

# 2021

## LEELANAU COUNTY

### GUIDE TO PERMITTING & ZONING



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## Introduction

Delays and issues with the permitting process can be costly to homeowners, construction companies, and even local governments. Unfamiliarity with permitting and zoning processes can arise for those not familiar with the road map and nuances of the process for different municipalities and agencies. The creation of the Guide to Permitting and Zoning for Leelanau County is the result of the collaboration of county and regional stakeholders to assist individuals and businesses with the permitting and zoning process necessary to move development forward.

The primary goals of the guide are to act as a reference and to educate the public from individuals to contractors to developers with the resources to access information for applying for permits or beginning a project within a certain County or municipality. The applicant or contractor should always contact the local Zoning Administrator, plan reviewer, or permitting agent of the location's local agencies prior to starting the project.

This Guide is not intended to be a "Do-It-Yourself" tool or as a definitive guide to municipalities' regulations and processes relating to zoning and permitting. Each project is different and utilizing the flowcharts within this guide does not guarantee that a permit or approval will be issued. Potential applicants and contractors are encouraged to seek the assistance of local professionals who have experience dealing with the requirements of permits and approvals (i.e. Zoning Administrator).

An understanding of the permitting and approval process will improve the efficiency of the process for both the private and public sectors, in return creating a more successful project from the onset. More introductory information on the planning and zoning process is available in the New Designs For Growth A Citizen's Guide to Planning & Zoning, which can be found at [www.nwm.org/citizensguide-planning](http://www.nwm.org/citizensguide-planning).

## Enabling Legislation

### [Michigan Planning Enabling Act 33 of 2008](#)

An act to codify the laws regarding and to provide for county, township, city, and village planning; to provide for the creation, organization, powers, and duties of local planning commissions; to provide for the powers and duties of certain state and local governmental officers and agencies; to provide for the regulation and subdivision of land; and to repeal acts and parts of acts.

### [Michigan Zoning Enabling Act 110 of 2006](#)

An act to codify the laws regarding local units of government regulating the development and use of land; to provide for the adoption of zoning ordinances; to provide for the establishment in counties, townships, cities, and villages of zoning districts; to prescribe the powers and duties of certain officials; to provide for the assessment and collection of fees; to authorize the issuance of bonds and notes; to prescribe penalties and provide remedies; and to repeal acts and parts of acts.

## Leelanau County Planning & Community Development Contact Information

Leelanau County planning staff provide planning and administrative assistance to the Leelanau County Planning Commission in carrying out its functions:

- Develop and maintain county plans including the Leelanau County General Plan
- Review proposed new or changes to Township plans and zoning ordinances
- Review proposed new or changes to Village plans
- Review EGLE and Corps of Engineers public notices for proposed projects affecting lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands in the county

Serve as an information and referral source:

- Planning and zoning reference information
- Census and demographic data
- Floodplain maps

All local municipalities in Leelanau County administer their own planning and zoning regulations. To apply for site plan approval or a zoning permit contact the appropriate Township or Village. Leelanau County also provides a link to the communities' websites available [here](#) under the Government tab.

Any properties placed in tribal trust through the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is exempt from local zoning and building regulations, but are subject to tribal rules and regulations. For more information visit their [website](#).

Trudy Galla, Director  
8527 East Government Center Drive Suite 108  
Suttons Bay, MI 49682  
Phone: (231) 256-9812  
Email: [tgalla@leelanau.gov](mailto:tgalla@leelanau.gov)  
[Website](#)

### Leelanau County General Plan

#### *Department of Building Safety Contact*

8527 East Government Center Drive Suite 109  
Suttons Bay, MI 49682  
Phone: (231) 256-9806  
Email: [buildingsafety@leelanau.gov](mailto:buildingsafety@leelanau.gov)

[Website](#)



## Other Permit Approvals as Required

Planning and zoning approvals in all townships and villages may require additional approvals as required. Discuss the necessary outside approvals that may be needed with the local planning and zoning official.

- **Local Fire Department Review**  
Depending on the project use, location, and scale, a review by the local fire department may be required for safety, access, and siting issues. See local jurisdiction contact information.
- **Leelanau Conservation District Soil Erosion Control Permit**  
Before contracting for, allowing, or engaging in an earth change in the County, a Landowner or Designated Agent shall obtain an earth change permit in the landowner's name if the earth change:
  1. Is a commercial project,
  2. Will disturb one or more acres of land,
  3. Earthwork within 100 feet of a regulated wetland (includes minor projects),
  4. Earthwork within 500 feet of a lake or stream (includes minor projects),
  5. Construction of a driveway with a slope of 10% or greater,
 or
  6. Any work done in a subdivision and all projects in Leland and Solon Townships need a permit, whether within 500' of water or not.
- **Road Jurisdiction - Either**  
Leelanau County Road Commission Office  
10550 East Eckerle Road  
Suttons Bay, MI 49682  
Phone: (231) 271-3993  
Email: lcrc@leelanauroads.org  
[Website](#)

