



RULES OF PROCEDURE:

A Model Template for a Municipal Planning Commission
(with a professional planner on staff)

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*This Model Template was written for a Municipal Planning Commission, which is not governed as a Special District or under the Private Act Statute.





RULES OF PROCEDURE

MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION

I. ENABLING LEGISLATION

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 13-4-103, the _____ Municipal Planning Commission hereby enacts the following Rules of Procedure to govern the transaction of business.

II. THE PLANNING COMMISSION

- A. **Name.** The name of the Commission shall be the “_____ Municipal Commission” as established and provided by TCA §13-4-101.
- B. **Membership.** The membership of the Commission shall conform to the requirements of TCA §13-4-101 which states: One (1) of the members shall be the mayor of the municipality or a person designated by the mayor and one (1) of the members shall be a member of the chief legislative body of the municipality selected by that body. All other members shall be appointed by such mayor. Should a vacancy arise, the mayor shall appoint a member.
- C. **Records.** The records of the Commission, including records of the minutes, actions and determinations shall be kept in the Office of the City Recorder and be available to the public during normal business hours.
- D. **Order of Business.**
1. Call to order
 2. Approval of Regular and Consent Agenda
 3. Presentation and approval of minutes of previous meeting
 4. Reports from officers, committees, or staff
 5. Old Business
 6. New Business: Applications for Rezoning, Site Plans, Preliminary Subdivision Plats, Final Plats and Staff Reports for each. Public Comment shall be permitted on any agenda item prior to Commission action.
 7. Public Forum on Planning-Related Topics not on the agenda.
 8. Adjournment

III. OFFICERS

Officers of the Commission shall be elected as follows:

- A. **Officers.** The officers of the Commission shall be Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.
- B. **Elections.** The chair, vice-chair and secretary shall be elected at the January meeting of the Commission. In accordance with TCA §13-4-102 the officers shall be elected from among the appointive members. All officers shall serve for a term of one year and shall be eligible for re-election.
- C. **Chair.** The chair shall preside at all meetings of the Commission and shall perform such duties as the Commission shall authorize. The chair shall not make a motion on an agenda item; however, may participate in discussion and vote on any matter.

D. **Vice-Chair.** In the absence of the chair, the vice chair shall perform the duties of the chair.

E. **Secretary.** The secretary shall maintain accurate minutes of the proceedings of the Commission. The secretary shall also perform such other duties as the Commission may direct, including the certification of official records and transcripts and subdivision plats as required in **TCA §13-4-102.**

F. **Planning Director May Serve as Secretary.** Pursuant to **TCA §13-4-102** the chief executive officer of the municipality, such as the city manager or town administrator, and in the absence of a city manager or administrator, “the chief executive officer” shall mean mayor, has the authority to appoint a planning director, who shall be qualified by membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners, experienced in city, regional or state planning or educated in a related academic field. The Planning Commission may delegate the responsibility for approval of a subdivision plat to the staff of the planning commission with approval by the majority vote of the Planning Commission and City Commission. Pursuant to **TCA § 13-4-302(d)** such delegation of the duties to the Planning Director are subject to the following procedures:

(1) A municipal planning commission may delegate the responsibility for approval of a subdivision plat to the staff of the municipal planning commission by a majority vote of the municipal planning commission that is taken in a public meeting after being placed on the municipal planning commission’s meeting agenda and notice being provided as required for other matters before the municipal planning commission.

(2) This delegation may only include subdivision plats that include:

(A) No more than twenty-five (25) lots and only if the development received preliminary plan approval through the municipal planning commission; or

(B) No more than five (5) lots if the development did not require preliminary plan approval through the municipal planning commission; provided, that:

(i) The subdivision complies with such regulations governing a subdivision of land as adopted by the municipal planning commission pursuant to **TCA § 13-4-303;**

(ii) No request for a variance from such regulations has been requested; and

(iii) A division of land requiring new road or utility construction is not approved by the planning staff under this subsection (c) unless the plan received preliminary approval by the municipal planning commission.

(3) A municipal planning commission shall not delegate to its planning staff the authority to preliminarily approve, finalize approval of, or certify a subdivision plat, regardless of the number of lots proposed for the subdivision plan, consistent with the parameters of this section, unless each municipal legislative body, lying in whole or in part within, and subject to, the jurisdiction of the regional planning commission, approves such delegation by a majority vote of their respective legislative bodies. (A Municipal Planning Commission serving as a Regional Planning Commission within the respective Planning Region must seek approval of the County Legislative Body as well).

IV. MEETINGS

A. **Regular Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held on the _____ of each month at 6:00 PM in the _____ or at such other place and/or time as designated by the chair. Public notice of all regular meetings shall be posted and/or duly advertised to meet the legal requirements of TCA §8-44-101 requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

B. **Special Meetings.** The chair may, and shall upon the request of two members, call a special meeting of the

Commission for the purpose of transacting any business. Special meetings shall also meet the public notice requirements of the Open Meetings Act..

