

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

CREATING A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE LOVE TO LIVE, GROW, AND LEARN.

**CITY OF ALBION**  
WILLIAM L. REIGER MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
112 W CASS ST.  
ALBION, MI 49224

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

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### OBJECTIVES

All residents of the City of Albion are key stakeholders and will continue to be involved in the future development of our community. The City of Albion and its third party consultants will take a proactive approach to public engagement and make concerted efforts to ensure that there are opportunities for all to be involved in the decision-making process when appropriate.

- The City of Albion evaluates each project on an individual basis to determine:
  - its scope and limitations,
  - the appropriate stakeholders,
  - the appropriate approving body,
  - key points of community impact during the decision-making process,
  - any internal and external resources, and
  - the appropriate level of community participation.
- The City of Albion will *make information available in a timely manner* to ensure that interested parties and community stakeholders have adequate time to be involved in decisions at various stages of the review and approval process.
- The City of Albion works to make sure that information is *transparent and easy to access for all interested members of the community*.
- The City of Albion *seeks public input for the ongoing and future development* of the City, such as the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning and Future Land Use Plan.
- The City of Albion strives to *find creative ways to reach a diverse set of community stakeholders* in decisions regarding planning, land use, and development.
- The City of Albion uses comments and information received from interested members of the community to make decisions regarding planning, land use, and future development.
- The City of Albion *tracks and reviews* the results of all public participation and *provides summaries* back to the public.

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## KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CITY OF ALBION

In the City of Albion, each project will be evaluated on an individual basis to ensure that all interested and appropriate stakeholders are included. The stakeholders will vary according to the project being reviewed. Possible key stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Residents of Albion
- Neighboring jurisdictions
- Calhoun County
- City employees and staff
- Albion Economic Development Corporation
- Business owners and their employees
- City boards and commissions
- Neighborhood groups
- Schools
- Churches
- Albion College
- Utility providers
- Albion Community Foundation
- Albion River Committee
- Senior groups
- Health care providers
- Real estate professionals
- Visitors and tourists
- Albion Reinvestment Corporation
- Industrial facilities/manufacturers
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Emergency personnel
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

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## METHODS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The necessary level of public participation will vary by project. The following are methods that may be used to reach the appropriate level of public participation when taking action on land use, development applications, projects, and initiatives. The City of Albion will always attempt to use more than one tool or method, depending on the specific project and target audience. This list is flexible and can be changed based on each project's needs and circumstances.

### INFORM—PROVIDE INFORMATION AND ASSIST PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

- **Website** – [www.CityofAlbionMI.gov](http://www.CityofAlbionMI.gov) announces meetings, posts City Council, Planning Commission, and boards/commissions packets and agendas, meeting minutes, and will often contain pages or links for topics of major interest.
- **Newspaper** – The Albion Recorder is Albion's weekly newspaper published every Thursday with events from Albion, Concord, and Springport. The Advisor/Chronicle is a free weekly newspaper published on Fridays and covers both Albion and Marshall.
- **Cable** – The City of Albion posts relevant information about community events, public hearings, and other meetings on WOW! Cable Channel 17. City Council and Planning Commission meetings are also broadcast live on this channel.
- **Printed Postings** – Available for viewing at the City Hall bulletin board outside of City Hall and Public Service Building bulletin board.
- **Announcements** – Announcements are made during meetings of the City Council, Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions.
- **Press releases and articles** – The City will issue press releases and information for articles to various newspapers regarding public hearings, developments, and other projects (including the Battle Creek Enquirer, the Homer Index, the Albion/Marshall Advisor & Chronicle, the Albion Recorder, and the Albion E-News).
- **Email or postal mail** – Interested parties may request to the City Clerk that they be notified personally of meetings/topics for discussion. Postal mailings are sent to neighbors within 300 feet of properties applying for zoning changes and variance requests, according to statute.
- **YouTube** – All City Council Meetings are recorded and posted on YouTube. Recordings can be found on the City of Albion's YouTube page at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIsBR9GwwVJIL2wyGJCiXfg>.

