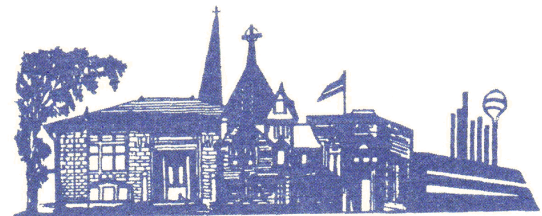


# **Belvidere Planning Department**

## **FY 2018 Annual Report**



**BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS**

Established 1881

**Gina DelRose, Community Development Planner**

**Ben Rohr, Land Use Planner**

**Cathy Crawford, Administrative Assistant**



# CITY OF BELVIDERE

## **Planning and Zoning Commission**

Andy Racz, Chairman  
Robert Cantrell, Vice-Chair  
Art Hyland  
Daniel Arevalo  
Alissa Maher  
Rich Weigel  
Anthony R. Phelps

## **City Council**

Mayor Mike Chamberlain  
Alderman Tom Porter 1<sup>st</sup> Ward  
Alderman Clayton Stevens 1<sup>st</sup> Ward  
Alderman Mike Borowicz 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward  
Alderman Dan Snow 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward  
Alderman Thomas F. Ratcliffe 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward  
Alderman Wendy Frank 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward  
Alderman George Crawford 4<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Alderman Ron Brooks 4<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Alderman Marsha Freeman 5<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Alderman Mark Sanderson 5<sup>th</sup> Ward

## **Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission**

David Kummerow, Chairman  
Lisa Kummerow, Vice-Chair  
Anna Pivoras  
Filitsa Platopoulos  
Becky Tobin  
Kris Bryan  
Alexandra Omiotek

# VILLAGE OF POPLAR GROVE

## **Planning and Zoning Commission**

Jake Dykstra, Chairman

Nate Skora

Jesi Ellwanger

Don Sattler

Ed Wethington

Keith Richard

George Waddell

## **Village Board**

Owen Costanza, Village President

Erin Walsh

Neely Erickson

Jeff Goings

Ron Quimby

Eric Miller

Sophia Ramdass

## **Planning Department Overview**

The Belvidere Community Development Department includes the Planning and Building Departments. The Planning Department provides professional municipal planning services pertaining to land use and comprehensive planning for the City of Belvidere and the Village of Poplar Grove. The planning staff serves as liaison to the Planning and Zoning Commissions for both entities and the Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission. The planning department is a member of the technical committee of the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP) and participates in RMAP's Planner's Network when schedules permit. Additionally, the planning department advocates and coordinates the implementation of the region's established planning goals and objectives as expressed through various plans, policies and ordinances.

The Belvidere-Boone County Planning Department serves as liaison to numerous boards and commissions for Belvidere and Poplar Grove.

### **Planning and Zoning Commissions**

The Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) is made up of seven members appointed by the Mayor with the consent of City Council; the members meet once a month on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm. The PZC functions as both the City of Belvidere's Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals. In addition to making recommendations on matters based on their consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, the PZC functions as the public hearing body for planning and zoning applications related to map amendments, text amendments and special use permits. The PZC holds the public hearings, adopts findings-of-fact and makes recommendations to the City Council based on standards set forth within the City of Belvidere Zoning Ordinance and guidance from the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the PZC hears variance requests and appeals to the City of Belvidere Zoning Ordinance.

The Village of Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) is made up of seven members appointed by the Village President with the consent of the Village Board; the PZC convenes once a month on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm. The Poplar Grove PZC functions the same as the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission. The Planning and Zoning Commission makes recommendations to the Committee of the Whole and ultimately to the Village Board.

### **Belvidere Building, Planning and Zoning Committee of the Whole**

The City of Belvidere has the Committee of the Whole (Building, Planning and Zoning Committee) consisting of each member of the City Council to discuss and focus on the issues regarding planning and zoning matters. To reduce review time of city planning cases, the cases go directly to the City Council for review on the third Monday of the month. If the City Council has questions or concerns regarding a planning case, the case is referred to the Committee of the Whole on the fourth Monday at 6:00pm. The Committee of the Whole reviews the case and forwards their recommendation to the City Council for final action.

### **Belvidere City Council**

The City Council consists of eleven elected officials, including the mayor; two aldermen are elected from each of the five Belvidere wards. The City Council determines the final decisions on all planning cases other than variances and appeals. The types of planning cases that the City Council rules on include: annexations and pre-annexation agreements; map amendments; special use requests; text amendments; and subdivisions. The City Council members formulate their decisions based on the recommendations from the planning staff and of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the outcome of the public hearing, the standards set forth in the City of Belvidere Zoning Ordinance and the policies of the Com-

prehensive Plan.

