

## **Planning Commission Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who is the Planning Commission and what do they do?**

The Planning Commission generally meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers, 26815 Scotia Rd. The Planning Commission is comprised of 9 members; 8 members are appointed by the Mayor and one member is a City Commissioner. All serve without compensation. The Planning Commission adopts and maintains the Master Land Use Plan, reviews site plans, and makes recommendations to the City Commission on amendments to the Zoning Ordinance (text and map) and other planning related matters.

### **What is Site Plan Review?**

The Planning Commission reviews proposed new buildings and homes and additions to ensure compliance with the zoning ordinance.

### **Can I have input on what they do?**

Of course, the city welcomes and encourages your input. Public hearings are noticed and the Planning Commission agenda is available online. Just take a look and if the topics interest you, attend the hearing or review and make your opinions known!

### **How are the meetings run?**

Robert's Rules of Order (as amended) will be observed.

[Public Hearings/Site Plan Reviews](#)

- I. The hearing/review will be introduced by the Chairman.
- II. The applicant will explain his/her request to the Commission.
- III. The Planner or other staff member will review the request.
- IV. The Chairman will take comments and questions from the public (this is the *only* opportunity for the public to speak unless the Chairman reopens public discussion).
- V. Planning Commissioners will question the applicant and staff.
- VI. The applicant has the opportunity to respond and/or comment on the public's input to the Commission.
- VII. The matter is deliberated and decided upon by the Planning Commission.

### Public Participation

If you wish to speak on the subject being considered you will be called upon by the Chairman and should give your name and address to the secretary for the record. You must address the Commission and not engage in dialogue with the applicant.

### **How do they decide if my project gets approved?**

The Planning Commission shall grant approval to a site plan which meets all of the following standards:

- (a) The proposed use conforms to the uses permitted in that zoning district,
- (b) The dimensional arrangement of building(s) and structure(s) conform to the required yards, setbacks and height restrictions of the ordinance,
- (c) The location, size and height of buildings, walls, fences and structures provides adequate landscaped open space, light, air and access to the subject property and to adjacent properties,
- (d) The development will not hinder the reasonable development of adjoining properties nor diminish the value thereof,
- (e) The proposed buildings, structures and entry ways are situated and designed to minimize adverse effects (upon owners and occupants of adjacent and surrounding properties) by providing adequate design of ingress/egress, interior/exterior traffic flow, storm drainage, erosion, grading, lighting and parking,
- (f) The site plan and its relation to streets, driveways and sidewalks does not interfere with and is not hazardous to vehicular and pedestrian traffic,
- (g) Natural features of the landscape are retained where they can enhance the development of the site, or where they furnish a barrier or buffer between the project and adjoining properties (used for dissimilar purposes) or where they assist in preserving the general safety, health and appearance of the neighborhood,
- (h) Adverse effects of the proposed development and activities upon adjoining residents or owners are minimized by appropriate shielding, screening, fencing or landscaping,
- (i) All buildings and structures are accessible to emergency vehicles,
- (j) The site plan as approved is consistent with the intent and purposes of the zoning ordinance which is to promote public health, safety and general welfare, to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, to avoid the overcrowding of population, to lessen congestion on the public roads and streets, to reduce hazards of life and property and to facilitate existing municipal land use and development plans.

In addition to the above, the following standards shall apply to all site plans in Zones R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, R-1D, R-1E and 2:

- (aa) The proposed structure or addition is similar in size and scale to existing structures in the same neighborhood and is compatible therewith,
- (bb) The proposed roof line, pitch and materials are compatible with existing structures in the same neighborhood,
- (cc) The exterior building finish is compatible with existing structures in the same neighborhood,
- (dd) Proposed accessory structures and garages are similar in style and materials to the principal structure.
- (ee) The proposed structure will conform to the general architectural scheme and design of the structures in the neighborhood in which it is located.

For site plan reviews in Zones R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, R-1D, R-1E and 2, neighborhood generally includes properties on the same side of the street and in the same block. For corner lots, properties on the other corners may also be considered. The guidelines adopted by the Planning Commission address specific types of structures and features and are provided to assist in the interpretation and application of the above standards.

### **How do I know if my project has to go before the Planning Commission?**

Just bring your proposed project to the Planning Department at City Hall and they will be able to advise you. You may wish to consult them during the planning phase of your project as they will be able to help with ordinance compliance and save you time later. City Hall hours are 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday or you can call with any questions you may have. 248-541-4300.