

# CITY OF MASON

## Zoning and Development Department

### 2008 Annual Report

During 2008, the Department of Zoning and Development continued to provide services to the community relating to planning, zoning, building inspections and code enforcement. In addition to day-to-day responsibilities, the Zoning and Development Department provides staffing to various Boards, Commissions and Committees, including the following:

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Building Code Board of Appeals
- Sign Board of Appeals
- Historic District Commission

The Zoning and Development Department is responsible for the following Chapters of the Mason City Code:

- Chapter 6 (Building and Building Regulations)
- Chapter 22 (Environment)
- Chapter 30 (Floods)
- Chapter 31 (Historic Preservation)
- Chapter 58 (Signs)
- Chapter 74 (Subdivisions and Other Divisions of Land)
- Chapter 86, Article II (Vegetation)
- Chapter 94 (Zoning)

In addition to the code responsibilities described above, the Department is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance needs for City Hall, the Police Department, the Mason Library, and other City property including 822 Mason Street and the City's rental property located at 441 North Jefferson Street.

#### **PERSONNEL**

The Zoning and Development Department is comprised of the following personnel:

- David Haywood, Zoning & Development Director
- John Dodson, Building Official/Building Inspector
- Jessica Besaw, Intern – Spring 2008
- Jacob Pettengill, Intern – Fall 2008

#### **ZONING DIVISION**

The Zoning Division was involved in a variety of projects during 2008, including but not limited to the following:

- A. Prepared staff reviews for special use permits, site plans, zoning amendments, site plan reviews for building permits, code enforcement, assignment of addresses for new commercial and residential structures, and land division requests.
- B. Prepared the following planning documents for the respective Board/Commission:
  - 1. Worked with the City Administrator, Planning Commission and Department Heads to complete the 2008-2014 Capital Improvement Plan (Planning Commission)
  - 2. Prepared the Mason Five-Year Recreation Plan 2008-2013 through a series of community workshops, school survey and public input (City Council)
- C. Worked with the Historic District Commission on the resource inventory update project.
- D. Attended the Heart of Michigan Parks and Trails Committee meetings to stay in tune with area efforts to expand regional trail systems.
- E. Attended Mason Economic Development Committee meetings informing members of City business and development activities.
- F. Through Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, served as a member to the Urban and Rural Service Boundary Committee.
- G. Finalized the address list for the Local Update of Decennial Census Addresses Program for the 2010 U.S. Census.
- H. Initiated a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund recreation grant for an eastern loop trail connecting Bond Park, Laylin Park, Ingham County Rayner Park and Fairground, Mason High School, Mason Middle School, and Steele Street Elementary School to the Hayhoe Riverwalk Trail.
- I. Continued to report on current department activities through use of the Mason Newsletter and City website.
- J. Reported monthly code enforcement progress to the City Administrator.
- K. Provided input to the Building Committee on the City Hall/Police Department Municipal Complex project.
- L. Provided input to the Downtown Development Authority on the development of their Market Study.
- M. Attended the following training courses:
  - 1. Michigan Zoning Enabling Act Workshop
  - 2. Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council – Local Food Production Workshop
  - 3. Wind Energy Siting and Policy Issues Workshop

4. Michigan Planning Enabling Act Workshop – “Play by the Rules, Plan by the Law”
  5. Michigan Association of Planning Annual Conference
  6. CPR Training
- N. Prepared the following amendments to the Mason City Code for City Council consideration and adoption:
1. Ordinance No. 165 – Soil Erosion and Sedimentation (pending)
  2. Ordinance No. 166 – Outdoor Seating
  3. Ordinance No. 170 – Public Trees

The Zoning and Development Department has been active in the past year with development permits and variances. The following table illustrates the comparative levels of zoning permits between 2006 and 2008.

Zoning Permit Type	2006	2007	2008
Rezoning	4	0	3
Special Use Permits	2	3	4
Preliminary Site Plan Reviews*	1	0	0
Final Site Plan Reviews	2	2	3
Plats (Preliminary / Final)	0	0	0
Planned Unit Developments	0	0	0
Parking Lot Plan Reviews	0	1	0
Land Divisions**	3	4	5
Zoning Board of Appeals	6	3	4
Historic District Commission	7	4	10
Building Code Board of Appeals	3	5	0
Sign Code Board of Appeals	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>

\* Preliminary site plan reviews not covered by special use permits.

