



Information for Applicants of Boards and Commissions

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Columbia Heights has several boards and commissions that advise the City Council on specific policies and make recommendations based on research and staff expertise. Members of boards and commissions are volunteer residents appointed by the City Council with the exception of the Charter Commission. The Chief Judge of Anoka County reviews applications and makes appointments for the Charter Commission. Procedure for filling all other commission positions generally consists of a review of applications, Council interview of prospective commissioners and selection of successful applicants. This handout is designed to provide you with summary information regarding each of the commissions and information about what you can expect as a commissioner.

IN GENERAL

Commissions have regularly scheduled meetings once per month (quarterly for the Charter Commission). Prior to each meeting, commissioners receive an agenda packet which contains staff reports and background information about the items to be considered. Staff reports can be quite detailed and may require substantial time to become fully familiar with agenda items. Commissioners are expected to maintain regular attendance at meetings, participate in the formal meeting, physically view sites when appropriate, and render decisions based upon the overall good to the community as opposed to more parochial interests. The City Council will give thorough consideration to commission recommendations in dealing with subject matter coming before it.

BOARD AND COMMISSION DESCRIPTIONS AND INFORMATION

CHARTER COMMISSION

Description: The Columbia Heights City Charter determines the procedures of City government in accordance with state statutes and the Minnesota State Constitution. The Charter enables the City of Columbia Heights to be a self-governing City under the municipal home rule provisions of the Constitution. The Council receives advice about Charter changes and updates from the Charter Commission, which is charged with keeping the document current under procedures authorized by state statutes.

Membership: The Charter Commission must have no more than fifteen and no less than seven members, who are appointed to four-year terms by the Chief Judge of the 10th Judicial District. Any Columbia Heights resident of legal voting age can apply to the commission.

Meetings: The commission meets quarterly on the third Thursday in January, April, July, and October at 7 pm at City Hall, unless otherwise noted.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA)

Description: The responsibility of the EDA is to provide financial and technical assistance and resources to residential, commercial, and industrial interests to promote health, safety, welfare, economic development and redevelopment.

Membership: The EDA is composed of seven members, at least two but no more than five of whom must be members of the City Council. The term of any commissioner who is a member of the City Council shall coincide with that member's City Council term. Other members are appointed for six year terms.

Meetings: Meetings are held on the first Monday of the month, 6 pm at City Hall, unless otherwise noted.

LIBRARY BOARD

Description: The Library Board guides the policy, programs, and use of the City library, and acts as a liaison between citizens and staff. The board makes decisions regarding library land and equipment. It also sets the levels of service and staffing. The board recommends improvements for the library and has the authority to make reasonable administrative rules and regulations, including the setting of fees. All the library policies and programs are made in accordance with the policies approved by the City Council. Annually, the Library Board approves and recommends to the City Council a budget for the coming year, and at least semi-annually the board approves and makes a line item comparison of its performance against the current budget and recommends transfers of funds among items.

Membership: The Library Board has five members appointed by the Council for three-year terms. Members must be residents of Columbia Heights.

Meetings: The board meets the first Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm, at the Columbia Heights Public Library, unless otherwise noted.

PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION

Description: The Park and Recreation Commission guides the use of public park lands, recreation, and senior citizen programs in the City, including parks, parkways, playgrounds recreation fields and buildings, and all related public service facilities. The commission has the authority to make reasonable administrative rules and regulations, including the setting of fees and the public use of park land and buildings.

Membership: The Park and Recreation Commission has seven members appointed by the Council for three-year terms. Members must be residents of Columbia Heights.

Meetings: Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm at Murzyn Hall, unless otherwise noted.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Description: The Planning Commission acts as an advisory board to the City Council on matters relating to zoning, development, and conditional and interim use permit applications. The Commission acts as the Board of Appeals and Adjustments of Variance and Appeal Cases. It also helps prepare and maintain a Comprehensive Plan for the physical development of the City.

Membership: The Planning Commission has seven members appointed by the Council for three-year terms. Members must be residents of Columbia Heights. The City Planner, Building Official and City Attorney serve as ex-officio members of this commission.

Meetings: Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, 6 pm at City Hall, unless otherwise noted.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Description: The Sustainability Commission shall serve as an advisory body to the Council and the administrative service of the city by advising and making recommendations to the City Council on how to operate in an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable manner within the city on its own initiative, or as referred to the Commission by the Council or the administrative service of the city.

Membership: The Sustainability Commission shall be composed of nine members appointed by City Council and serving three-year terms with the terms being staggered so that no more than one-half of the terms on a board or commission expire in any particular year. The City Engineer, or person designated by the City Engineer, shall serve as an ex officio member of the Commission.

Meetings: Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, 6 pm at City Hall, unless otherwise noted.

YOUTH COMMISSION

Description: This commission serves as an advisory body to the Council, and other boards and commissions as appropriate to inspire and bring to light new ideas from a youth perspective. This commission also creates an educational environment for youth looking to expand their knowledge of government and leadership functions.

Membership: The Youth Commission must have no less than seven members and no more than 13 members, with a staff mentor and councilmember liaison. Members must be between the ages of 14-18 years old, a resident of Columbia Heights or attend school in Columbia Heights. Members will serve two-year staggered terms.

Meetings: Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month throughout the school year, 6 pm at City Hall, unless otherwise noted.