### CONSULT—OBTAIN PUBLIC FEEDBACK

- **Social media** – The Public Safety Department currently uses Facebook to announce street closures, storm watches/warnings, public safety notices, etc. and the City may also use Facebook to notify the community of upcoming events and meetings.

- **Surveys** – The City will sometimes use online and paper surveys to allow for the collection of large amounts of data and input from the public.
- **Public Hearings** – Public attendance at meetings is highly encouraged and allows for an appropriate venue for public comment.

#### **INVOLVE—WORK DIRECTLY WITH PUBLIC THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS**

- **“Town Hall” Meetings & Community Workshops** – In order to create a space for two-way communication, the City holds “town hall” or “open house” style events for projects and initiatives as needed.
- **Planning & Design Charrettes** – Multiple day design charrettes and information gathering sessions allow for a larger group of people to participate in community planning.

#### **COLLABORATE—PARTNER WITH PUBLIC IN EACH ASPECT OF DECISION MAKING**

- **Advisory committees** – The City uses advisory committees to enhance collaboration between city staff and the public.
- **Focus groups** – Inviting relevant stakeholders and interested parties to brainstorm ideas for initiatives and projects.

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#### **COMMUNICATING RESULTS**

The City of Albion will publicly communicate all results of community input on planning and development issues via the “inform” methods.

## OPEN MEETINGS

All meetings of the City Council, and its various boards and commissions, shall be open to the public in accordance with the “Open Meetings Act,” PA 267 of 1976 as amended, except closed session meetings as provided for in the Act. Public notices for these meetings are printed in the paper and hung at City Hall as required by the Act. The following processes require that neighbors within 300 feet of a property are personally notified:

- Rezoning of property
- Special land use
- Variance requests

Statutes require these processes be noticed in a newspaper of general distribution in the City (Advisor/Chronicle) as well as mailed to neighbors within 300 feet at least 15 days prior to the meeting. All meetings are held in a facility accessible to persons with disabilities, and The City provides and will provide reasonable accommodations. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should contact the City Manager’s Office.

*Interested persons are encouraged to contact the City Clerk or to check the City’s Website at: [www.cityofalbionmi.gov](http://www.cityofalbionmi.gov) in order to be kept informed of any meeting schedule, agendas, variations, or location changes. Meeting agendas and packets are available on the City’s website in advance of the meeting.*

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## UPDATING THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

Like all documents, the City of Albion understands that the Community Engagement Statement will need to be reviewed and updated on a routine basis. This plan will be updated as needed, at a minimum of every 5 years, in conjunction with the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Updates to this plan will be drafted by staff, reviewed and recommended by Planning Commission, and approved through City Council. At least one public hearing will be held during the process to gather community input and to generate new ideas.

## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BODIES

The City of Albion has a number of boards and committees. Below you will find descriptions of the City Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Downtown Development Authority. A complete list is online at:

[http://cityofalbionmi.gov/government/city\\_boards\\_commissions\\_and\\_committees/index.php](http://cityofalbionmi.gov/government/city_boards_commissions_and_committees/index.php).

All agendas can be found on the home page of the City's website at [www.cityofalbionmi.gov](http://www.cityofalbionmi.gov).

The City encourages citizen participation in local government planning and policy decisions. All residents are invited to apply for appointments to City boards and commissions. Vacant positions are advertised on the City's Website at: [www.cityofalbionmi.gov](http://www.cityofalbionmi.gov). For more information regarding the boards and commissions, please contact the City Clerk at [jadomingo@cityofalbionmi.gov](mailto:jadomingo@cityofalbionmi.gov) or (517) 629-7864.

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## CITY COUNCIL

The City of Albion operates under the Council-Manager form of government. City residents elect a Mayor and a City Council to preside over the City, and the City Council appoints a City Manager to handle the day-to-day administration of the City. The City Manager makes recommendations to the Council, and the Council acts on business at regularly scheduled meetings.

The Albion City Council consists of the Mayor and six Council members. Council members are elected to four-year terms, staggered every two years. A Mayor is elected every two years.

