



City of Vassar
Annual Planning Commission Report
2020

Introduction

The Planning Commission is responsible for creating a master plan for the physical development of the city. They review comprehensive programs for capital improvements, rezoning requests, site plans, subdivisions, special use permits and other land use applications. They also review the widening and extension of streets, the development of parks and other public improvements.

The Planning Commission develops new zoning standards and ensures that the standards of appropriate environmental protection legislation are applied. The Commission consists of nine members who serve three-year terms.

Purpose

The purpose for the Planning Commission Annual Report is for a few reasons. First, it is required by law. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act states that “A planning commission shall make an annual written report to the legislative body concerning its operations and the status of planning activities, including recommendations regarding actions by the legislative body related to planning and development. This means that all planning commissions across the state of Michigan, including Vassar, must provide an annual report that summarizes what the planning commission has done in the given year.

Second, the annual report increases information-sharing between staff, boards, commission, and the governing body. This allows for anticipation of upcoming issues and priorities, to prepare and budget, if necessary. In addition, it allows for more transparency and provides more trust in the City’s operations.

Third, it gives the City of Vassar the opportunity to thank board and commission members for their time and good work. Working together in groups is not always easy, especially when the group has different ideas and motives. The Planning Commission has the common interest of what they feel is best for Vassar. With the Planning Commission Annual Report, we can take the time to thank them for their time and energy dedicated to their public service.

Commission Members

Name	Appointed	Term Expires
Michael Damm	Council Liaison	Tenure
Gary Kasper	07/2007	06/30/2021
Buryl Binder	08/2013	06/30/2021
Ian Rudnik	03/2014	06/30/2020
Jennifer Miller	2014	06/30/2023
Nathaniel Miller	2014	06/30/2023
Benjamin Kaiser	02/2020	06/30/2023

Attendance

	M. Damm	G. Kasper	B. Binder	I. Rudnik	J. Miller	N. Miller	B. Kaiser
January 20	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
February 24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
March	No Meeting						
April 27	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
May	No Meeting						
June 15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
July	No Meeting						
August 17	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
September	No Meetings						
October							
November 23	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
December	No Meeting						

Meetings

The Commission meets the third Monday of each month (please see calendar for exceptions) at 6:30 PM at Vassar City Hall. City Hall is located at 287 E. Huron Avenue, Vassar.

Meeting Dates	Meeting Summary
January 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion was had ref zoning ordinance amendments. Public Hearing had been in reference to the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance at 6:39pm until 6:41pm. • Public Comment: None • Commission Member Comments: None • City Manager Announcements & Statements: Interim Manager updated the commission as to the progress as to the progress of the city manager search.
February 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Plan Reviews. 19-01: 542 State Rd-340 SMV LLC; 19-02: 302 E. Huron Ave-Pharmaco; 20-03: 327 S. Main St-DRJ Michigan; 20-04: 18 Enterprise Dr-Motor City Oasis; 20-01: Micron 475 Goodrich St-Agronomod Vassar LLC. Motion to approve all sites was passed. • 18 Enterprise Dr-Motor City Oasis building review. Motion to approve was passed. • 999 E Huron Ave-Earthly Alt building review. Motion to approve was passed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 945 E Huron Ave-Secure Transport. Motion to approve was passed. ● Public Comment: None ● Commission Member Comments: None ● City Manager Announcements & Statements: Manager Search update-Andrew Niedzinski
April 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2020-2021 Capital Improvement Plan. Discussion on CIP. Motion to approve was carried. ● 124 N Water St. Discussed Plan. Motion to approve was carried. ● 81 Enterprise Dr. Motion to approve was carried. ● 947 E Huron Ave. Motion to approve was carried. ● Public Comment: None ● Commission Member Comments: None ● City Manager Announcements & Statements: None
June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 700 E Huron. Justin Dunaskiss discussed the project and answered questions of the Planning Commission. Motion to approve the site plan was unanimous. ● 542 State St. Planning Commission discussed the project. Motion to approve the site plan was unanimous. ● 643 E Huron. Wesley Barber discussed the project and also asked for the Planning Commission to allow for a smaller parking lot. Motion to approve the site plan was unanimous. Motion to allow for reduced parking and allow for administrative approval by City Manager of updated site plan was unanimous. ● Public Comment: None ● Commission Member Comments: None ● City Manager Announcements & Statements: None
August 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Class A Designation-134 N Main St. Motion to approve was passed. ● Public Comment: Kathy Dubois ● Commission Member Comments: None ● City Manager Announcements & Statements: None
November 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion of Master Plan survey. ● Public Comment: None ● Commission Member Comments: None ● City Manager Announcements & Statements: None

Master Plan Review

No changes were made to the Master Plan during 2020.