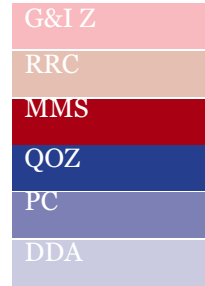
OR

- Michigan Department of Transportation  
Traverse City Transportation Service Center  
2084 US 31 South, Suite B  
Traverse City, MI 49685  
Phone: (231) 941-1986  
[Website](#)
- **Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department**  
Businesses may reach out to the Health Department regarding food safety/licensing, water safety, air quality, other use type inspections, and employee health and wellness. Here is a link to their [website](#).
- **Michigan Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy**  
Projects with the potential to impact air and water quality require EGLE-issued permits. Additionally, development near or in state protected wetlands, lakes, or streams may require EGLE-issued permits. View the EGLE [website](#) for more information. List all applicable development situations- critical dunes, high-risk erosion. Designated wetlands online viewer [here](#).

## Areas of Interest

This Guide utilizes (6) areas of interest that describe the communities' readiness for development and their public bodies overseeing development. They are:

- A Growth and Investment Zone
- A Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC)
- A Michigan Main Street community
- A Qualified Opportunity Zone
- Has a local Planning Commission
- Has a Downtown Development Authority or equivalent

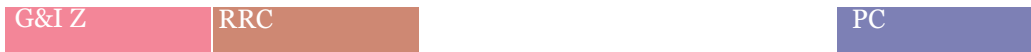


The areas of interest are color-coded and organized into a bar chart for easy identification. A community that represents all six areas of interest will have an associated bar chart with all six representing colors. Shown here:



Each Leelanau County local jurisdiction is assigned a color-coded bar chart. For an example of how the bar chart is applied, the Village of Northport represents three of the six areas of interest: is a growth and investment zone, has participated in the Redevelopment Ready Communities program, and has a local Planning Commission. Therefore, three of the six bars will be shown on the Village's bar chart. Northport is not a Main Street community, does not have an Opportunity Zone, and does not have a Downtown Development Authority. Therefore, those bars are excluded. A bar chart representing the associated areas of interest is included with each local jurisdiction. The Village's bar chart is represented in the following manner:

Village of Northport:



## A Growth & Investment Zone

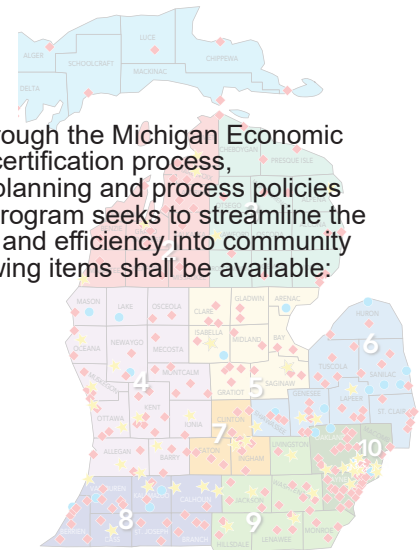
While many assets are needed for new growth and investment, there are five (5) essential criteria common to communities throughout the nation that support growth and investment potential. These five criteria were used in the selection of areas for additional analysis regarding growth and investment readiness, trends, and capabilities:

- Operational municipal water system
- Operational municipal sewer system
- Operational broadband service area - standard of 25 mbps download / 3 mbps upload
- Adopted master plan that recommends a defined higher density downtown core for development and investment
- Zoning ordinance that codifies higher density development in the downtown core
- Available governmental officials and staff to create effective growth- and investment-oriented policies and efficiently process requests and permits

## A Redevelopment Ready Community

The Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) program is provided through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation for communities across the state. Through the certification process, communities are empowered to build a strong foundation by establishing planning and process policies which retain and attract business investment and talent. Additionally, the program seeks to streamline the development approval process, by integrating transparency, predictability, and efficiency into community development practices. When encountering an RRC community, the following items shall be available:

- An updated Master Plan;
- An updated Zoning Ordinance;
- A comprehensive Guide to Development;
- A Public Participation Plan; and
- Strategic sites identified for development.



## A Michigan Main Street Community

Michigan Main Street (MMS) began in 2003 and is a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program. As a Main Street America™ coordinating program, MMS is affiliated with the National Main Street Center, which helps to lead a powerful, grassroots network committed to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. The Main Street program operates under the following four points:

- Economic Vitality
- Design
- Organization
- Promotion

## A Qualified Opportunity Zone

Opportunity Zones were created under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to stimulate economic development and job creation by incentivizing long term investments in low-income neighborhoods. Opportunity Zones are defined by the Economic Development Administration as an economically-distressed Census tract where private investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for capital gain tax incentives. Communities located in designated Opportunity Zone Census tracts will be identified.