### **Poplar Grove Village Board**

The Village Board of Poplar Grove consists of six members and a village president elected at large; Poplar Grove also has a village administrator. Similar to the City of Belvidere, the role of the Village Board is to make the final decisions on all cases other than variances and appeals. The Poplar Grove Village Board reviews annexations and pre-annexation agreements, map amendments, special use requests, text amendments and subdivisions. The Village Board members make their decisions based on the recommendations of the planning staff and of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the outcome of the public hearing, the standards set forth in the Village of Poplar Grove Zoning Ordinance and the Poplar Grove Comprehensive Plan.

### **Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission**

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor with the consent of City Council; the members meet once a month on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:30pm. The (HPC) is tasked with reviewing certificates of appropriateness, conducting surveys, performing community and educational outreach regarding historic preservation, and other preservation-related matters.

### **Growth Dimensions and RMAP**

The planning staff collaborates with Growth Dimensions, a non-for-profit economic development agency funded in part by the City of Belvidere and Boone County and the Rockford Metropolitan Agency on Planning (RMAP) on various projects. When requested, staff will attend Growth Dimensions' committee meetings such as their community group and RMAP's committee meetings. Planning staff also was a regular participant in the Kishwaukee Riverfront Committee when it met. The planning staff is expected to provide assistance to Growth Dimensions on future projects by providing data for RFPS and directing development inquiries to them.

## **The Belvidere Planning Department Year End Summary**

The Belvidere Planning Department began the 2018 fiscal year with an ambitious attitude after a busy 2017 fiscal year. The Planning Department consists of the Community Development Planner, a part-time land use planner provided by the Rockford Metropolitan Agency on Planning and an Administrative Assistant that is shared with the Building Department as the Community Development Administrative Assistant and Transcriber.

Funding for the department is provided by the City of Belvidere; revenue is also contributed by the Village of Poplar Grove for contractual services. The department receives revenue through application fees for zoning petitions and subdivision reviews, the creation of zoning verification letters and any printed maps, scanned plats or copies of ordinances purchased by the general public.

The projected revenue for the department for the 2018 fiscal year was \$13,600; \$13,100 in application fees and \$500 in miscellaneous fees (letters, contractual services, etc.). The actual revenue for the 2018 fiscal year was \$13,891.505; \$11,871.50 in application fees and \$2,020 in miscellaneous fees. In addition to the department's revenues exceeding the projection, the department's actual expenses were below projections as well.

The planning department processes the various zoning applications for the City of Belvidere and the Village of Poplar Grove; the department is responsible for the preparation of agendas and minutes for two commissions in addition to participating in five other boards, commissions and committees. The planning staff works closely with the public to answer questions regarding zoning, development, setbacks, addressing, etc. The planning staff continues to work with the 911-board to update the addresses for the city and coordinates with other municipal staff and governmental agencies regarding planning, zoning and technical issues.

### **Land Development Cases**

The planning department processed thirty Belvidere and Poplar Grove planning cases during 2018 fiscal year (May 1st to April 30th); twenty-four cases were reviewed for the city; and six cases were reviewed for Poplar Grove. Staff generally has in-depth phone conversations or meetings with applicants before they submit a zoning petition. Planning and Zoning Commission (both entities) meetings and Belvidere City Council meetings occur after regular business hours. Staff is not required to attend Poplar Grove's Committee of the Whole or Village Board meetings.

Application fees pay for the newspaper publication, Commissioner's meeting per diems and staff time involved in processing the request.

### **Map Amendments**

Map amendments rezone a property from one district to another. The Comprehensive Plan is a guiding tool when determining map amendments.

Belvidere map amendments require a public hearing before the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission prior to city council. Notifications for map amendments are done by posting a sign on the property, notifying property owners within 250 feet and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed five map amendments, a 150 percent increase from the previous year.

Poplar Grove map amendments are very similar. They require a public hearing before the Poplar Grove

Planning and Zoning Commission prior to being heard by the Committee of the Whole and the Village Board. Notifications for map amendments are done by notifying adjacent property owners and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed no map amendments, a 100 percent decrease from the previous year.

### **Variances**

Variances are deviations from specific bulk regulations of the Zoning Ordinance such as the square –footage of a sign, setback of a building or paved area, height of a structure, etcetera. A hardship must be proven to allow a variance.

Belvidere variances require a public hearing before the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission. They are not decided by the city council. Notifications for variances are done by posting a sign on the property, notifying property owners within 250 feet and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed three variances, a 50 percent decrease from the previous year.

