

Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals

Roles, Responsibilities, Desired Skills/Experience, and Appointment Application Process

The Chelsea City Council is always seeking resident involvement in local government decision-making. There are different ways to participate beyond attending public meetings: by serving on a board or commission. Individuals interested in serving on a board or commission are encouraged to attend board and/or commission meetings in advance of applying. Meeting schedules, agendas, and meeting packets are available online at https://www.city-chelsea.org/services/planning_zoning/index.php.

It is important that appointed members of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals attend each meeting. Individuals who cannot commit to attending regularly scheduled meetings are encouraged to participate as a member of the audience rather than occupy a seat on a board or commission. Consistent failure to attend meetings is considered a misfeasance and can be cause for removal from an appointment to a board or commission by the City Council.

The process to apply for a position involves an application and interview. Applications are available on the City webpage, or may be obtained in person at the Chelsea City Offices or by email request to the Mayor at jpacheco@city-chelsea.org. Applicants should indicate which board or commission to which they seek appointment on the application. Completed applications can be mailed to or dropped off at the Chelsea City Offices at 305 S. Main St., Suite 100, Chelsea, MI 48118.

The Mayor reviews applications and accompanying materials and interviews applicants. Interviews are typically conducted in the spring, as most terms follow the fiscal year. However, applications are accepted all year long; if an opening occurs during the year, interviews will be conducted as needed. The Mayor makes a recommendation to the City Council for appointments to boards and commissions.

All information included on or attached to an application will become a matter of public record and viewable on the City website as an informational item attached to a City Council agenda packet.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission is charged with reviewing site plans and special use for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and the Master Plan. The Planning Commission is also charged with considering applications for rezoning, reviewing amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, and updating the Master Plan; on these matters, the Planning Commission serves in an advisory role to the City Council.

Meetings are typically held at 7:00 pm on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month as needed. All meetings are held in compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

By law, the membership of the Commission must represent different professions and occupations having an interest in the development of the City. Membership is to include a representation of important segments of the community, such as the economic, governmental, educational, and social development of the City of Chelsea, in accordance with the major interests as they exist in the City, such as natural resources, recreation, education, public health, government, transportation, industry, and commerce. The membership must also be representative of the entire territory of the City to the extent practical.

Membership

The Chelsea Planning Commission consists of ten members. Members must be qualified City electors with the exception that one may be other than a qualified elector of the City per the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.

- Members are appointed by the Mayor, subject to a majority vote of the City Council. Terms are three years.
- One member, the non-voting member, is also a City Council member.
- Members hold office until their successor is appointed, except for the non-voting member whose membership follows his or her elected term.
- An elected officer or employee of the City is not eligible to be a member of the Planning Commission. The term 'elected officer' does not include the non-voting member.
- The Planning Commission has adopted by-laws addressing officers, meetings, public comments, quorum, and conflict of interest.
- A Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary are elected by the Planning Commission annually. The ex-officio member cannot be the Chair.

Planning Commission Duties

- Prepare, review, and/or update the Master Plan at least every five years as a guide for the development of the City addressing land use and infrastructure issues projecting up to 20 years.
- Consider applications for, conduct a public hearing on, and make a recommendation to the City Council on rezoning requests.
- Author/review amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and make a recommendation to the City Council.
- Review proposed plats and site condominiums for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and make a recommendation to the City Council.
- Review and approve or deny special exception uses and commercial site plans.

Skill Sets and Experiences Desired

- Architecture/Landscape Architecture
- Building Construction
- Civil Engineering
- Land Use Planning
- Land Use Law
- Real Estate Development

Compensation & Training

- Members are compensated per meeting attended.
- Members are reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their activities for the City and as authorized by the City Council.
- The City Council encourages members to attend relevant workshops and conferences and will pay registration fees if previously approved.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is authorized to grant dimensional variances from the Zoning Ordinance and, upon request, interpret provisions of or hear an appeal from an administrative action in applying the Zoning Ordinance. The ZBA typically meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. All meetings are held in compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

The ZBA make their determination based on the authority granted to them through the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and based on criteria and procedures in the Zoning Ordinance.

Membership

- The ZBA consists of five members and up to two alternate members. Three members must be present for the ZBA to conduct any business.
- The City Council appoints all the members; terms are three years.
- One regular member may be a member of the City Planning Commission.
- One regular member may be a member of the City Council, but they may not serve as Chair.
- An employee or contractor of the City may not serve.
- Any member who is also a member of the Planning Commission or City Council cannot participate in a public hearing or vote on a matter that they have previously voted upon in their other capacity.

Skill Sets and Experience Desired

- Architecture
- Building Construction
- Civil Engineering
- Land Use Planning
- Real Estate/Development /Law
- Zoning

Compensation & Training

- Members are compensated per meeting attended.
- Members are reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their activities for the City as authorized by the City Council.
- The City Council encourages members to attend relevant workshops and conferences and will pay the registration fees.