The Mayor is the presiding officer of the City Council. He or she is a voting member of the Council. The Mayor makes all appointments approved by the Council except those required by law or ordinance to be made by another officer or agency of the City. If a vacancy occurs in the Mayor's office, or the Mayor is unable to perform his or her duties, the Council member elected Mayor Pro Tem succeeds the Mayor.

The Albion City Council represents the City and its citizens. The Council is responsible for adopting and amending City laws and ordinances, determining City policies and standards, and authorizing the annual City budget. The Council also determines City tax millage rates and utility rates, and approves contracts and agreements for the City.

The Albion City Council meets on the first and third Mondays of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council chambers at City Hall (112 W. Cass Street).

Meetings are broadcast live on WOW! Cable Channel 21. Council Agendas are available for review at City Hall on Fridays preceding meetings as well as on the city web page. Minutes of City Council meetings are available at City Hall and at the Albion District Library (501 S. Superior Street) as well as on the city web page. Council meetings are also recorded and

uploaded to YouTube. They can be found on the City of Albion's YouTube page at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIsBR9GwwVJIL2wyGJCiXfg>.

Time for citizen comments is set aside twice during each Council meeting, once near the beginning of the meeting and once near the end.

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## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

The Albion Planning Commission possesses powers and functions required of Planning Commissions under the provisions of PA 285 of 1931, State of Michigan, as amended, including, but not limited to, comprehensive planning, initiating zoning amendments, granting special use permits and planned unit developments (under certain situations), and recommending the Public Improvements Program.

This nine-member commission is provided by Charter Section 8.14 and MCL Section 125.33. The statute does not impose a residency requirement on appointment. The Charter, however, requires that the six persons, whom the Mayor appoints and the Council confirms, have the qualifications of a City elector. Residency is, therefore, required for appointment to the Planning Commission. The other three members are the Mayor, a Councilperson and a City Administrative officer.

Nine voting members, including the Mayor and one Councilmember (appointed annually) and one staff member. One member may be a non-resident, with the consent of Council, who possesses an interest in planning in the City of Albion. Appointed by Mayor with confirmation by City Council. Each term is three years.

The Planning Commission meets every third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers located on the second floor of City Hall at 112 W Cass St. Albion, MI 49224.

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## **ALBION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

The Albion Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) and the Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA) are separate legal entities, which for purposes of coordination were merged by action of the City Council May 3, 1982. The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) is also a separate legal entity. The AEDC was designated by City Council as the BRA governing body on Dec. 4, 2000.

The Albion Economic Development Corporation works to recruit and assist business and industry in the greater Albion area. We seek innovative, collaborative, solutions to modern business challenges, always mindful of the rich natural, economic, and cultural heritage of our community.

The purpose of the AEDC is to strengthen and revitalize the local economy by alleviating and preventing conditions of unemployment, ultimate responsibility for attracting, assisting and retaining local industries and commercial enterprises, providing means and methods for encouragement of attracting new and expanding current industries and commercial business.

The AEDC was established by adoption of articles of incorporation dated July 29, 1977. The statutory authority for the adoption is found at MCL Section 125.1601, et seq. Board member's qualifications are found at MCL Section 125.1604. It shall consist of at least nine members, including the Mayor who shall serve as a Director by virtue of holding the office of Mayor of the City of Albion – not more than three can be an officer or employee of the municipality. The Mayor appoints the board members with the advice and consent of the Council. Ex-officio, nonvoting members include: President of the Chamber of Commerce, Sheridan Township Supervisor, and Albion Township Supervisor. Though residency requirements are determined at the discretion of the appointing authority, the goal is to maintain a majority of residents on the board. Board members serve six-year terms.

The Albion EDC Board meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 a.m. in the Albion EDC Conference Room located at 309 N. Superior St. Albion, MI 49224.

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### **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

The purpose of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is to hear appeals and make decisions necessary for the enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance.

MCL Section 125.585 provides the statutory basis for this important five-member board to consider appeals from administrative decisions usually in the zoning area. It does not mention residency as a prerequisite to appointment. The old zoning ordinance, Section 30-76, still provides authority for the Albion Zoning Board of Appeals which should consist of seven regular members and two alternates. This number is more than allowed by statute and the statute should be followed.