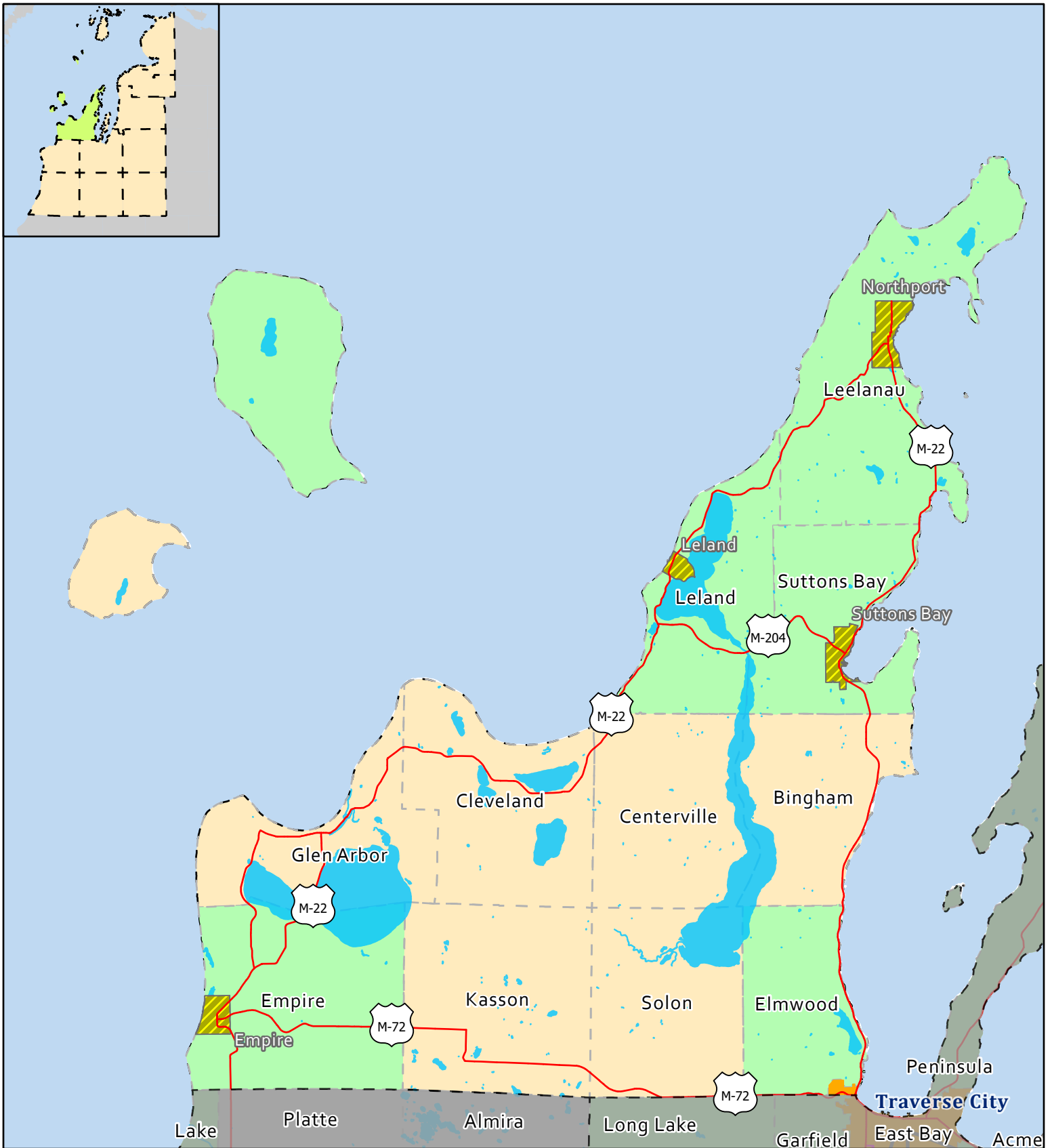
## Local Planning Commission

The group of appointed community residents who make up the Planning Commission serve as the sounding board for planning and development projects within the community. Each local government in Michigan has the authority to create a Planning Commission, but not all have one. Many communities in Michigan rely on County planning services. However, all local municipalities with a local planning department are listed in this guide. While the community may or may not have a dedicated planning staff member, the local Planning Commission will still be called upon to provide input on development projects. Where a community has enacted a local zoning ordinance, the Planning Commission will offer recommendations to the relevant City Council, Village Council, or Township Board. A community who is under county-wide zoning will offer recommendations to the County Planning Commission.

## Local Downtown Development Authority

Part 2 of Act 57 of 2018: Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act describes the authority, purpose, and powers of local Downtown Development Authorities. The State legislation can be found [here](#). The Downtown Development Authority Board is made up of appointed officials charged with creating a development plan for a defined tax increment financing district. The Authority is a stakeholder body and instrumental to the growth and development of the district.