\*\* Includes lot combinations and land conveyances.

## **BUILDING DIVISION**

The Zoning Division was involved in a variety of projects during 2008, including but not limited to the following:

- A. Conducted building inspections, plan reviews and code enforcement.
- B. Coordinated inspections/plan reviews with Fire Chief regarding proposed and damaged structures.
- C. Coordinated the asbestos removal from City property located at 822 Mason Street.

- D. Conducted routine and emergency maintenance at the following City properties;
1. 441 N. Jefferson Street
  2. Mason Library
  3. Mason City Hall
- E. Attended the following training courses:
1. Incident command training
  2. CPR/First aid
  3. Code Officials Conference of Michigan – Annual Conference
  4. Code Officials Conference of Michigan – Quarterly Meetings
  5. Huron Valley Association of Code Officials – Monthly Training Course

The overall level of building permits issued in 2008 decreased significantly (17.6 percent) as compared to permits issued in 2007. Residential permits are down 53.8 percent from a year ago, with all of residential permits shifting to single-family. However, this is not surprising in today's economic downturn. In fact, we are please to see the level of residential and commercial investment and re-investment in the community.

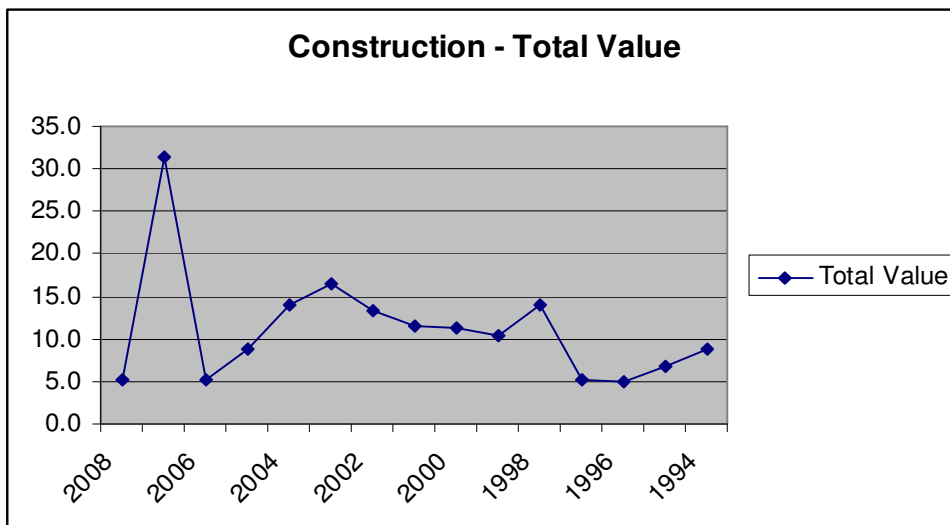
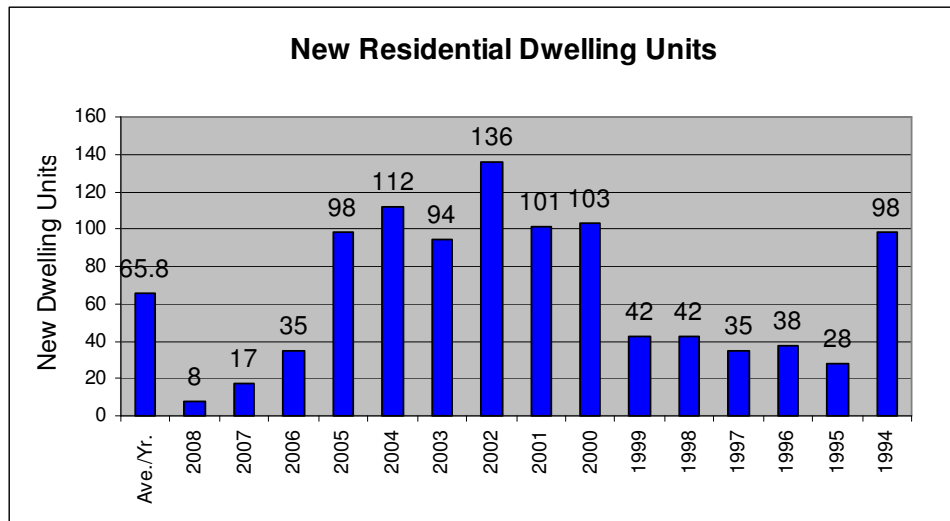
The following table illustrates the comparative building activity in the City for the past three years:

<b>Building Permit Type</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Single family permits	3	13	8
Value	\$716,500	\$1,549,300	\$570,500
Two-family permits	2	2	0
Value	\$496,700	\$247,756	\$0
Multiple family permits	8	0	0
Value	\$885,256	\$0	\$0
Commercial permits – New	2	6	3
Value	\$1,450,000	\$2,450,086	\$2,425,000
Commercial permits – Alteration	15	23	22
Value	\$256,048	\$25,551,362	\$668,977
Sign permits	7	18	11
Other permits	163	229	181
<b>Total permits</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Total value of construction</b>	<b>\$5,234,623</b>	<b>\$31,514,362</b>	<b>\$3,664,477</b>
<b>Total permit fees</b>	<b>\$23,507</b>	<b>\$213,319</b>	<b>\$42,268</b>

The major commercial, office, industrial, and institutional buildings receiving building permits in 2008 are as follows (permits over \$50,000):

1. Maple Street Mall, commercial remodel/new use, 108 W. Maple Street
2. Little Caesars, commercial remodel/new use, 227 N. Cedar Street
3. Biggby, commercial remodel/new use, 661 N. Cedar Street
4. Mason Bowling Center, commercial remodel, 801 N. Cedar Street
5. H & H Welding, office addition, 700 Acme
6. McDonalds, commercial new construction, 730 N. Cedar Street
7. Green Acres Retirement Living, residential new construction, 1025 E. Ash

A detailed breakdown of the 2008 permits with a comparison to the past 15 years can be found in the attached table. The following graphs show the number of new residential units and the total construction value of building permits in the City for the past 15 years:



### CODE ENFORCEMENT

The City's code enforcement officer responded to 338 complaints in 2008. The overall compliance rate for all categories in the calendar year 2008 was 84 percent. Our highest compliance rate category was tall grass/weeds at 99 percent. The compliance rate for all categories is as follows:

- junk (82%)
- nuisance (78%)
- property maintenance (26%)
- tall grass/weeds (99%)
- unlicensed/inoperable cars (90%)
- working without a permit (92%)

The following table shows the relative comparison of code enforcement categories for the past three years:

<b>Enforcement Category</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Blight	15	4	**
Junk	21	28	22
Noise	1	*	*
Nuisance	20	22	9
Property Maintenance	2	40	42
Tall Grass/Weeds	16	112	154
Unlicensed/Inoperable Cars	16	49	60
Working Without a Permit	15	56	51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>338</b>

\* Category merged with nuisance. \*\* Category eliminated.

The City's policy for tall grass/weed violations is to issue a ten day order to mow/trim weeds and lawns. Upon failure to respond to the order or insufficient progress with compliance the Building Official then requests the Department of Public Works to assign a crew to complete the work as soon as practicable. The property owner is then billed for the worked completed by City staff. Of the 154 cases identified above, 35 lawns were mowed by the City in 2008.

## **FORECLOSURES**

As of December 29, 2008, the Assessor's office has received Sheriff's Deeds on 59 properties that are currently in the foreclosure process. These properties are either owned by a bank or will be owned by a bank at the end of the six month redemption period. Some of the properties are redeemed by the individuals.

- In 2006, 19 properties were foreclosed on and 5 properties were sold by banks to individuals after being foreclosed on.
- In 2007, 32 properties were foreclosed on and 11 properties were sold by banks to individuals after being foreclosed on.
- In 2008, 68 properties were foreclosed on and 24 properties were sold by banks to individuals after being foreclosed on.