

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS YOUTH COMMISSION BY-LAWS

2022-2023 BY-LAWS OFFICIALLY APPROVED BY YOUTH COMMISSION VOTE MAY 11, 2022

The purpose of the Columbia Heights Youth Commission is to serve as an advisory body to the Columbia Heights City Council, and other Boards and Commissions as appropriate, inspire and bring to light new ideas from a youth perspective, create an educational environment for youth looking to expand their knowledge of government and leadership functions, and provide experience-building opportunities for area youth seeking increased community and local government engagement. These By-Laws are adopted in consultation with City Staff, the City Council, and Youth Commission to establish and assist in the function of procedures of operation. City Council can, by majority vote, remove the Youth Commission for inactivity or lack of maintaining minimal membership, unethical behavior of individual member or membership in whole, or other determined good cause. City Council may also, by majority vote, choose to change or amend these by-laws as needed.

Section I. Membership

- A. Representation: The Commission shall be a minimum of 7 members and a maximum of 20 members.

Ideally, the Commission should represent a diverse cross section of the community, with participants selected from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, and ages. This is an advisory group pertaining to Columbia Heights youth and therefore members must be residents of Columbia Heights and provide their address upon application.

- B. Membership qualifications: Commission members shall be 14 to 18 years old at the time of the start of their appointed term.

- C. Term duration and limits: Members shall serve two-year, staggered terms. Active terms shall run from Oct 1 to Sept 30 (with the exception of the Commissions inaugural term, running from March 1 to Sept 30), with monthly meetings throughout the school year (Oct through May). Members in good standing may be reappointed for a second term provided they still meet the membership qualifications.

- D. Monthly Meetings: Monthly Meetings will be the second Wednesday of the Month, Oct through May, 6-7:30 pm. Meetings shall be held in recognized, accessible City public spaces allowing for public

attendance. Special meeting revising date, time, and location is permitted with appropriate notice in accordance with open meeting law.

- E. City Council shall annually designate a Council Member to serve as Council Liaison to the Commission. A staff representative will be selected annually by the City Manager to support and guide the Commission as the official Staff Representative for the Commission. Administration staff shall provide the Staff Representative and Youth Commission with additional assistance and clerical support as needed.
- F. In the event a member ages out of the membership requirement during their current term, they will finish their current term.
- G. Members who move out of Columbia Heights during their term shall notify the commission of the status change as soon as they are aware of it. They shall resign their membership effective on the last day of their residency. If they have moved out of Columbia Heights prior to notifying the commission, their resignation is effective immediately. If their resignation brings the total number of Commission members below seven, a call for applications for a mid-term appointment will go out within one week of the member's notification of residential change, with a two-week deadline for potential members to submit applications. Applications will be reviewed and acted on by the City Council at their earliest convenience. The City Council may hold optional interviews before making an emergency mid-term appointment.

Section II. Attendance

- A. Regular in-person attendance at Commission meetings is expected from Commission members, Liaisons, and Staff Representatives.
- B. Three absences are allowed per year for each Commission member. In non-emergency cases, commissioners shall make a good-faith attempt to notify staff representative(s) at least one day prior

to any absence. After the second absence the member will be notified by the Staff Representative to be reminded of the three-absence limit. Staff Representative may also discuss possible accommodations with the member if member is willing to share their reasons for the absences. After three absences, the member's standing shall be brought to the City Council to determine if circumstances warrant termination of membership.

- C. One member of the Youth Commission shall be present for at least one regularly scheduled City Council meeting per month. That member may be designated on a monthly or annual basis by the Youth Commission. That member shall provide 72 hours notification to the City Clerk or Staff Representative if they would like to report to or update the City Council.

Section III. Duties and Functions

- A. The Youth Commission shall keep the Columbia Heights City Council and Administration informed on matters concerning youth within the City, including but not limited to:
 - 1) building commitment to and raising awareness of youth issues;
 - 2) promoting public interest in and an understanding of youth issues and activities;
 - 3) fostering youth involvement in municipal decision-making;
 - 4) fostering cooperative interaction with social, health, and recreational programs;
 - 5) developing goals for improving youth engagement, including developing methods to monitor progress toward these goals;
 - 6) fostering educational opportunities including, but not limited to, field trips, tours, mentorship by Staff, Commissioner, or Council
- B. The Youth Commission shall hold public meetings and provide written recommendations to the Council on matters of youth interest initiated by or referred to the Commission
- C. Members shall participate in existing community events as well as create new events and projects

- D. Members shall stay informed on activities of the City Council, Boards and Commissions
- E. The Youth Commission shall build partnerships with other youth organizations in Columbia Heights and neighboring cities
- F. The Youth Commission shall provide representation to other organizations and groups as appropriate

Section IV. Application Process

- A. Members of the Commission shall be appointed through an application and interview. The City Council is responsible for both appointment and reappointment of members for each term year.
- B. To correspond with the school year, applications will be available in August and due mid-September.
- C. Interviews and selections will be made in late September.
- D. A designated Youth Commission member may attend applicant interviews and offer feedback to the City Council on the selection(s).