# Leelanau County & Local Units of Government

## Legend

- |                            |                       |                         |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Highways                   | G&I Areas Villages    | All Villages            |
| Hydrology                  | G&I Areas Cities      | Leelanau County         |
| Great Lakes                | Surrounding G&I Twps. | Other NW MI Counties    |
| Qualified Opportunity Zone | All Townships         | Counties Outside Region |



Map produced by Networks Northwest Community Development 4/29/2021

# Village of Empire

G&I Z

PC

[Village Website](#)

*Village Hall Address*  
PO Box 253  
11518 South LaCore Street  
Empire, MI 49630  
Office Phone: (231) 326-5353

### *Village Contact Information*

Derith Smith, Clerk  
Office Phone: (231) 326-5466  
Email: [clerk@villageofempire.com](mailto:clerk@villageofempire.com)

**Village of Empire Master Plan**  
**Zoning Ordinance**

### *Zoning & Planning Commission*

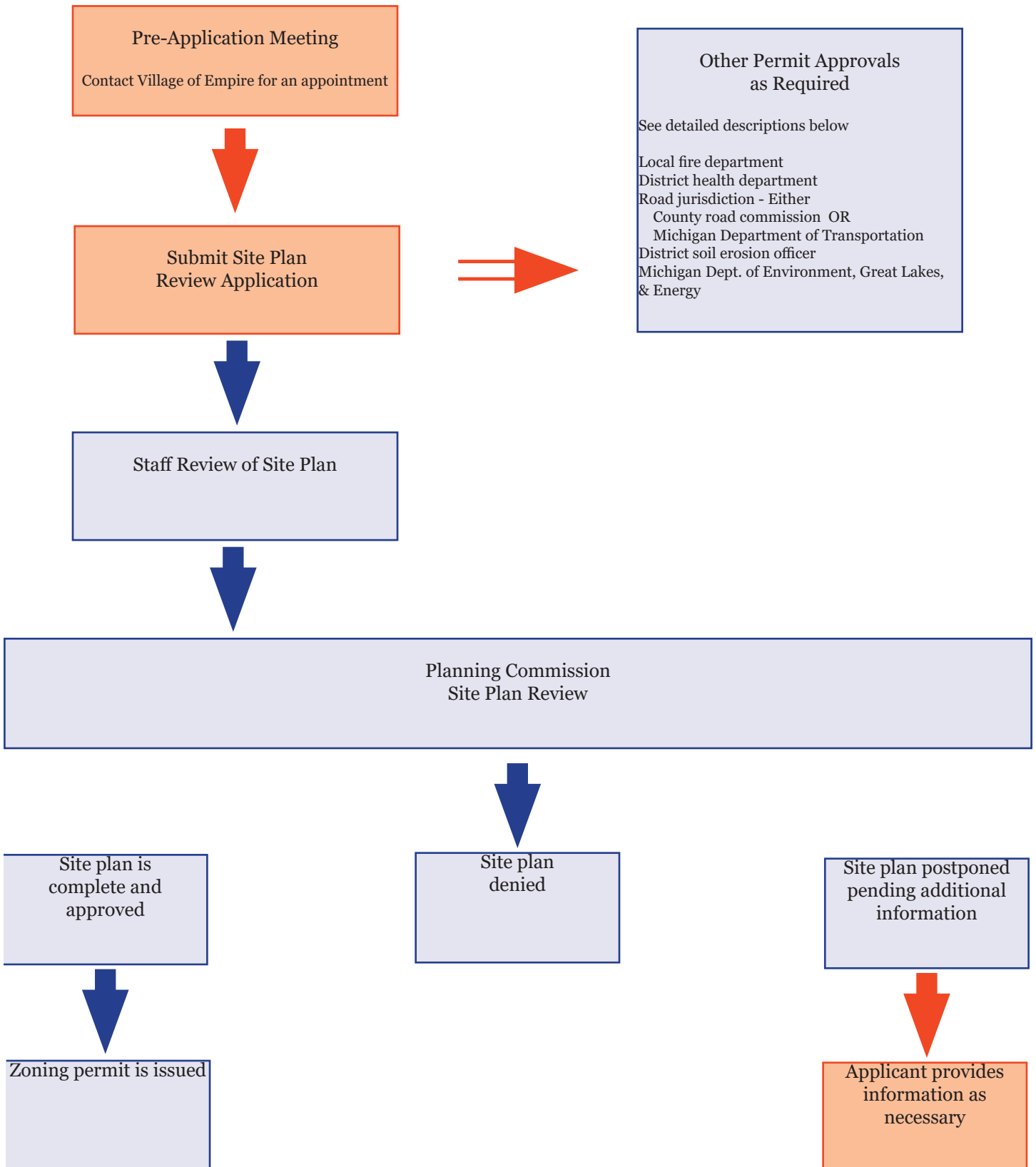
Chris Grobbel, Zoning Administrator  
Office Phone: (231) 499-7165  
Email: [cgrobbel@grobbelenvironmental.com](mailto:cgrobbel@grobbelenvironmental.com)

[Permits & Applications](#)



## Village of Empire Site Plan Review Process

Steps marked in orange indicates items the applicant is responsible for while blue indicates government or other agency review steps.