Poplar Grove variances are very similar. They require a public hearing before the Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission. They are not decided by the Committee of the Whole or the Village Board. Notifications for variances are done by notifying adjacent property owners and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed one variance, the same number as in the previous year.

### **Special Uses**

Special Use are land uses that are generally acceptable in a zoning district but at times may need conditions put in place to make them appropriate. The Zoning Ordinance decides what uses are permitted, what are allowed by special use and what ones are prohibited.

Belvidere special uses require a public hearing before the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission prior to city council. Notifications for special uses are done by posting a sign on the property, notifying property owners within 250 feet and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed ten special uses, a 40.7 percent decrease from the previous year.

Poplar Grove special uses are very similar. They require a public hearing before the Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission prior to being heard by the Committee of the Whole and the Village Board. Notifications for special uses are done by notifying adjacent property owners and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed three special uses, the same number as in the previous year.

### **Text Amendments**

Text Amendments are changes to the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and/or the Comprehensive Plan. Text amendments can be requested by staff or the public.

Belvidere text amendments require a public hearing before the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission prior to city council. Notifications for text amendments are done by publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed two text amendments, a 50 percent decrease from the previous year.

Poplar Grove text amendments are very similar. They require a public hearing before the Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission prior to being heard by the Committee of the Whole and the Village Board. Notifications for text amendments are done by publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed one text amendment, a 100 percent increase from the previous year.



## **Subdivisions**

Subdivisions create new lot lines and right-of-ways. There are three kinds of subdivisions; a preliminary plat is the approved draft of a development; a final draft which can occur in phases makes the preliminary plat official; a replat alters properties that have already been final platted.

Belvidere subdivisions do not require a public hearing but are reviewed by the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission prior to going before the city council. Since there is no public hearing, notices are not required. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed two subdivisions, a 71.4 percent decrease from the previous year.

Poplar Grove subdivisions are very similar. They do not require a public hearing but are reviewed by the Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission prior to being heard by the Committee of the Whole and the Village Board. Since there is no public hearing, notices are not required. During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed one subdivision, the same amount from the previous year.

## **Annexations**

Annexations occur when land is incorporated into the limits of the annexing municipality. This can occur for multiple reasons such as needing municipal services or wanting to develop under the municipality's zoning ordinance.

Annexation requests do not go before a Planning and Zoning Commission. Their public hearings and determinations are conducted by the City Council/Village Board. The State Statutes outline notification requirements which are not handled by planning staff.

During the 2018 fiscal year, staff processed two annexation requests for the City of Belvidere, a 100 percent increase from the previous year but did not process any annexation request for the Village of Poplar Grove, the same amount from the previous year.

## **Site Plan Review**

The planning department is responsible for site, landscaping and lighting plan review for construction projects that are commercial or industrial within the City of Belvidere, and the Village of Poplar Grove. The Belvidere Building Department purchased a computer program (WebQA) to manage comments generated during the permitting process. This program has replaced the Comments and Review System (CRS) that was previously used during plan review. Once a construction project is completed, the planning staff inspects the site to insure that the site is improved according to the submitted and approved plans. In the 2018 fiscal year, the planning department reviewed 35 site, landscaping and lighting plans for 20 projects in the City of Belvidere and none in the Village of Poplar Grove. In the 2017 fiscal year, the planning department reviewed 37 site, landscaping and lighting plans for 23 projects in the City of Belvidere and none for the Village of Poplar Grove.

Some of the larger projects reviewed in the 2018 fiscal year include new businesses Little Minds Daycare and Casey's General Store; and renovations for businesses such as Manley Motors and Tom and Jerry's.

## **Downtown Overlay Review**

The planning department is responsible for the administration of the Downtown Overlay District according to the requirements of the Belvidere Zoning Ordinance. The intent of the Downtown Overlay is to preserve the character of the historic downtown while encouraging additional development in harmony with existing buildings. Any building façade improvements or signage in the Downtown Overlay District require plan review and approval by the planning department prior to the issuance of a building permit. The

planning department discontinued using the multi-part application process in order to make the submittal and review process easier for downtown business owners. In the 2018 fiscal year, the planning department reviewed 9 downtown projects for signage and façade improvements compared to 10 in the 2017 fiscal year.. The majority of the fiscal year 2018 projects were for new signage. The planning department has a photographic record of the downtown buildings from 2009 and 2013.