The ZBA is composed of seven voting members at large and two alternates (no City officials may serve on this board). Appointed by Mayor with confirmation by City Council. There is no residency requirement, however, the City's goal is to have all members be residents of the City. Members of the ZBA serve three-year terms.

Zoning Board of Appeals meetings take place on the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. at Albion City Hall located at 112 W Cass St. Albion, MI 49224.

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## **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

The purpose of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is to conduct downtown development activities in accordance with the provisions of PA 197 of 1975, as amended, including, but not limited to, the definition of a development area, the creation and implementation of a development plan, etc. (The power to levy and collect a tax according to Section 12(1) of 1997 is not included.)

This agency is created to help a deteriorating downtown restore itself. The governing board is comprised of the Mayor and at least eight and not more than 12 other members (now set at Mayor and ten others through a 1999 bylaw amendment); a majority must have an interest in property located in the downtown area and at least one member shall be a resident of the downtown area, MCL Section 125.154. This is a municipal corporation, which the City created in April 1988 when the Council adopted Ordinance 88-2. (Now Code Sections 34-26 through 34-33). The Council approves its budget and bylaws. Except for the statutory and ordinance restrictions – residency of the appointees to this board is within the discretion of the appointing authority.

The DDA is composed of eleven members as determined by Downtown Development Authority Bylaws. A majority of members must have an interest in property within the DDA district. One member shall be a resident of the district. The Mayor is a voting member by virtue of office. Appointed by Mayor with confirmation by City Council. There is no residency requirement to be on the DDA, however, the City's goal is to maintain a majority of residents on the Board. Members serve four-year terms.

The DDA Meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30 a.m. at Albion City Hall located at 112 W Cass St. Albion, MI 49224.

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## **ALBION BUILDING AUTHORITY**

The responsibilities of the Authority include, but are not limited to, the acquisition, ownership, maintenance, furnishing, equipping, improving or renovating of an existing building or facility or the construction of a new building or facility. Currently, the Authority manages Maple Grove Apartments, a City-owned housing project for elderly and/or handicapped persons.

The ABA is a creature of statute. MCL Section 123.951, et seq, governs the creation of a building authority by a municipality. It is accomplished by the municipality adopting articles of incorporation. No member of the governing body of an incorporating unit of an authority is eligible for membership on the authority. Albion adopted its authority's articles of incorporation on May 17, 1978 with Resolution 5-D-78. The three members of the governing board are called commissioners and are elected by the Council. No residency for membership

is required. The articles were amended in 1998 to increase the commission membership to five and to provide that one commissioner would be a Maple Grove tenant. No other residency is required by the amended articles. Residency of the appointees to this board is within the discretion of the appointing authority.

Five voting members elected by the City Council. One member to be a tenant of Maple Grove Apartment. Except for the member from Maple Grove Apartments, residency is at the discretion of the appointing authority. Three years.