# Village of Northport

G&I Z      RRC

PC

[Village Website](#)

*Village Offices Address*  
116 Nagonaba Street  
Northport, MI 49670  
Office Phone: (231) 386-5182

### *Village Contact Information*

Cynthia Edmondson, Community Liaison  
Office Phone: (231) 386-5182 ext. 13  
Email: [liaison@villageofnorthport.net](mailto:liaison@villageofnorthport.net)

**Village of Northport [Master Plan Ordinances](#)**

### *Zoning & Planning Commission*

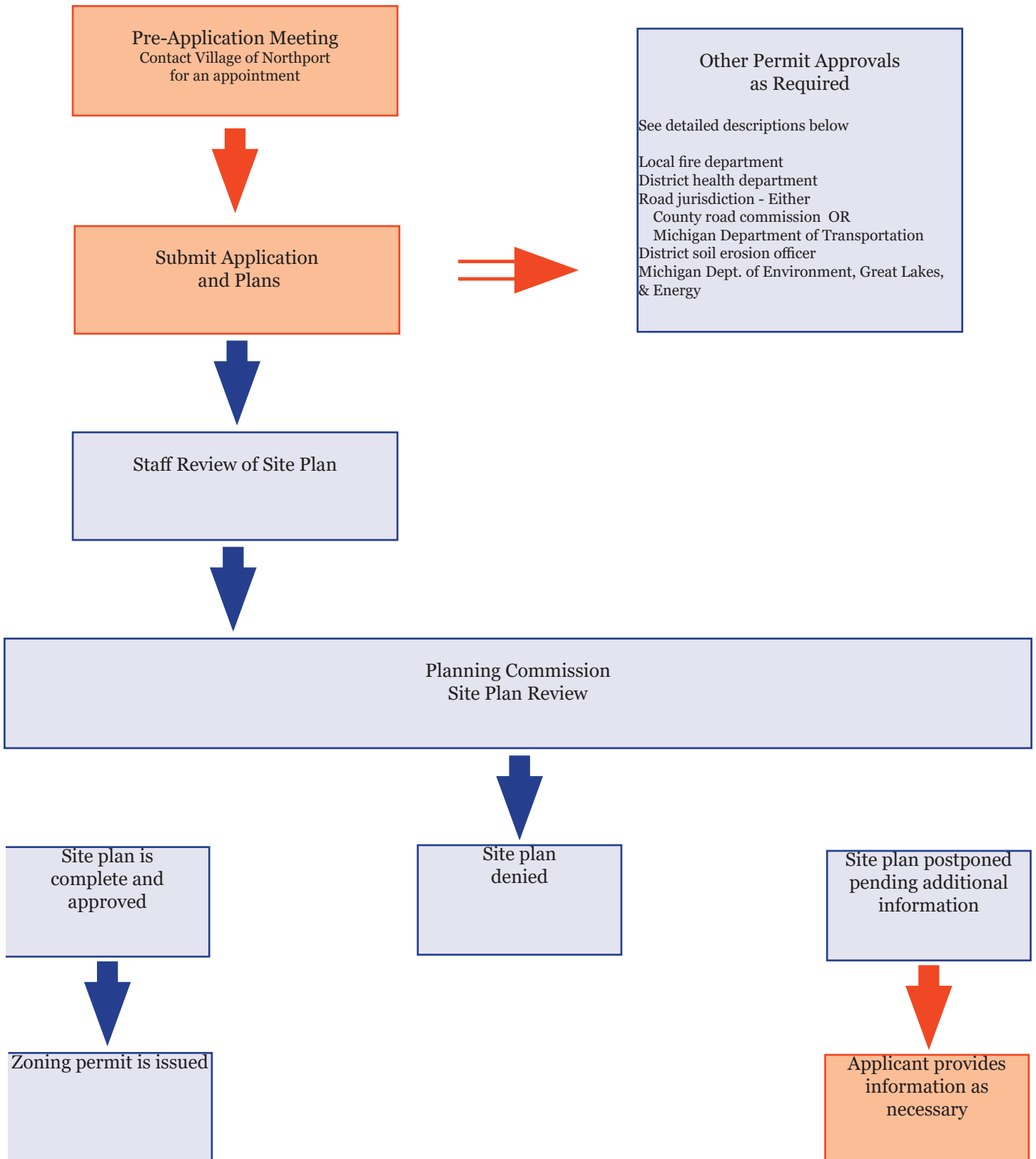
Office Phone: (231) 386-5182 ext. 14

[Planning and Zoning Applications](#)



## Village of Northport Site Plan Review Process

Steps marked in orange indicates items the applicant is responsible for while blue indicates government or other agency review steps.



