

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
BYLAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Adopted August 1, 1977  
Amended November 6, 2002; September 17, 2003; October 2, 2008;  
February 5, 2013; December 4, 2018

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**ARTICLE I – AREAS OF FOCUS AND ACTION**

- A. The primary area of focus and action of the City of Williamston Planning Commission (hereafter, “the Commission”) is that within the city’s geographic boundary.
- B. The Commission’s work also includes areas adjacent to city boundaries in cooperation with adjoining governmental units to promote compatibility, coordination and understanding.

**ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Commission is to perform the duties set forth in the following:

- A. Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended (MCL 125.3801, et seq.)
- B. Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended (MCL 125.3101, et seq.)
- C. Section 2-311, et seq., of the City of Williamston Code of Ordinances, which establishes the Planning Commission.
- D. City of Williamston Subdivision Control Ordinance, being Section 54-31, et seq., of the City’s Code of Ordinances.
- E. City of Williamston Zoning Ordinance (as amended).
- F. Other Ordinances enacted by the City Council delegating specific duties to the Planning Commission.

**ARTICLE III – DUTIES**

The duties of the Commission shall be as provided by law, including but not limited to the following:

- A. Conduct studies, assemble information to determine economic, physical facilities, natural resources, and social conditions, trends and prospects.
- B. Prepare and document a master plan to guide and enhance the development of the City, as described in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended.

- C. Prepare ordinances and codes and other tools needed to implement the master plan and other plans.
- D. Adopt the master plan, recommend its implementation, and recommend to City Council adoption of related ordinances and codes.
- E. Provide for consultation with City of Williamston officials and administrators, private organizations, citizen groups, officials of other municipalities, and state and federal government agencies.
- F. Follow prescribed legal procedures for adoption, referral, review and amending plans, ordinances and codes.
- G. Provide information to news media concerning studies, plans, and recommendations, and plan and conduct “educational” efforts to inform the general public.
- H. Review proposals and plans for public improvements that relate to the current comprehensive master plan for development as adopted.
- I. Review and act upon referrals from the City Council and administrative agencies, other public agencies, area municipalities, and private organizations.

#### **ARTICLE IV – ORGANIZATION, RULES, OFFICERS**

The Planning Commission consists of seven (7) members, six (6) of whom are appointed by the Mayor with the approval of Williamston City Council, and one of whom is a City Councilmember selected by the City Council to serve ex officio, with full voting rights. All members must be electors of the City, except that one member may be an elector of another local unit of government.

##### **A. Vacancies**

- 1. Members are requested to inform the Zoning Administrator, in writing, at least two months prior to their term expiring whether or not they wish to be considered for re-appointment for another term. The Zoning Administrator will forward the members’ letters to the Mayor for consideration.
- 2. Member vacancies are filled for the unexpired balance of the term.
- 3. The Commission shall make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council of persons available for appointment to fill a vacancy, after review of their completed applications and personal interviews during a regular Commission meeting.

##### **B. Officers elected by members of the Planning Commission at the regular monthly meeting in July of each year shall be:**

- 1. Chair
- 2. Vice-Chair
- 3. Secretary

**C. Duties of Officers:**

**1. Chair**

- a)** The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Commission, both Regular and Special.
- b)** The Chair may designate the Vice-Chair to preside in his/her seat at any meeting if he/she desires.
- c)** The Chair (or any three members) may issue a call for a Special Meeting by making a written or oral request to the City Clerk's office.
- d)** The Chair shall direct the City staff to establish the agenda for regular or special meetings, and the order thereof including such items of old business and other items that may have been deferred at previous meetings and shall provide this information to the City Clerk's office. The agenda and all pertinent background information necessary for the meeting shall be sent to members by mail or messenger at least 3 days prior to the meeting. Only those items on an agenda of a meeting shall be considered unless additional items are allowed by unanimous consent of all members present.
- e)** Sign such correspondence and documents as may need the signature of the Chair.
- f)** Appoint members to such regular and special committees as may be authorized and approved by a majority of the Commission.

**2. Vice-Chair:**

- a)** The Vice-Chair shall preside at meetings of the Commission in the absence of the Chair, or when requested to do so by the Chair.
- b)** The Vice-Chair shall perform all of the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unable to perform his/her duties and after being so informed by the City staff.

