

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

City of La Porte Department of Community Development & Planning

Overview

For the Department of Community Development and Planning (CDP), 2021 was a year about learning the ropes, intensive collaboration, and improving processes. It was a year of firsts, which brought a fresh set of eyes to “the way we’ve always done it.”

Changes to the role of City Planner include an increased presence in Site Review, Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Downtown Design Review, NewPorte Landing Design Review, Downtown Outdoor Café Review, Alcohol Beverage Review Commission, an emphasis on physical planning for the City using GIS and principles of urban design, and more time assisting the Historic Preservation Commission. In late Fall, David kicked off a critical facilitative effort for the City to continue collecting valuable public feedback about addressing bicycling and walking issues through formation of the Active Transportation Task Force. In such short order, this Task Force has doubled attendance and will continue to grow as more outreach is done by the City Planner. David completed updating BZA, PC, Site Review, Downtown Design Review, NewPorte Landing Design Review, COA, and Riverfront District Alcohol Permit Applications. CDP is proud of our accomplishments in 2021 and look forward to building on the momentum in 2022 to make La Porte The Place To Be!

Redevelopment Commission Projects

NEWPORTE LANDING

The Redevelopment Commission had a busy year of negotiations, sales of RDC real estate, and approval of purchase agreements for a few key development opportunities in NewPorte Landing. Specifically, the Kensington Development Agreement was approved and now ALDI is currently undergoing construction on a new grocery store at the corner of Pine Lake Avenue and Truesdell Avenue.

DEMOLITION OF 150 PINE LAKE AVENUE BUILDINGS

The Redevelopment Commission spent funds to clear the site at 150 Pine Lake Avenue (formerly the Don George Ford Automotive Dealership). The site will be seeded in early spring due to timing of demolition late in the season.

Business Improvement District

PLANTER AND STREETLIGHT MAINTENANCE ISSUES

The City Planner worked with the BID Board to make necessary repairs to two planters, one at the SW corner of Michigan and Lincolnway and the other at the SE corner of Jefferson and Michigan. David coordinated upper outlet repairs on the streetlight posts to get all of the lighted wreaths and snowflakes working appropriately.

HOLIDAY DECORATION COORDINATION

CDP helped coordinate holiday decorations including banners, wreathes, tree lighting, and the downtown Christmas tree. The UEA was critical in helping fund purchase of the new and improved holiday lighting and banners for the BID area.

Historic Preservation Commission

The HPC met a total of eleven times in 2021 as well as one special meeting to discuss events and outreach opportunities. They approved four Certificate of Appropriateness and reviewed two homes slated for the Home Owner Repair Program to help satisfy the CDBG program's Section 106 Review requirements. CDP updated the HPC webpage with current information regarding COA applications, Single Site Designation applications, HPC procedures and bylaws, draft guidelines for locally designated properties, and creation of a locally designated historic district city property map based on the current list of locally designated historic district properties. CDP prepared required reports for the Division of Historic Preservation within the IDNR as part of the City's status as a Certified Local Government for last year. The HPC adopted revised design guidelines for the locally designated historic district properties that are intended to be more of a resource for property owners that want to do renovations to the exterior of their homes.

Site Review, Plan Commission & Zoning Board

IMPROVING APPLICATIONS TO BE MORE USER FRIENDLY

In 2021, the City Planner revised all Site Review, Plan Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals applications and information documents to be easier to fill out for everyone.

PROJECTS REVIEWED

Projects that went through Site Review, Plan Commission, or Zoning Board in 2021 include the following:

- 1013 Division St. (Reduce Front Yard Setback)
- 2437 Monroe St. (Allow Gas Station & Convenience Store)
- 1522 E. Lincolnway (Increase Sign Size and Height)
- 301 Waverly Rd. (Reduce Side Yard Setback)
- 1107 Woodward St. (Allow Residential Two Family Dwelling)
- 305 E. 12th St. (Allow 6 ft tall fence in front and side yard)
- 708 Pine Lake Ave. (Allow Two Unit Long Term Rental Residence)
- 620 North St. (Reduce Side Yard Setback)
- 1900 E. Lincolnway (Increase Sign Height and Size)
- 1421 5th St. (Reduce Side Yard Setback)
- 234 Pine Lake Ave. (Reduce Minimum Parking Requirements and Allow Drive Through Restaurant)
 - Also conducted Site Review in conjunction with BZA review
- Sagamore Business Center (Increase Sign Size and Height)
- 160 McClung Rd. (Allow Outdoor Storage of Boats, Cars, RVs)
 - Also conducted Site Review in conjunction with BZA review
- 909 Pine Lake Ave. (Allow Electronic Message Center Sign)
- 1119 Weller Ave. (Exceed Maximum Area Limitations for Accessory Building)
- 726 E. Lincolnway (Minor Automobile Repair and Used Automobile Sales)
- Site Review for La Porte County Public Library parking lot at Maple/Madison
- Site Review for La Porte County Public Library Reading Garden & Garage

The City Planner has also provided a breakdown of the number of applications processed and approved by each appropriate Commission with this report for your information.

PLANS IN 2022 INCLUDE:

- Completion of the City to Shore Bike Route (funded by the Unity Foundation)
- Update Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance
- Active Living Workshop in coordination with Indiana Health by Design and NIRPC
- Update Trails and Greenways Plan in coordination with Parks Master Plan
- Finish Railroad Quiet Zone Study (funded in part by UEA and NW Health)
- Completion of the Clear Lake Greenway Loop Trail, Stone Lake Trail and Chessie Trail second phases
- Investigate opportunities for smart growth with the North-South Corridor
- Create a pilot project with the Monroe Street streetscape adjacent to plaza
- Increase Housing Development and Redevelopment on City-owned properties