C. Quorum. The majority of the Commission membership shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting the business of the Commission. Approval of any item of business shall require a favorable vote of the majority of the quorum.

D. Agenda. The secretary shall have prepared for each meeting an agenda specifying the order in which the items of business shall appear before the Commission. Pursuant to TCA §8-44-110 the agenda must be made available to the public for free at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to a regular meeting. The agenda must reasonably describe the matters to be deliberated or acted upon during the public meeting. The Municipal Planning Commission may deliberate or act upon matters not listed on the agenda of its regular meeting if they follow their properly adopted rules and procedures and with all other applicable state laws. The commission may not withhold items from an agenda for the purpose of avoiding public disclosure of business to be considered.

E. Conflict of Interest. Any member who has a personal interest involved in any matter before the Commission shall make a disclosure of such interest and be excused from voting on such matter. In such event, the member shall not be regarded as a member of the Commission for quorum or majority purposes on that particular vote. It shall be the responsibility of the Commission members to disclose any conflict of interest.

F. Manner of Voting. The voting on all questions coming before the Municipal Planning Commission shall be by roll call. The "ayes" and the "nays" shall be entered upon the minutes of such meeting except that when the vote of all Municipal Planning Commissioners present is unanimous, the record of such unanimous vote shall be sufficient. Each motion or action of the Municipal Planning Commission shall include specific findings of fact and statements of material evidence and include the reasons for its actions in accordance with Article V, Section 2. The action taken on the motion and the specific findings and reasons shall be noted in the minutes of such meeting.

V. PROCEDURES

A. General. As set forth in Section IV A above, the final agenda for the Municipal Planning Commission shall be prepared in advance of each meeting and posted on the city's official website at least 48 hours in advance of the public meeting.

- (1) The Commission shall adopt the agenda as its first order of business after the meeting is called to order. Agenda items shall be followed in order of appearance on the printed agenda.
- (2) Additional items not requiring a vote may be placed on the agenda by unanimous consent vote of the members of the Commission present at the meeting. The regular agenda items are to be heard and voted on individually. The consent agenda items are to be heard and voted on with a single motion. During the adoption of the agenda, the Commission may choose to move an item or items from the regular agenda to the consent agenda or from the consent agenda to the regular agenda. The consent agenda shall include items determined by the secretary due to the limited scale and scope of the project or if the projects contain limited staff comments or recommended stipulations.
- (3) Items may be removed from the agenda at the request of the applicant or the order of appearance on the agenda may be changed by majority vote of the Municipal Planning Commission members present at the meeting.



- (4) All regular agenda items shall require the property owner or agent of the property owner to be present to respond to questions and comments. Should the owner or agent not be present, the Commission may vote to proceed or defer due to special circumstances as communicated by the owner or agent. In all other circumstances the Commission shall act on the item to comply with state regulations (Public Chapter 1044 of 2026) to ensure a timely development review process.
- (5) When an agenda item is called to be heard by the Chair, the staff shall present the item and explain to the members the action requested and provide a staff report with Findings of Facts as to the requested item. Staff will state or read their recommendation as to the requested action. At the conclusion of staff's comments, the owner or agent of the owner may present facts or evidence in support of the approval of their agenda item.

B. Public Forum. The Commission may allow members of the public to speak on planning-related topics. The Public Forum is intended for discussion of topics associated with the duties of the Commission only. Members of the public shall be limited to three (3) minutes unless additional time is permitted by the general consent of the Commission. If a group wishes to address the Commission on the same topic, the Commission may request that a spokesperson be chosen by the group or limit the comments to five (5) members of the public on the same topic, but additional comments may be permitted by the general consent of the Commission due to special circumstances. All comments and Commission responses shall be handled in a civil, and respectful manner. The chair is responsible for maintaining order and decorum. If an individual deemed out of order by the chair, he/she may be asked to leave, or if necessary, be escorted from the meeting by the deputy. The Commission may set a total time period of the Public Forum to twenty minutes.

VI. INTERPRETATION AND FILING

A. The Commission shall interpret the meaning of these Rules of Procedure. The Commission may, in extraordinary cases, make an exception to the rules by majority vote. In any parliamentary matter not covered herein, **Robert's Rules of Order** shall apply.

B. Upon adoption, these Rules of Procedure shall be filed in the office of the City Recorder or the Planning Department.

Approved by the _____ Municipal Planning Commission during the meeting held:

Signature of Chair

Date:



Need Assistance?

The Center for Local Planning stands ready to provide advice to local governments as they work to comply with these statutory requirements by improving meeting practices, updating Bylaws, and creating updated internal processes. Communities with questions may submit a request for assistance to planning@tennessee.edu