**3. Absence of Chair and Vice-Chair:**

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair from a regular or special meeting of the Commission, the members by a majority vote shall select a temporary chair to preside. The duties of the temporary chair shall be ad hoc for that meeting only.

**4. Secretary**

- a)** In the absence of the City staff, the Secretary shall record the proceedings of a meeting of the Commission. Copies of the proceedings shall be sent with the agenda of subsequent meetings.
- b)** The Secretary shall conduct such correspondence as he/she may deem necessary, or that he/she may be requested to do by the Chairman or Commission as a whole.



## **ARTICLE V – ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

- A.** Advisory Committees comprised of citizens or members of the City staff, or a combination thereof, may be established on an ad hoc basis by the Commission in carrying out the work, studies, and duties of the Commission.

## **ARTICLE VI – COMMISSION BUDGET**

- A.** The Commission may provide input to the City Manager in January of each year that shall be considered when the Manager develops and presents the budget to the City Council in April. The proposals of the Commission shall also be considered by the City Council when it adopts its Annual Budget in June.
- B.** The Commission shall have the right to expend money appropriated for items stipulated in the official City budget within administrative procedures established by the City Manager and the City Council.

## **ARTICLE VII – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES**

- A.** The Commission shall be governed by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act; these Bylaws adopted on August 1, 1977 and amended from time to time; these parliamentary procedures and rules; and the Michigan Open Meetings Act.
- B.** Voting in all matters of importance, or the expenditure of funds, shall be by roll call vote. The Chair shall decide whether or not a roll call or voice vote is necessary, unless there is a specific request from any member for a roll call vote.
- C.** A roll call vote shall be by a rotating call method.
- D.** The Chair or Vice-Chair, as the case may be, does not lose their vote when presiding at a meeting.
- E.** A simple majority of the members present at a meeting shall be sufficient to pass any official action, unless state law or these Bylaws require a greater majority on a specific motion being voted upon.
- F.** Members of the Commission shall vote on all matters, but may abstain from voting if there is a conflict of interest per Chapter 2, Article III of the Code of Ordinances.
- G.** Rules of Order
  - 1.** Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws all business of the Commission shall be conducted according to the most current edition of Roberts Rules of Order.
  - 2.** Notice of regular meetings shall conform to all requirements of law.

**H.** Agenda for Regular Meetings should follow according to the following (except the Chair may exercise the prerogative of changing the order of business if determined necessary).

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll call (determination of quorum)
4. Acceptance of action on agenda
5. Audience participation on non-agenda items
6. Review and approval of minutes
7. Old business\*
8. New business.\* For each item, discussion and debate follow these priorities:
  - a) Presentation by staff
  - b) Comments by applicant
  - c) Questions from Commissioners
  - d) Comments from proponents\*
  - e) Comments from opponents\*
  - f) Action
9. Items for discussion and/or action\*
10. Items of interest/information only
11. Committee reports
12. Second opportunity for audience participation on non-agenda items
13. Placement of items on future agenda
14. Commissioner comments
15. Adjournment

Items marked with an asterisk (\*) are opportunities for public comment recognized by the Chair. Depending on the length of the agenda and the number of persons waiting to speak, the Chair may limit the length of any agenda item, including presentation by an applicant and comments by those supporting or opposing the question on the floor. The Chair may rule out-of-order any comments that are non-germane, derogatory, disruptive, or repetitive. The Chair may order any disruptive person from the room. In the event of general disruption, the Chair may recess the meeting.

**I.** Agenda for Special Meetings:

1. Call to order
2. Roll Call
3. Only items specifically placed in advance on the agenda of a Special Meeting shall be considered, except by unanimous consent of the members present at the Special meeting.
4. Items for future agendas
5. Adjournment

**J.** Public Hearings. The Commission, by majority vote of the members present, or the Zoning Administrator shall set a date for Public Hearing. If there are several separate items to be heard at one public hearing, the same procedures shall be followed for each.

