

Planning Commission

City of Huntington, WV

What is the Planning Commission?

The Huntington Planning Commission is an appointed advisory body of nine citizens established to oversee the development and review of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan sets forth proposed land use development in the City for the next 20-25 years.

The Commission's primary responsibility as overseer of the Comprehensive Plan is to approve or deny requests for special permits and to make recommendations on other matters concerning the City Zoning Ordinance, which is the primary implementation tool for the Comprehensive Plan.

Who serves on the Planning Commission?

The nine members of the Planning Commission are appointed by the Mayor, confirmed by Huntington City Council, and are residents of the City. In making appointments to the Commission, care is taken to ensure that members are representative of the various neighborhoods across the City as well as business and industry. One member of the Commission is a member of the governing body (a City Council member) and a second member is also a member of City administration (the Mayor). All members are volunteers and serve three-year terms.

What does the Planning Commission do?

The Planning Commission hears issues involving special permits, rezonings, abandonments, annexations, and subdivisions at its monthly meetings. Each of these items is described below.

Special Permit: a category of land uses whose operation may give rise to unique problems with respect to their impact upon neighboring property. Examples of special permits include bars/taverns, daycare centers, nursing homes, parking lots, and utility transformers.

Rezoning: a request to change the assigned land use designation from one category to another category.

Abandonment: the conveyance of public land for permanent private uses. The City turns over all rights of the property, except easements for utilities.

Annexation: the addition of new properties into the City limits.

Subdivision: the division of property into multiple parcels.

At the monthly hearings, the Planning Commission makes final decisions on requests for special permits. Other issues such as rezonings, abandonments, and annexations will receive a favorable or unfavorable recommendation, which will then be taken to City Council for a final hearing.

All decisions of the Planning Commission concerning the approval or denial of a Special Permit may be appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

What does the Commission consider when it makes a ruling or recommendation?

When considering a **special permit**, the Commission examines the project to make sure that it will not:

- X Be detrimental to the Comprehensive Plan;
- X Endanger the public health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the community;
- X Be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other nearby property for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property value within the neighborhood;
- X Impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district;
- X Lack adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and other necessary facilities; and
- X Lack adequate ingress/egress designed to minimize traffic congestion.

When considering other issues, the Planning Commission must examine the overall effect upon the Comprehensive Plan.

When does the Planning Commission meet and how is an item placed on its agenda?

The Huntington Planning Commission meets on the first Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers, 800 Fifth Avenue. In order to be placed on the Commission agenda, an

application must be filed prior to the filing deadline. This date varies and is available from the Planning staff. This deadline allows time for application review, advertisement, and neighbor notification. Since the application process differs for most issues, a preapplication appointment should be scheduled with the Planning Director. At the preapplication appointment, the applicant will be provided with necessary forms and information regarding site plan requirements and filing fees. Preapplication appointments may be made by visiting the Department of Development and Planning Office, City Hall Room 14, or by calling 696-4438.

Once completed application materials are submitted, the issue will be advertised in a legal advertisement in the *Herald-Dispatch* 15 days prior to the hearing and letters will be mailed to notify surrounding property owners of the application and date of the meeting.

What happens at a Planning Commission meeting?

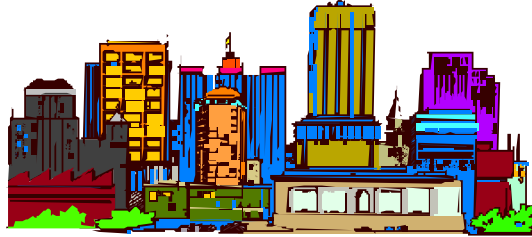
At the monthly meeting, each applicant is required to be present either in person or by a representative. All meetings are recorded and open to the public. The following procedure is standard in handling a case before the Commission:

- X The applicant or representative is asked to step forward and state his/her name and address for the record.
- X The Commission Chairman asks the applicant to explain what they are requesting and why the Commission should approve or favorably recommend the application.
- X Drawings, photographs, site plans, etc. are introduced.

- X The Commission questions the applicant.
- X The Chairman asks for testimony from anyone wishing to speak in favor of the issue.
- X The Chairman asks for testimony from anyone wishing to speak in opposition to the issue.
- X The Commission votes on the issue and approves or denies a request for special permit, makes a favorable or unfavorable recommendation to City Council, or votes to table the issue for further study. Tabled issues are usually placed on the following month's agenda.

For more information about the Huntington Planning Commission or to obtain an agenda for the upcoming meeting, call 696-4438.

The Huntington Planning Commission



A Citizen's Guide

David Felinton, Mayor

**Prepared by
Department of Development and Planning
Richard Dixon, Executive Director
P.O. Box 1659, Huntington, WV 25717-1659**

**Telephone: (304) 696-4438
TDD: (304) 696-5582
FAX: (304) 696-4465**

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