Zoning Ordinances

- 1) **Ordinance No. 2019-06:**
 - a) **Effective Date:** These amendments shall take immediate effect upon publication of this ordinance in a newspaper or general circulation.
 - b) Public Hearing of Planning Commission-November 15, 2019; 1st Reading by Council-December 2, 2019; 2nd Reading & Public Hearing by Council-January 6, 2020; Adopted by Council-January 6, 2020; Published in the Tuscola County Advertiser-January 11, 2020.
- 2) **Ordinance No. 2019-09:** At the January 6, 2020 regular council meeting, the Vassar Council did adopt the following: Ordinance No. 2019-09 an ordinance for the City of Vassar, Michigan amending the following: Chapter 50: Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions – Article 2: Uniform Marihuana Ordinance.
 - a) **Effective Date:** These amendments shall take immediate effect upon publication of this ordinance in a newspaper or general circulation.
 - b) 1st Reading-December 2, 2019; 2nd Reading-January 6, 2020; Public Hearing of Council-January 6, 2020; Adopted by Council-January 6, 2020; Published in the Tuscola County Advertiser-January 11, 2020.
- 3) **Ordinance No. 2020-01:** At the February 18, 2020 special council meeting, the Vassar City Council did adopt the following: Ordinance 2020-01 an ordinance of the City of Vassar, Michigan, amending the following: Chapter 86: Zoning: In part to address Marihuana Businesses within the City of Vassar in accordance with State Law.
 - a) **Effective Date:** These amendments shall take immediate effect upon publication of this ordinance in a newspaper or general circulation.
 - b) Public Hearing of Vassar Planning Commission-January 20, 2020; 1st Hearing by Council-February 3, 2020; 2nd Hearing by Council-February 18, 2020; Public Hearing of Council-February 18, 2020; Adopted by Council-February 18, 2020; Published in the Tuscola County Advertiser-February 22, 2020.
- 4) **Ordinance No. 2020-02:** At the September 14, 2020 regular council meeting, the Vassar City Council did adopt the following: Ordinance No. 2020-02 an ordinance of the City of Vassar, Michigan, amending the following: Chapter 10 – Building and Building Regulations: - Section 31: Adoption of Michigan State Construction Codes.
 - a) **Effective Date:** These amendments shall take immediate effect upon publication of this ordinance in a newspaper or general circulation.
 - b) 1st Reading by Council-August 3, 2020; 2nd Reading by Council-September 14, 2020; Public Hearing of Council-September 14, 2020; Adopted by Council-September 14, 2020; Published in the Tuscola County Advertiser-September 23, 2020.

Announcements & News

This year in 2020, Vassar witnessed changes to the community, both good and bad. In March 2020, the City of Vassar announced that it would close its doors to the public. It was to ensure that the city would oblige Governor Whitmer's orders to lockdown the state. The city took measures to ensure members of the public and employees to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This included obtaining and installing Plexiglas windows at the receptionist counters, hand sanitizing stations around City Hall, and mask requirements to contain the spread of the virus.

The lockdown, in part due to the pandemic, made it a challenge to meet and discuss as a commission. Thanks in part to Zoom, the Planning Commission was able to meet within the safety of our homes. In part to communication software, the Planning Commission was able to continue meeting throughout the rest of 2020.

In this same year, we saw our City Manager, Brian Chapman, leave our community to take another City Manager position with the City of Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula. We thanked Brian for his service to our community and wished him the best of luck as he will be beginning his new journey while he finishes his duties with us in Vassar. We will miss him dearly.

As City Manager Chapman left for his new position, another individual began his journey in Vassar as well. Andrew Niedzinski, former interim City Manager for the City of Pinconning, and a former intern/ Executive Assistant for City Manager Chapman here in Vassar, was appointed in January 2020 to begin his position as our new City Manager in March. We have been humbled to work with him and discuss business in planning as usual. As a bonus in September 2020, City Manager Niedzinski hired a new intern/Executive Assistant Chris Frazer to aide him in completing projects that will further benefit the community of Vassar as Niedzinski did before becoming City Manager.