



City of Clawson
Board and Commission Member
Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are provided as a general guide to help residents and business owners understand what certain board and commission members do, their terms of office and basic requirements.

January 2020

City Council Member

The City Council is the legislative body of the city as enabled by state statutes and city ordinances. The mayor and four council members are elected by registered voters of the city. Terms for the mayor are two years and the term for council members is four years. Two council people shall be elected every two years. City Council is enabled to set policies and enact laws deemed proper for the ongoing health, safety and welfare of the city.

Typical Duties

- Attend all regularly scheduled meetings (first and third Tuesday of each month) and special meetings.
- Actively participate in discussion of meeting topics and consider all presentations, proposals, and facts while voting on official actions.
- May participate in special subcommittees or task forces as needed.
- Review and establish public and administrative policies
- Adopt laws, codes and rules
- Review and approve the annual budget, tax levy, and capital improvements program
- Participate in civic events to provide leadership and stay abreast of programs and trends to improve the community

Requirements for Holding Office

- Must be 25 years of age or older on the date of taking office
- Must be a qualified city voter

Planning Commission Description of Duties

The Planning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council, which is responsible for reviewing and acting on matters related to planning and development. The Commission is composed of nine members representing – as much as possible – different professions or occupations, be appointed by and receive compensation (if any) from the City Council. Each Commissioner will be appointed to a three-year term, unless their successor takes office.

Typical Duties

To implement the Master Plan, the Planning Commission is empowered to administer the City's zoning laws, ordinances, rules and regulations which:

- Regulate the use and appearance of buildings, structures and land.
- Regulate location, height, and size of buildings and structures; the size and use of lots, yards, courts, and other open spaces; the percentage of a lot which may be occupied by a building or structure; and the intensity of land use.
- Regulate signs and billboards.
- Establish requirements for off-street parking and loading.
- Establish and maintain building setback lines.
- The Planning Commission also reviews environmental documents, municipal code amendments and specific plan or other policy documents, and makes recommendations to the City Council on issues pertaining to Annexations, General Plan Amendments, Zone Changes and policy issues regarding development.

Desirable Qualifications

A Planning Commissioner's primary job is to make land use decisions that are consistent with the policies and plans encoded within the City of Clawson Master Plan. Therefore, the priority of a Planning Commissioner must be to develop decision-making skills and knowledge of City policies, both past and present. It is not critical to have training in fields such as planning, architecture, law, civil engineering, geology, economics, or demography; as these are skills that are available to the Commissioner from staff, consultants, and the applicant. The commissioner's job is to weigh the professional input given in staff reports, environmental reports, and consultant reports and make a concise decision as to the applicability of the proposal to the city's wants and needs, as well as its understanding and reflection of the Master Plan.

Suggested qualifications for a Planning Commissioner include:

- A willingness and ability to research and report on issues, programs and policies related to development issues.
- A willingness to attend night meetings on a regular basis. The regular meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.
- A willingness to assist in implementing projects as decided upon by the City Council.
- The ability to sustain harmonious working relationships with Commission members, the City Council, staff, residents, and the public.
- A willingness to attend extracurricular meeting and training seminars related to regional planning uses.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The ZBA is a quasi-judicial body comprised of five members, appointed by city council to serve three-year terms. Decisions of the ZBA shall not be based on whether it agrees with zoning ordinance regulations. If the ZBA finds specific ordinances problematic, it shall communicate the issue to the Planning Commission, who may study and recommend amendments as appropriate.

Typical Duties

- Hear appeals of decisions rendered by other boards and administrative staff
- Interpret unclear provisions in the zoning ordinance
- Decide on applications by landowners to permit buildings which vary from the nonuse/dimensional standards of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Decide on applications of public service or public utilities to permit the erection and use of a building or an addition to an existing building to a greater height or larger area than the district requirements established in the Zoning Ordinance.
- To permit temporary buildings and temporary uses in connection with the development of land for periods not to exceed one year.

ZBA composition

- ZBA members are appointed to three (3) year terms or same as term office for planning commission/legislative body members (ex officio)
- Not less than five (5) members for populations greater than 5,000
- ZBA members shall be electors within the zoning jurisdiction of the local unit of government
- A member of the legislative body may be on the ZBA
- Two (2) alternates are allowed (an alternate must stay with a case until its final, they act as a regular member when serving)

Desirable Qualifications

A Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) Member's primary duty is to understand and apply the city's zoning ordinance. It is not critical to have training in fields such as planning, architecture, law, civil engineering, geology, economics, or demography; as these are skills that are available to the zoning board of appeals from staff, consultants, and the applicant. The zoning board of appeals members should strive to discern and decide as to the validity of hardships as well as consider alternatives to variance requests that could be more compliant with the ordinances.

Suggested qualifications for a Zoning Board of Appeals member include:

- A willingness to attend night meetings on a regular basis. The regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month.
- An ability to understand zoning ordinances
- The ability to sustain harmonious working relationships with Board members, the City Council, Planning Commission, staff, residents, and the public.
- A willingness to attend extracurricular meeting and training seminars related to regional planning and zoning uses.

Downtown Development Authority

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) members will provide leadership in implementing DDA programs designed to enhance and promote the DDA district by sharing their experience in or knowledge of administration, finance, program development, advertising, public relations, downtown business activity, communications, design, or economic development. Collectively, the DDA Board assumes legal and philosophical responsibility for all its activities. To do this, the DDA is enabled by the state and local ordinance. The board establishes DDA policy, maintains control over its finances, publicly promotes community revitalization within the district, evaluates overall DDA project performance and oversees personnel matters.

Typical Duties

- Board members must ensure the continuing legal existence of the program as well as adopting policies that determine the programs purposes, governing principles, functions and activities and courses of action.
- The board members are responsible for monitoring the finances of the DDA budget including program costs and revenues
- Board members advocate community revitalization and promote economic development in the downtown area.
- Beyond the above noted responsibilities, the DDA board divides its workload and clearly delineates responsibilities among four committees, in one of which each board member shall participate
- Board members are encouraged to improve their understanding of downtown revitalization by participating in training opportunities as available.
- Board Members are encouraged to attend at least one out-of-town conference or seminar relating to community revitalization each year, such as the quarterly Michigan Downtown Association meetings, the National Main Street Center annual conference, or other applicable training sessions.

People with skills or talents in the following areas would also bring a great deal to the DDA:

- Architecture/Design
- Art
- Banking
- Health Care
- Human Resources
- Marketing
- Media/Public Relations
- Public Speaking
- Volunteer Administration
- Writing

Potential board members whose skills and backgrounds fill the needs of the board should, of course, but supportive of the DDA vision and be willing to accept the time commitment and work associated with the board member position.