## Village of Suttons Bay

G&I Z

PC

DDA

[Village Website](#)

### *Village Hall Address*

420 North Front Street  
PO Box 395  
Suttons Bay, MI 49682  
Office Phone: (231) 271-3051

### *Village Contact Information*

Rob Larrea, Village Manager  
Office Phone: (231) 271-3051  
Email: [manager@suttonsbayvillage.org](mailto:manager@suttonsbayvillage.org)

Village of Suttons Bay [Master Plan](#)

[Zoning Ordinance](#)

[Village Zoning Map](#)

### *Zoning & Planning Commission*

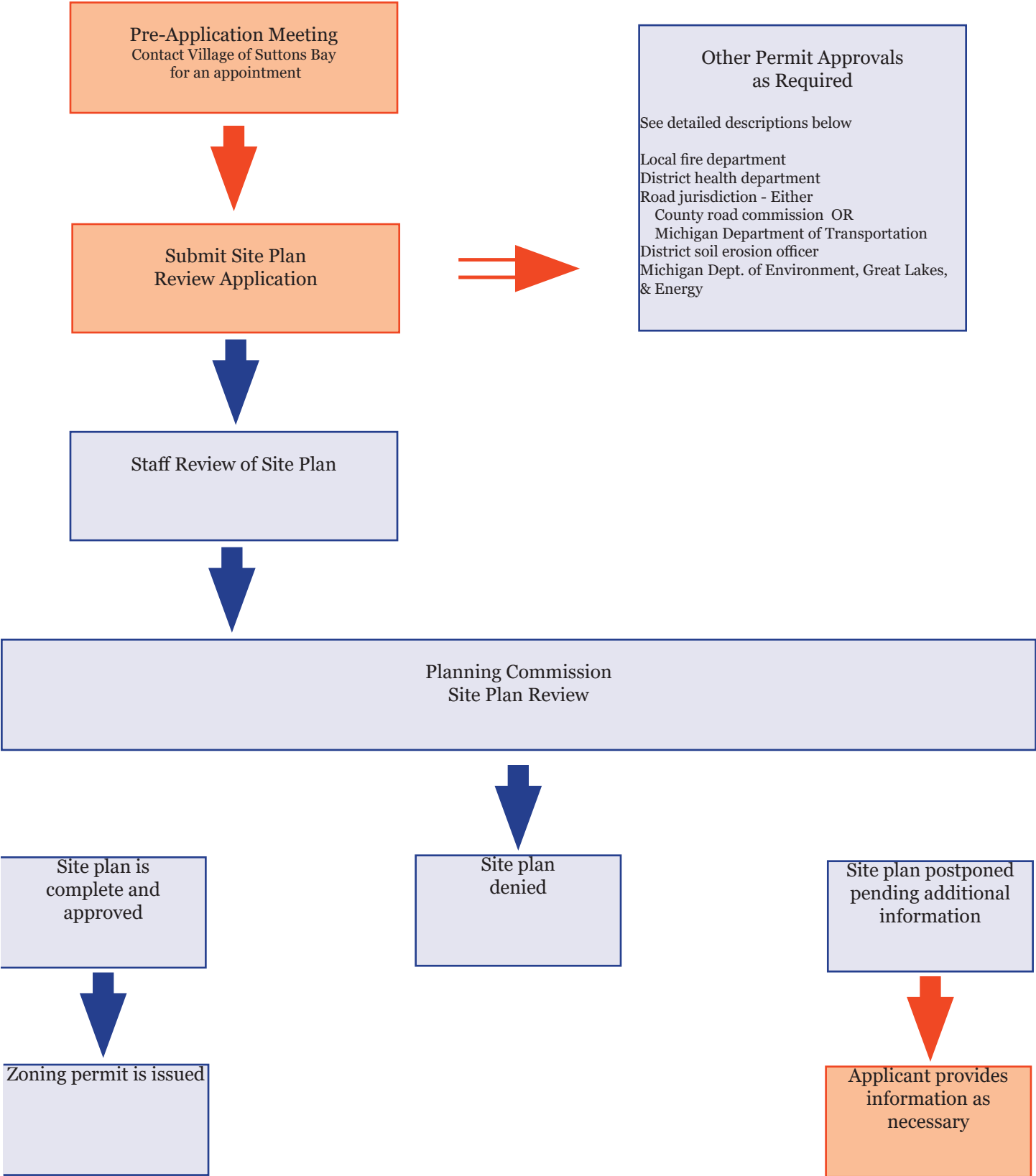
Leslie Couturier, Zoning Administrator  
Office Phone: (231) 271-3051  
Email: [zoning@suttonsbayvillage.org](mailto:zoning@suttonsbayvillage.org)

[Permits & Applications](#)



# Village of Suttons Bay Site Plan Review Process

Steps marked in orange indicates items the applicant is responsible for while blue indicates government or other agency review steps.