## **Grant Administration**

### **Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Historic Preservation Plan (2016-2018)**

The commission submitted a grant application in February 2016 seeking professional consulting services to develop a Historic Preservation Plan that develops effective action strategies for Belvidere’s historic preservation activities for the next decade. The purpose of the plan is to identify and assess the community’s resources and current preservation activities; encourage community visioning for the development of plan strategies and to develop a final plan highlighting community goals with long range goals and implementation strategies regarding historic preservation activities for the community for the next ten years.

In September of 2016, request for proposals were sent out to applicable companies and in November of 2016, the Lakota Group was awarded the contract for the Historic Preservation Plan. Throughout 2017, The Lakota Group conducted open houses, meetings with staff and stakeholders and surveys of Belvidere. The project ended up extending past the September 30, 2017 deadline and was completed at the end of 2017 and a short presentation was provided to the City Council on January 16, 2018. Staff stayed in constant contact with the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office and requested an extension to the project. The close out paperwork was submitted on February 9, 2018. Due to missing the September 30, 2017 deadline, the State requested that staff amend their submittal on April 23, 2018. Reimbursement from the State has yet to be received.

### **Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission**

During the 2017 fiscal year, the Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission adopted a work plan for the year focusing on preservation education, promotion and recognition, this plan extended into the 2018 fiscal year. The Commission held its sixth annual awards program to recognize organizations and individuals that had completed outstanding renovation projects. The program was held at the Poplar Grove Vintage Wings and Wheels Museum on May 11, 2017 (in recognition of preservation month). A booklet was designed highlighting the projects with advertising sponsorship received from local businesses and supporters of the preservation efforts. The event was well attended and appreciated by the recipients and the community.

The commission designed a 50/50 matching grant program with the funds raised from the various fund-raising events held each year (Progressive Dinner and Interactive Murder Mystery Dinner) and royalties from the Images of America book sales as an incentive for restoration projects. Landmark property owners are eligible to apply for project reimbursement for up to \$1000 each year that funds are available. In the 2018 fiscal year, one \$1,000 grant was awarded to the Belvidere Cemetery Association to assist in the repainting of the Pettit Memorial Chapel.

One certificate of appropriateness was approved for 228 West Hurlbut Avenue. There were no National Register Districts designated during the fiscal year; however discussions regarding the Leath Warehouse continue to take place.

The commission continued its community outreach programs. The commission set up its annual display at the Boone County Museum of History during Belvidere’s Hometown Christmas and sponsored live music. There was a Friends of Preservation meeting held in conjunction with an open house for the Lakota Group’s

10 Year Preservation Plan. The commission arranges for preservation-themed presentations at each meeting. For those that cannot attend the meetings, the commission has created a newsletter called the History Keeper that highlights discussions from the meeting, historic residences in Belvidere and provides a resource corner for information.

### **Comprehensive Plan Review**

There was no work by the planning staff on updating the Belvidere Comprehensive Plan or finishing the Poplar Grove Comprehensive Plan during the 2018 fiscal year. However, planning staff did assist RMAP and the Boone County Planning Department in their updating process of the Boone County Comprehensive Plan. Data gathered during the County's update and amendments that were made will be incorporated in the City of Belvidere and Poplar Grove updates in the 2019 fiscal year.

### **Other Activities**

Aside from meetings, land development cases and historic preservation, the planning department has other job duties. One on-going project has been the digitization of all case files and linking them to GIS. This makes researching the history of a parcel or the popularity of a land use much easier. Planning staff continues to assist the Boone County Recorder's office by digitizing their plats so that they can be searchable by the general public. Scanning and printing of plats and large plans is available to the public as well for a minor fee. The Department was able to purchase a used large format scanner and printer in fiscal year 2018 to replace the one that stopped working in January 2016. In the 2018 fiscal year, the department scanned 58 plats for the Recorder's office, 16 plats for the general public and 52 plats for other departments.

The planning staff issues two kinds of letters, zoning verification letters and addressing letters. Zoning verification letters are often-times requested by financial institutions representing a buyer. The letters state whether a property is conforming, legal non-conforming or non-conforming. The status of a property can impact its value. Buyers will also request the letters in order to confirm that their intentions for the property are allowable. Staff issued 27 zoning verification letters for the City of Belvidere and five for the Village of Poplar Grove. Staff charges a minimal fee for this service. Address letters are issued when there is new construction or an existing structure needs an additional address or corrected address. Staff works closely with 911 and the fire department regarding addressing matters and will issue an official address and notify all utilities and governmental agencies so they can update their records. Staff issued 14 letters for the City of Belvidere and one letter for the Village of Poplar Grove. There is no cost for this service.

