



# Village of Decatur, Michigan

## Training Strategy

October 2023

## Introduction

The Village of Decatur features a number of appointed boards and committees. Diversity on those boards and committees can ensure that a wide range of perspectives are considered when decisions on development and financial incentives are made. The Village should seek applicants with the skill sets desired for each board and commission and establish expectations prior to new officials and board members becoming active.

Further, the Village should encourage and support the ongoing education and training needs of all elected and appointed officials, and staff. These officials will make more informed decisions when they receive adequate training. Turnover in officials and staff can create gaps in knowledge, which makes ongoing training essential to the efficient functioning of the Villages development process.

## Expectation and Skillsets

**Village Council.** The Decatur Village Council was created to provide quality public services at the lowest possible tax rate to promote health, comfort, safety and convenience to its citizens and the community. Comprised of six Council Members and the Village President, Village residents elect council members for four-year terms. The Village Council also appoints a Village Manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Village.

**The Planning Commission.** Shall consist of five members who reside in the village and who shall represent insofar as possible different professions, occupations, geographical areas, and constituencies, and who shall be appointed by the village president, subject to the approval by majority vote of the village council. One member of the planning commission shall be a member of the village council. The term of each member, with the exception of the village manager, shall be for three years, except that the respective terms of the members first appointed shall be: one for one year, two for two years, and legislative member for term of office. Terms of office will begin at 12:00 midnight on June 3 of each year and end at 11:59 pm of June 2. Members may, after a public hearing, be removed by the village president for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance of office. Vacancies occurring otherwise than through the expiration of term shall be filled for the unexpired term by appointment by the village president and approval by the village council. Members of the planning commission shall receive no compensation for their service.

**Downtown Development Authority.** The purpose of the Downtown Development Authority is to eliminate causes of deterioration and to promote and provide for the economic growth and improvement of the business district of the Village. The powers and duties of the Downtown Development Authority are those enumerated in MCL 125.4207 and the authority shall be under the supervision and control of a board consisting of the president of the Village and nine members appointed by said president, subject to the approval of the Village Council as provided in MCL 125.4204.

**Parks and Recreation Committee.** Michigan winters make the summers here that much more enjoyable. That's why the Village of Decatur is proud to offer its residents and visitors a number of public parks in which to enjoy the balmy days of spring, the sun-filled days of summer, and the crisp afternoons of fall. And, if you like to get out in the snow, there's ample time to enjoy snowmobile trails, cross-country skiing and more! Maintained by the Village, the parks provide a variety of recreational opportunities with continuous improvements for added enjoyment. The Parks and Recreation Committee shall consist of 7 members appointed by the Village President.

## Applications

Those wishing to apply to any of the appointed boards or commissions included within this document can request an application at Village Hall (114 N Phelps St., Decatur, MI 49045) or can access the application form online. A separate application is required for each board or commission an applicant wishes to join.

## Education and Training

**Training Budget.** The Village should include in its annual budget money allocated for training for elected and appointed officials and staff. Members of the Village council (in its capacity as zoning board of appeals and otherwise), planning commission, and downtown development authority, as well as Village staff make more informed decisions based upon the latest information when they receive adequate training on land use and development issues. Turnover in officials and staff can create gaps in knowledge, which makes ongoing training essential to efficient functioning of the Villages development processes.

**Identification of training needs.** The Village council, planning commission, and DDA should annually review with staff training needs during the budget process. Newly elected or appointed members, or staff, would benefit from introductory training provided regionally by groups like the Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Association of Planning, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and others. Veteran board members and staff could benefit from refresher training, and all could benefit from training that introduces new laws, concepts, or best practices.

**Tracking attendance at training.** Those attending training will be asked to fill out a tracking document that indicates the training topic, the training dates and location, who put on the training, what was learned applicable to the Village, and whether the training is recommended by the attendee to other members of elected or appointed officials or staff. These tracking documents will be kept in a training file and used to determine who has attended trainings and who has not.

**Notification of training opportunities.** Staff receives email notification of training opportunities from organizations that include the Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Association of Planning, Michigan Economic Development Association and others. Department heads are instructed to forward such

training opportunities to the Village manager and Village clerk, who then can coordinate providing them by email, or within meeting packets, to the applicable elected or appointed officials.

**Communication about training.** In addition to completing the tracking document, those who attend training on behalf of the Village are asked to briefly communicate at the next meeting of the elected or appointed board what they learned at the training and how the training benefits the community. In instances where doing so is beneficial, elected and/or appointed boards can hold joint meetings to discuss important things learned at training and how to implement such. The planning commission shall prepare annually for the village council a report that covers, among other things, the training taken by board members during the previous year.