## Bingham Township

PC

Marian (Midge) Werner, Township Supervisor  
7171 South Center Highway  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
Office Phone: (231) 922-6767  
[Website](#)

Steve Patmore, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 271-2722 ext. 3  
Email: zoningadmin@suttonsbaytwp.com  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Zoning Map](#)

## Centerville Township

PC

Jim Schwantes, Township Supervisor  
  
Office Phone: (231) 920-5204  
Email: centervillesupervisor@gmail.com  
[Website](#)

Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 360-2557  
Email: tim@allpermits.com  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)

## Cleveland Township

PC

Tim Stein, Township Supervisor  
PO Box 150  
Cedar, MI 49621  
Office Phone: (231) 228-6984  
Email: timstein08@aol.com  
[Website](#)

Nello Valentine, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 228-5123  
Email: nvctza@gmail.com  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)

## Elmwood Township

PC

Jeff Shaw, Township Supervisor  
10090 East Lincoln Road  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
Office Phone: (231) 946-0921  
Email: supervisor@elmwoodtownship.net  
[Website](#)

Sara Kopriva, Planner/Zoning Administrator  
Office Phone: (231) 946-0921  
Email: planner@elmwoodtownship.net  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Zoning Map](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)

## Empire Township

PC

Christine Neiswonger, Township Clerk  
PO Box 234  
11494 South Union Street  
Empire, MI 49630  
Office Phone: (231) 326-5349  
Email: empiretownshipclerk@gmail.com  
[Website](#)

Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 360-2557  
Email: tim@allpermits.com  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)

## Glen Arbor Township

PC

Tom Laureto, Township Supervisor  
PO Box 276  
6394 West Western Avenue  
Glen Arbor, MI 49636  
Office Phone: (231) 334-3539  
Email: supervisor@glenarbortownship.com  
[Website](#)

Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 360-2557  
Email: tim@allpermits.com  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)



## Kasson Township

PC

Greg Julian, Township Supervisor  
11167 South Maple City Road  
Maple City, MI 49664  
Office Phone: (231) 883-2560  
Email: gregoryjulian@gmail.com  
[Website](#)

Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 360-2557  
Email: tim@allpermits.com  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)

## Leelanau Township

PC

John Sanders, Township Supervisor  
PO Box 338  
119 East Nagonaba Street  
Northport, MI 49670  
Office Phone: (231) 386-5138  
Email: ltsuper@leelanautwp.org  
[Website](#)

Steve Patmore, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 386-5138 ext. 4  
Email: ltzone@leelanautwp.org  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)

## Leland Township

PC

Susan Och, Township Supervisor  
PO Box 238  
123 North St. Joseph Street  
Lake Leelanau, MI 49653  
Office Phone: (231) 256-7546 ext. 202  
Email: lelandoch@gmail.com  
[Website](#)

Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 360-2557  
Email: zoning@lelandtownship.com  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)

## Solon Township

PC

James Lautner, Township Supervisor  
PO Box 253  
12708 South Solon Road  
Cedar, MI 49621  
Phone: (231) 947-2509  
Email: jamescarllautner@gmail.com  
[Website](#)

Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 360-2557  
Email: tim@allpermits.com  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)