In fiscal year 2018, planning staff along with the Boone County GIS Department began preparing for the 2020 Census. Every year staff has to submit BAS (Boundary and Survey) Maps to the Census Bureau so that they can update their municipal boundaries and road systems. For the decennial census, staff must participate in the LUCA (Local Update of Census Addresses) program which verifies every single address and housing unit in Belvidere. Since the Census Bureau is gradually becoming paperless, the GIS Department has been extremely helpful in submitting the data in an acceptable mapping format

The department is active in Heritage Days, the Chamber Chili Cook-off and Hometown Christmas. For Heritage Days, staff is part of the organizing committee, assists with fundraising, administers the Facebook page, participates in creating the City Hall float, walks in the parade and is present during the entire festival to monitor events and assist where needed. Planning for the festival is a year round responsibility. This year, staff took a more active role in the Belvidere Area Chamber of Commerce's Hometown Christ-

mas. In addition to handing out hot chocolate to those in attendance, staff participated in the organizing of the event and secured vendors and new activities. The Chamber Chili Cook-off is a good community outreach event and staff participates in creating the booth space and serving chili to the public. Another community outreach event that staff participates in is the Boone County Fair; a booth is manned by Belvidere staff as well as many others.

The Summer Food Service Program, is a USDA program organized locally by the Community Action Agency. Planning staff assists the City Clerk with handing out free lunches and monitoring the lunch site once a week from June to August. Moving the summer lunch program from City Hall to the park at the corner of High Line and Lakeshore Drives to coincide with the City's Police and Fire Department outreach efforts proved to be successful. There was a large increase in children coming for lunch and the Belvidere Family YMCA was able to provide community outreach as well.

## Appendix Tables

- I. Population Estimates
  
- II. Case Comparisons
  - A. FY 2016-2018 Belvidere Case Comparisons
  - B. FY 2016-2018 Poplar Grove Case Comparisons
  
- III. Case Load Summaries
  - A. FY 2018 Belvidere Case Load Summary
  - B. FY 2018 Poplar Grove Case Load Summary
  
- IV. City of Belvidere Zoning Petition Flow Chart

I

**Estimated Population**

	2010	*2011	*2012	*2013	*2014	*2015	*2016	*2017	2018 to date
Belvidere:	25,585	25,603	25,666	25,701	25,716	25,734	25,755	25,773	25,807
Poplar Grove:	5,023	5,029	5,034	5,037	5,037	5,037	5,043	5,043	5,051

\* The estimated population numbers were based solely on the amount of building permits granted for single family residential structures and multi-family units and did not take into account fluctuating vacancy rates.

