq. ft. addition will be constructed along with new dryers, coating equipment, conveyance systems, and advanced odor control equipment. Construction began in the fall of 2021 with completion anticipated in late 2022.

Since 1986, the City has approved a total of 62 tax abatements for 40 different companies. Currently, there are 7 active abatements in the City including the following companies: Barak River Rock LLC, WellPet LLC, River Walk Development Group LLC, Jamil Packaging Corporation, and Lippert Components.

## **COVID-19 Recovery**

2021 proved to be a challenging but improving year compared to 2020 relative to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The wide distribution of vaccines and other medications allowed many activities to resume or have some sense of normalcy. Although multiple variants spiked and caused significant and illness and continued deaths, particularly for those that chose to go unvaccinated, restrictions continue to be lifted as time goes on.

To address the impacts of the crisis, Mayor Wood directed a multifaceted approach relative to our City's recovery and directed the Planning and Community Development Department to lead these initiatives. The three steps the City undertook included the targeted allocation of federal funding, a small business loan program, and a local construction stimulus bond. As previously reported, both the targeted allocation of federal funding and the small business loan program were only moderately successful. The federal funding which targeted our social safety net sub recipient organizations had COVID related restrictions that meant the funds could only be spent in certain ways. This resulted in some difficulties in actually spending the funding.

The small business that the loan program was supposed to only marginally successful in that only 6 businesses received loans for just under \$60,000. We think that the limited interest in the loans was in part due to other programs, particularly at the federal level, which provided outright grants of money that did not require payback to help businesses deal with the pandemic impacts. At the local level, we chose not to pursue the outright giving of local tax money to businesses, looking at local support as a way to bridge hard times and a desire not to favor one type of business over another.

### **Local Construction Stimulus**

One of the impacts of the pandemic for the City of Mishawaka was a decrease in construction activity. Unfortunately, this issue is much more complicated than just a simple drop-in activity. There have been radical changes in multiple industries. In addition to the illness impacts, the pandemic caused millions of people to retire or leave current positions creating a shortage of employees in many professions. The restaurant and hospitality industry were impacted severely. In Mishawaka specifically, even a local Kentucky Fried Chicken/Taco Bell closed and identified the reason as a simple lack of available staff. Other businesses have struggled to hire and have cut or changed hours as a result of these impacts. The pandemic has also caused supply chain issues that are world-wide. As an example, although there is a very high demand, car manufacturers have had to slow production simply because they are not able to obtain computer chips necessary for their production. These and other factors have impacted the supply and demand and has caused the price and lead times for many items to soar. Inflation is the highest it has been since the early 1980's and is currently at about 7% per year.

In Mishawaka, many of the private sector construction projects that had been planned to begin prior to the pandemic were delayed with some even being cancelled.

As part of the recovery for Mishawaka, a stimulus bond through the City's consolidated Tax Increment Financing District was approved. It is important to note that because this is a bond being paid for from an existing revenue stream, the bond did not impact the City's tax rate or increase property taxes as a result of the issuance.

Because of the slow-down associated with the pandemic and the historically low cost of borrowing the City approved 45 million dollars of projects to be constructed over three years. Although there is always a cost to borrowing, we believed at the time that the additional cost would be made up when you consider the inflationary costs of construction over time. Given the dramatic recent increases in inflation and the anticipated increases in interest costs for borrowing, we feel very fortunate that we were able to lock into a lower interest rate and bid a number of large projects before the worst of these ongoing pandemic impacts hit.

At that time, we felt that keeping the construction trades active would not only help them, but the activity will have a significant compounding effect on our overall economy. The suppliers, local restaurants, and service businesses all would see immediate and tangible benefits from this activity.

Choosing projects to move forward as part of the stimulus was not hard. We proposed accelerating projects to that have been in our capital improvement plans for years but had been waiting for us to assemble the cash to pay for them consistent with our past conservative practices.

The following projects were included in the stimulus. The original engineer’s estimate and the status of the project is listed as well.

<b>Stimulus Bond Issue - Proposed Projects</b>		
<b>Crawford Park Niles Avenue</b>	\$1,993,000	This project was completed in 2021 and is summarized in the Engineering Department Annual Report
<b>Cedar Street - Mishawaka to Madison</b>	\$2,141,700	This project was completed in 2021 and is summarized in the Engineering Department Annual Report.
<b>Ironworks Plaza @ Beutter Phase 3 Café / Rink / Event</b>	\$20,500,000	This project was bid in 2021 and is under construction. It is expected to be complete at the end of 2022.
<b>Battell Veterans Walk</b>	\$2,000,000	This project is under design and is expected to be bid in 2022, with a 2023 completion.
<b>Normain Park Master Plan / Restroom Replacement</b>	\$250,000	This project is under design. A master plan for the park is currently being prepared. A public meeting will occur with the neighborhood in early 2022. The restroom will likely be replaced in 2023.
<b>Ironworks Plaza Sculptures, 4 Total</b>	\$330,000	The contract for the sculptures has been approved. It is anticipated that the sculptures will be installed prior to the opening of the facility at the end of 2022.
<b>Crawford Park Phase 1</b>	\$2,200,000	This project is under design and is expected to be bid in 2022, with a 2023 completion.
<b>Riverwalk Restoration project, bank armoring</b>	\$2,400,000	This project is under design and is expected to be bid in 2022, with a 2023 completion.
<b>West Street Connector</b>	\$770,000	This project is tied to the Flaherty and Collins Mill Phase II project. The design of the project will be done concurrently with the development of the Mill construction drawings in 2022.
<b>Fire Station #2 Design and Construction</b>	\$7,600,000	This project is under design and is expected to be bid in 2022, with a 2023 completion.
<b>Cedar St. Motor Pool Reclamation / Infrastructure</b>	\$4,000,000	We have continued to work with our consulting engineer on developing a reclamation plan that can be approved by IDEM. More progress will occur in 2022 with the majority of work expected in 2023.