## Suttons Bay Township

PC

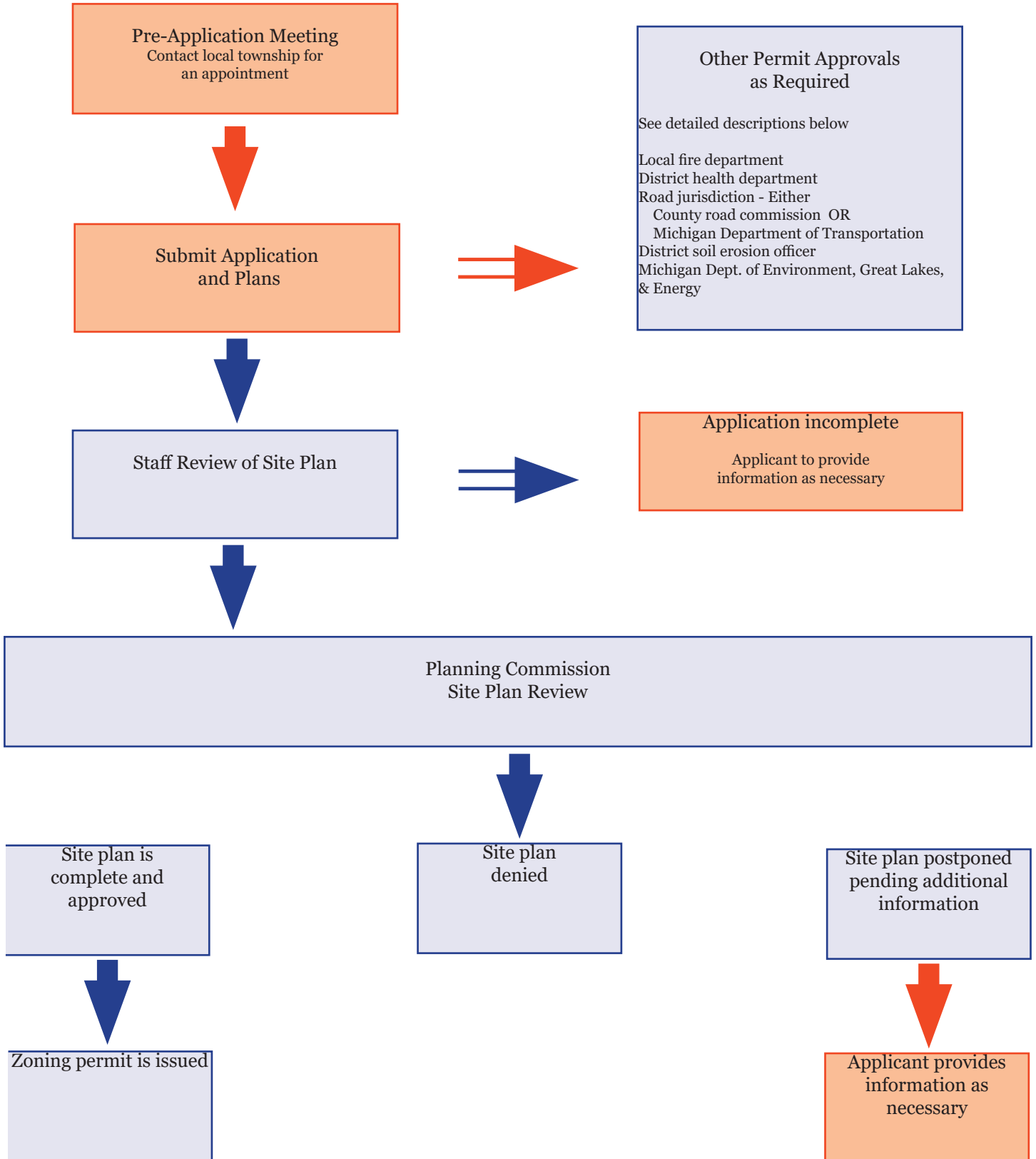
DDA

Richard Bahle, Township Supervisor  
PO Box 457  
95 West Fouth Street  
Suttons Bay, MI 49682  
Phone: (231) 271-2722  
Email: supervisor@suttonsbaytp.com  
[Website](#)

Steve Patmore, Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (231) 271-2722 ext. 3  
Email: zoningadmin@suttonsbaytp.com  
[Master Plan](#)  
[Zoning Ordinance](#)  
[Permits & Applications](#)

## Zoning Permit & Site Plan Review Process

Steps marked in orange indicates items the applicant is responsible for while blue indicates government or other agency review steps. Steps may vary by community.



## Additional Resources

Many regional and local agencies offer assistance to developers who are considering a project in Leelanau County. Many of these agencies are partners to local government and can help support a project through the permitting and zoning process. Please contact the individual agency for further information.



### Housing North

Housing North is a regional housing advocacy agency for northwest lower Michigan. Housing North was formed in 2018 by a cross-sector group of regional housing partners (business, philanthropic, government, workforce development, housing agencies) to overcome communication, policy, and financial barriers that prevent housing solutions. Housing North exists as a result of a shortage of housing in Northwest Michigan which hurts both residents and businesses. Housing North seeks to offer assistance to systemic issues such as expensive land and development costs, zoning that doesn't allow needed housing, and public opposition to development or zoning amendments.

[Website](#)



### The Leelanau Conservancy

The Leelanau Conservancy is devoted to protecting the land and water that make the Leelanau Peninsula one of the most unique and beautiful areas in the U.S. The Conservancy has preserved over 16,000 acres and created 28 Natural Areas for public enjoyment with more than 28 miles of trails. The Conservancy works with landowners to protect family farms and cherished private lands with conservation easements.

[Website](#)



### Leelanau Peninsula Economic Foundation

The Leelanau Peninsula Economic Foundation is a non-partisan, nonprofit with a mission to make available all of the tools, resources, and collaborative opportunities to assist the businesses and communities of Leelanau County, in order to strengthen and sustain their economic vitality.

[Website](#)



## Michigan State Housing Development Authority

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), established in 1966, provides financial and technical assistance through public and private partnerships to create and preserve safe and decent affordable housing, engage in community economic development activities, develop vibrant cities, towns and villages, and address homeless issues. MSHDA has a number of housing assistance programs which a developer might be eligible to apply for.

[Website](#)



Formerly Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, Networks Northwest is a regional planning agency which services 10 counties in northwest, lower Michigan: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford. Networks Northwest's staff of Community Planners provide technical planning expertise related to community engagement, spatial analysis, and master and recreational planning.

[Website](#)