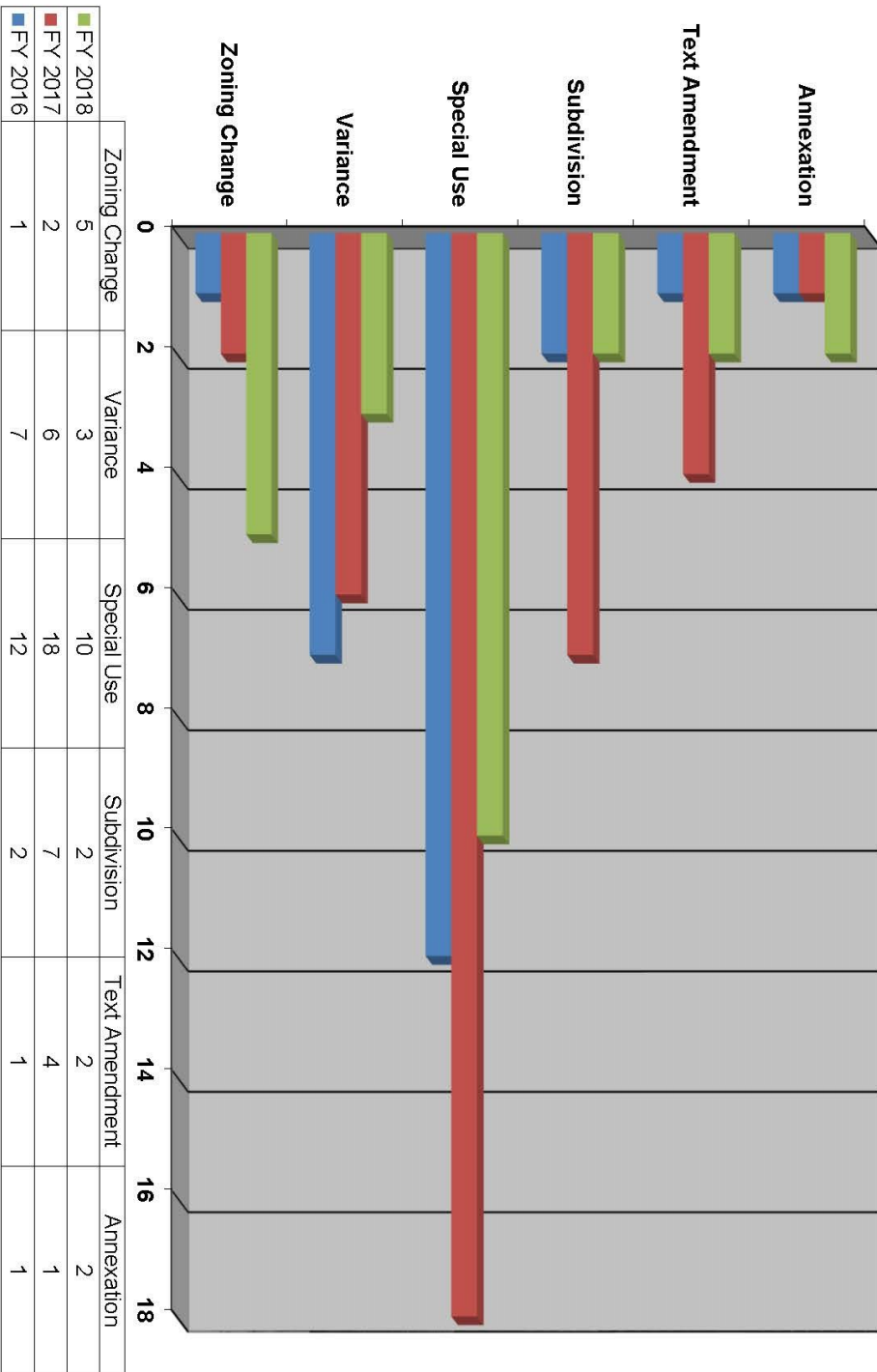
**Census Estimates**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Belvidere:	25,588	25,680	25,371	25,339	25,282	25,092	25,070	25,181	n/a
Poplar Grove:	5,023	5,087	5,096	5,115	5,169	5,056	5,054	5,093	n/a