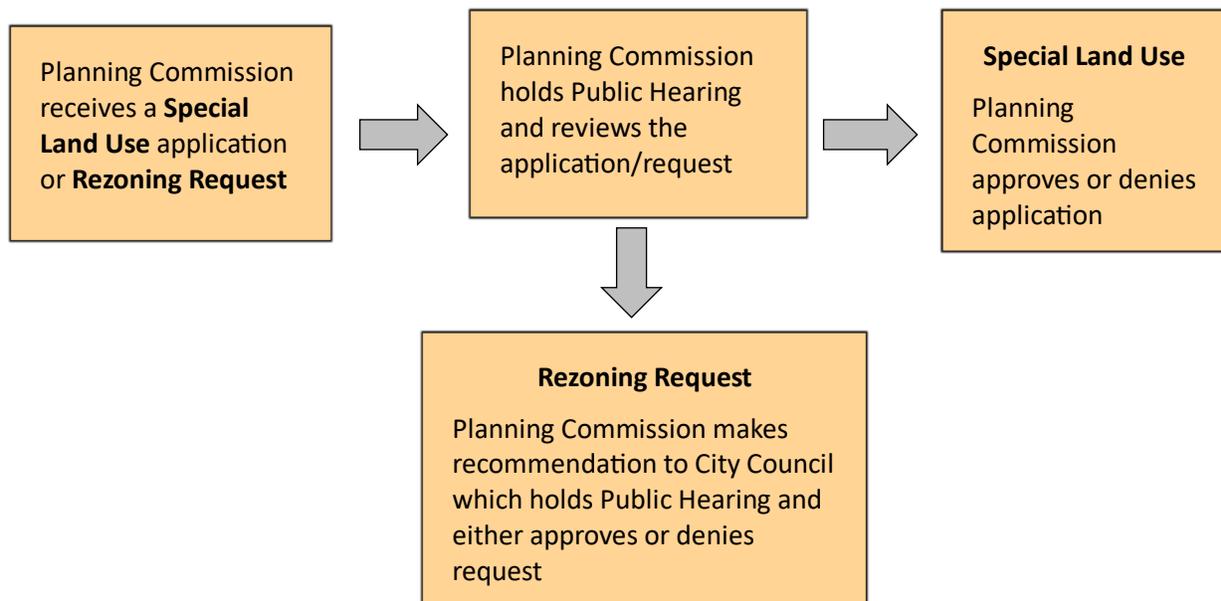
The ABA meets on a quarterly basis and as needed. Meetings are held at 8:00 am. Meeting dates and locations for the 2017 calendar year are:

March 9, 2017	Mayor's Office-City Hall
June 8, 2017	Maple Grove Community Room
September 14, 2017	Mayor's Office-City Hall
December 14, 2017	Maple Grove Community Room

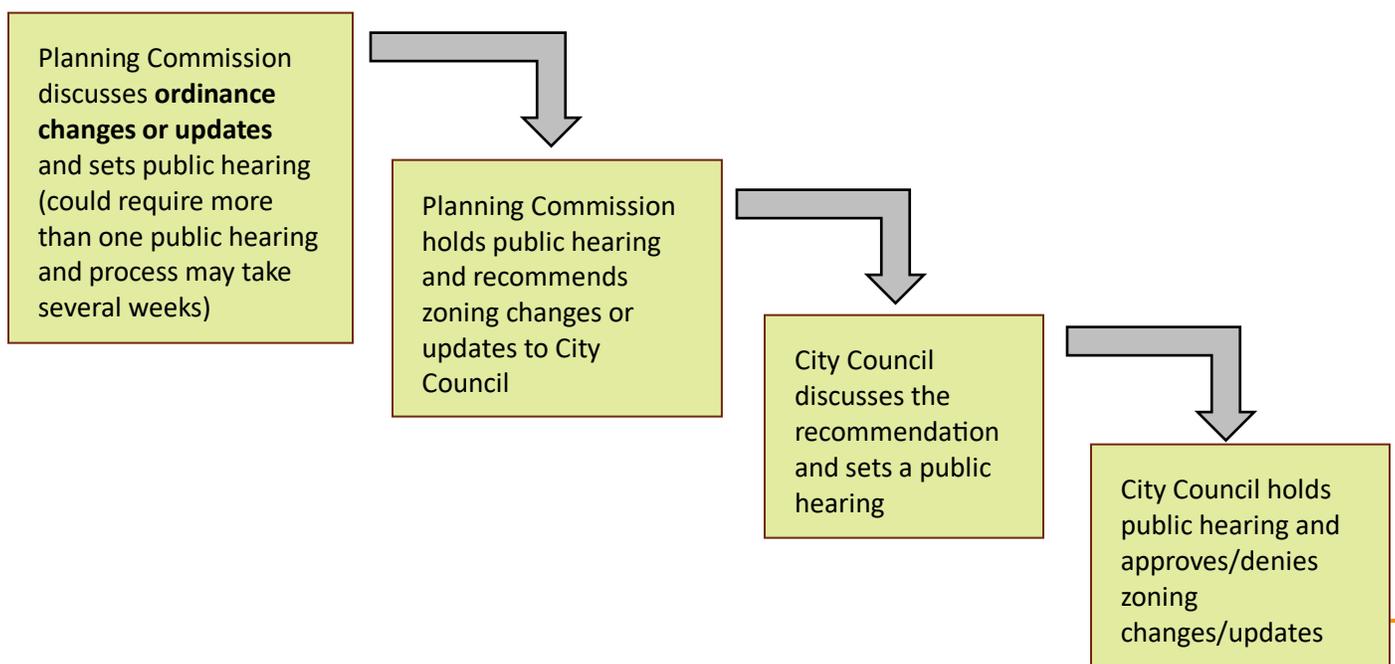
## PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPMENT

There are various times in the planning process when the City Council, the Planning Commission, and/or the Zoning Board of Appeals request public input. These processes include public hearings for rezoning of land, development of the Zoning or Sign Ordinances, the Comprehensive Plan, requested variances, and special land uses. The flowchart below outlines the timelines for these processes:

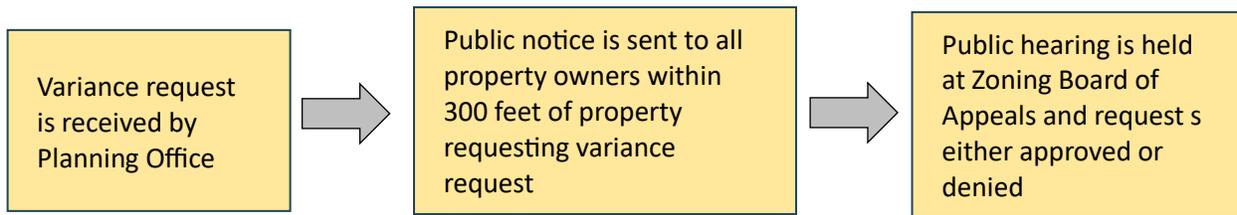
### SPECIAL LAND USE APPLICATIONS AND REZONING REQUESTS



### ORDINANCE CHANGES OR UPDATES

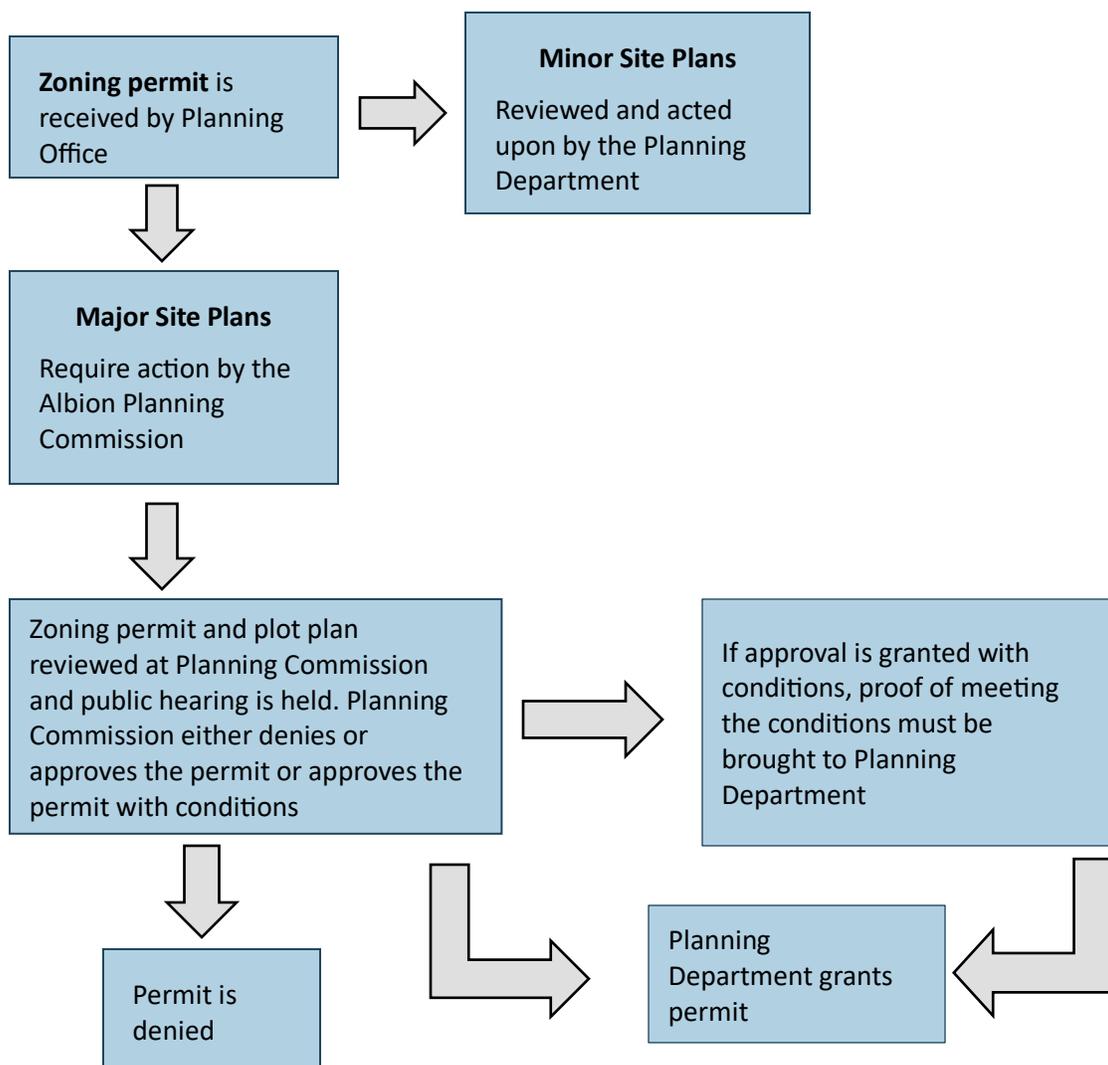


## VARIANCE REQUESTS



## SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

*The process always starts with an application for a zoning permit. A plot plan must be submitted as a part of the zoning permit application. Depending on the type of project you propose, a more extensive site plan may be required. Minor site plans are reviewed and acted upon by the Planning Department, but major site plans require review and action by the Albion Planning Commission.*



## STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS

- Albion City Charter
- Albion City Code of Ordinances
- Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976)
- Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008)
- Home Rule City Act (PA 279 of 1909)
- Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act (PA 381 of 1996)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development Public Engagement Requirements for CDBG Funding
- Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975)
- Plant Rehabilitation and Industrial Development Districts Act (PA 198 of 1974)
- Personal Property Exemption Act (PA 328 of 1998)
- Corridor Improvement Act (PA 280 of 2005)
- Other applicable local, state, and federal regulations

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### A NOTE TO DEVELOPERS