Section V. Representatives

- A. Youth Commission members shall designate Youth Representatives for all active Boards and Commissions in the City. When Youth Commission members have an excused absence, they should make every effort to secure an alternative representative to attend, or follow up on any topics discussed or decisions made by those boards and commissions after-the-fact.
- B. Youth Commission members shall designate appointees for representation to Council and other Boards and Commissions. An unexcused absence at a scheduled Council and/or Commission meeting will count as an absence against the representative member who was scheduled to attend.
- C. A Staff Representative shall be present at all Youth Commission meetings. If the designated Staff Representative for the Youth Commission is unable to attend a meeting, the City Manager shall designate an alternative representative to attend

- D. Staff Representative, City Clerk, and Youth Commission Chair shall organize and schedule educational presentations for Youth Commission meetings
- E. The Staff Representative or City Clerk shall take rollcall, note absences, and assist Commission members as needed, and provide instruction to the Youth Commission members on proper minute taking.
- F. Staff shall educate and assist Youth Commission members with responsibilities of their commission membership and offices relevant to a City Council advisory commission. This includes, but is not limited to, training Youth Commission members on operating under Robert’s Rules of Order and “best practices.”
- G. Council Liaison shall act in a non-voting role.
- H. Staff Representative shall run Youth Commission meetings in the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair.
- I. Where deemed appropriate, Staff Representative or City Clerk may step in to keep discussions on topic, offer suggestions, correct errors, or prevent legal mishaps.

Section V. Officers

The officers of the Commission shall be Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer.

Section VI. Officer Duties

- A. Chair.
 - 1) The Chair shall be charged with the administration of the Commission with assistance from Staff Representatives
 - 2) The Chair shall preside over all meetings of the Commission with assistance from Staff Representative and/or City Clerk.
 - 3) The Chair shall appoint Ad Hoc committees as necessary.

- 4) The Chair will confer with City staff to help coordinate event and activity involvement.
- 5) The Chair will confer with the Staff Representative and City Clerk to coordinate guest and educational presentations.
- 6) The Chair shall break tie votes.

B. Vice Chair

- 1) A Vice Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair during the Chair's absence.
- 2) A Vice Chair shall assist the Chair in performing duties as needed.

C. Secretary/Treasurer

- 1) The Secretary/Treasurer shall be responsible for record keeping and financial management and will operate under the guidance of the Staff Representative and City Clerk.
- 2) The Secretary/Treasurer is responsible for recording meeting and event dates; all meeting minutes; monitoring designated representatives to outside commissions and organizations; other responsibilities as assigned by Chair and Staff Representative
- 3) The Secretary/Treasurer will consult with Staff Representative or City Clerk regarding budgetary matters as they pertain to the Youth Commission

D. Additional Officer Responsibilities

- 1) All three officers shall become familiar with the official By-Laws, Rules of Operation, and Robert's Rules of Order and ensure, to the best of their ability, that both are consistently followed.
- 2) An annual report of the activities of the Commission shall be prepared by the Chair and Chief Secretary/Treasurer near and before the end of the term, and in a timeframe that allows presentation to the City Council no later than the 2nd Council meeting in May.

Section VII. Election of Officers

- A. Chair, First Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer shall be elected by the membership annually at the first meeting of the new term and shall serve until their successors have been duly elected and sworn in. Members may nominate themselves or another member for a specific role. Previous year's Chair will run the first meeting prior to the vote. If previous year's Chair is not present, previous year's Vice Chair will assume those duties. If neither are present, the Staff Representative shall run the meetings until new officers are in place. Candidates are given up to five minutes to make their case for why they should be appointed to a specific role (this will usually only be relevant if more than one nominated member is seeking the same officer position at a time).
- B. The Officers of the Commission shall be elected by a majority vote of members in attendance.

Section VIII. Meetings

- A. With good cause, Youth Commission members may choose to change the date and time of meetings provided the proposed changes do not create conflicts with other pre-established meeting schedules of other city entities. Meeting date and/or time changes must be approved by a majority vote of the commission members and approved by the Staff Representative. Notifications of changes in day/time/location of meetings must be made in accordance with Open Meeting Law.
- B. The meetings shall include review of proposed agenda, minutes from the previous meeting, and reports; discussion of new and old business coming before the Commission. Meetings may also incorporate education or informational presentations.
- C. The Chair may call special meetings of the Commission with at least three days' notice. The call shall state the subject matter to be considered at the meeting. No other items will be addressed other than the reason for the Special Meeting. Special Meetings shall be noticed in accordance with Open Meeting Law.

Section IX. General Rules

- A. All meetings shall be conducted in general conformance with Robert's Rules of Order.
- B. A quorum is necessary to transact official business at any meeting. The presence of at least half of the membership shall constitute a quorum.
- C. The Commission shall be responsible for its own procedures and order of business with guidance from the Staff Representative as needed. In consultation with the Staff Representative, the Commission may initiate or carry out activities addressing community concerns outside of regular meeting hours.

Section X. By-Law Changes

By-Laws shall be reviewed annually at the April meeting by Youth Commission members and the Staff Representative. After commission membership and staff review, the Commission Chair shall provide written changes, if any, to the Staff Representative for further feedback. The Staff Representative, in consultation with the City Manager and City Clerk may provide further changes to the By-Laws before an approval vote by the Commission. A two-thirds majority vote of approval by Youth Commission members shall be required for by-law changes. The City Council shall be notified of the changes at the first City Council meeting that takes place after the bylaw approval vote. The Youth Commission Chair, Staff Representative, or City Council may submit suggestions for By-Law updates or changes during the year, but action will not be taken to approve changes until the annually scheduled review or unless immediate action is deemed appropriate or necessary by a majority vote of the City Council.