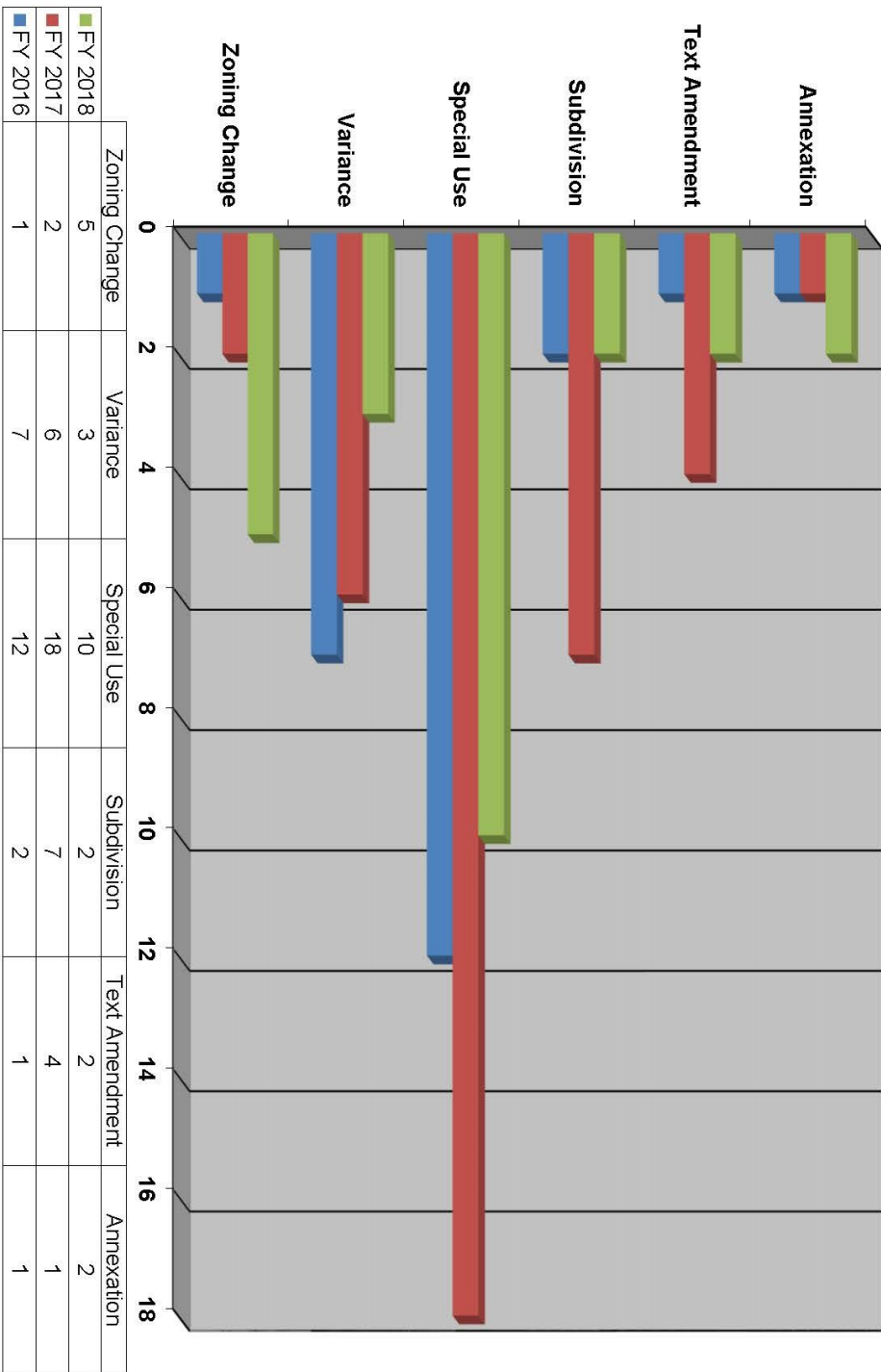
**\*Percentage of Growth**

	2000	2004	2010	2015	2020
Belvidere:	0	13	8.7	0.6	n/a
Poplar Grove:	0	114.9	70.8	0.3	n/a