It is strongly encouraged that all developers meet with Planning and Zoning staff for a conceptual review and seek input from neighboring residents and businesses at the start of the application process. We recommend using the “Methods of Community Participation” outlined on the third page of this document. There are times when developments may cause concern or be highly controversial among residents, thus it is important to engage residents at the conceptual stage of the development. The City of Albion and the Albion Economic Development Corporation are happy to help with this process.

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### STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS AND CDBG FUNDING

It is essential the city conducts planning activities that involve citizen input when determining potential project requests from the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) program. The local government is required to encourage citizen participation, particularly by low and moderate income persons who reside in blighted areas in which CDBG funds are proposed to be used. This process should establish the areas and identify the activities that residents feel are the most needed for their community.

Local governments are required to ensure that citizens will be given reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information, and records relating to proposed and actual use of CDBG funds. The city also must assist representatives of low/mod groups that request help in developing proposals.

When planning public meetings, local governments must provide reasonable accommodations, such as sign language or availability of major documents in a requested

language. All public meetings must be accessible to the handicapped. The Public Notice for the meeting(s) must include a statement on non-discrimination and provide a TDD or Michigan number where individuals who are hearing impaired can obtain information about the CDBG program.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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### CITY OF ALBION

**William L. Reiger Municipal Building**

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### ALBION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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