## II-A FY 2016-2018 Belvidere Case Comparisons

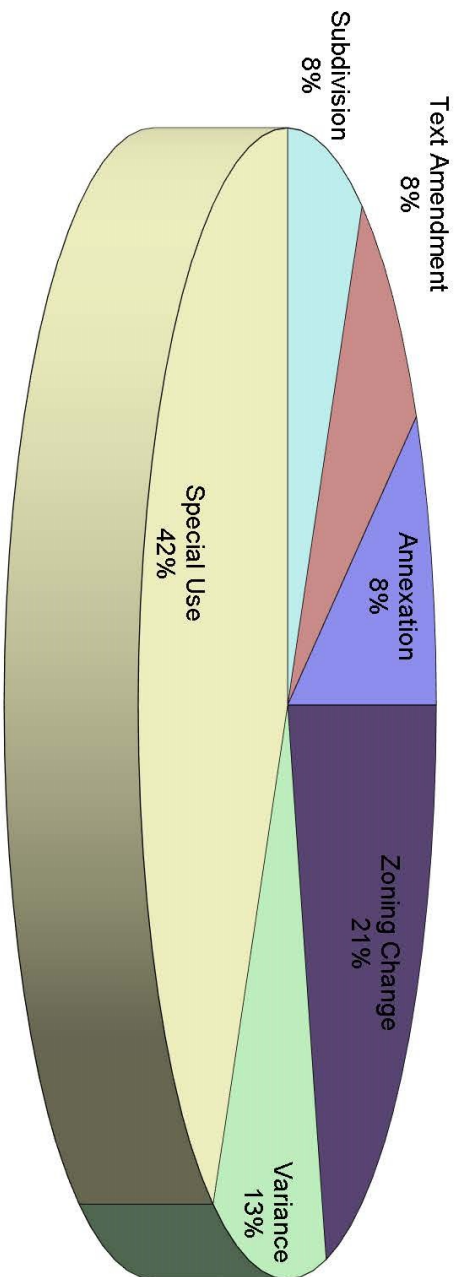


## II-A FY 2016-2018 Belvidere Case Comparisons

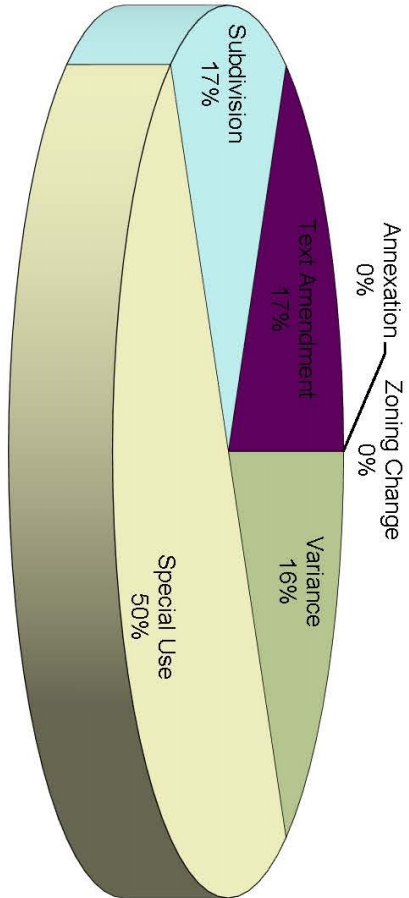


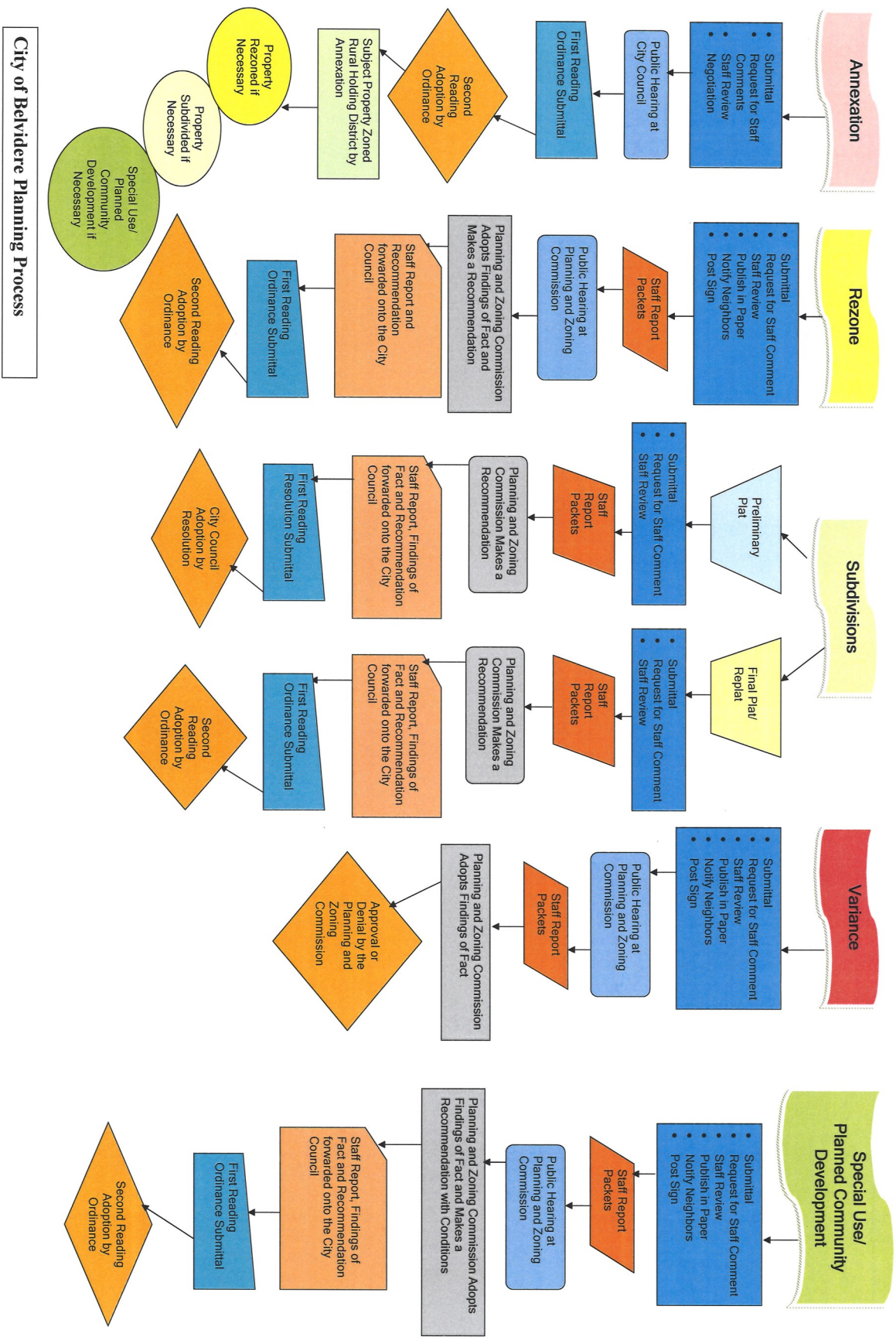


### III-A FY 2018 Belvidere Case Load Summary



### III-B FY 2018 Poplar Grove Case Load Summary





City of Belvidere Planning Process