1. Agenda for Public Hearings.

- a) Chair opens public hearing
  - b) Chair states purpose of hearing and rules of procedure as deemed necessary by the Chair, including processes for submission of written testimony and sign-up forms for those wishing to speak.
  - c) Presentation by staff summarizing the item
  - d) Questions from Commissioners to staff
  - e) Presentation by applicant
  - f) Questions from Commissioners to applicant
  - g) Testimony from public
    - i. Presentation of written comments
    - ii. Presentation of oral comments by those who have completed form to speak
      - Supporters of request/issue
      - Opponents of request/issue
  - h) Concluding comments from applicant
  - i) Concluding comment of staff
  - j) Concluding questions or comments from Commissioners
  - k) Close Public Hearing
2. If the hearing is on an issue proposed by staff and there is no applicant, agenda items (e), (f), and (h) shall be eliminated and the public shall be heard on the issue in the order in which each signed up to speak.
  3. Depending on the number of persons waiting to speak, the Chair may set a time limit for each speaker. Those persons representing an organization may be given more time than individuals speaking on their own behalf, if the organization has designated only one person to represent it. The time each speaker has the floor shall be kept by a staff member of the City as needed, using a mechanical timer. Speakers shall be informed 30 seconds before their time is to expire.
  4. The Chair may rule out-of-order any comments that are non-germane, derogatory, disruptive, or repetitive.
  5. The Chair may order any disruptive person from the room. In the event of general disruption, the Chair may recess the meeting.
  6. Planning Commission members who have not attended a public hearing on a particular issue, shall state for the record the method(s) they used to become informed in order to vote, e.g., (listened to a tape of the hearing, read the transcript or minutes of the hearing, made a site visit to the property in question, or are familiar with the issue by other means).

## **ARTICLE VIII PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. The Commission may hold public hearings for several purposes, including consideration of changes to the Zoning Ordinance, or for review, evaluation, and action on the Master Plan.
- B. Notice for all public hearings shall conform to all requirements of the laws of the State of Michigan and the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, as

amended. The public hearing may be held prior to a regular or special meeting of the Planning Commission.

- C. In addition, notices of certain public hearings shall be made by registered U.S. mail to each public utility company, and each railroad company owning or operating any public utility or railroad within the geographical confines of the City of Williamston and as additionally outlined in the City of Williamston Zoning Ordinance (as amended), and as outlined in the State of Michigan statutes regulating planning. In the instances where the proposed zoning change may also result in amendments to the Master Plan, then hearings may be held concurrently.
- D. At the Public Hearing, the Chair of the Commission shall preside. He or she shall state such rules of procedure as he or she deems necessary to proceed in an orderly fashion, including processes for submitting written testimony and sign up forms for those wishing to speak, so that all desiring to speak may be heard. At the opening of the hearing, the Chair will read the official notice of the hearing and follow the agenda.

#### **ARTICLE IX – PROCEDURE FOR AMENDING BYLAWS**

- A. Any member of the Commission may submit a proposed amendment to the Bylaws in writing to the Bylaws Committee.
- B. Upon receipt of such proposed amendment, the Bylaws Committee shall, after consideration, submit it to the Commission Membership (with or without recommendation) in writing at the next regular meeting at which time it shall be placed on the agenda for discussion.
- C. An amendment to the Bylaws shall not be voted upon at the meeting at which it is presented, but a vote shall be taken on the matter at the next regular meeting, and it shall be on the agenda of the meeting for such consideration as shall be deemed appropriate.
- D. At least a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the current members is required to amend these Bylaws.

#### **ARTICLE X – PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING, EVALUATING AND AMENDING THE MASTER PLAN**

- A. Any person or persons, a member of the City Council, the City Council as a whole by majority actions, or any member of the Commission, may initiate a review and request for action of any section, article, or portion of the Master Plan, other than the land use section by filing a petition on forms furnished by a City.
- B. The form of the petition shall be substantially as outlined in the City of Williamston Zoning Ordinance.
  - 1. This process shall include the Commission holding at least one public hearing before adopting any amendment, extension or addition to the Master Plan.



2. The adoption of any amendment, extension or additions to the Master Plan must be approved by affirmative votes of not less than 2/3 of the members of the Commission.

#### **ARTICLE XI – ANNUAL REPORT**

- A. After its last regular meeting in June of each year, the Commission shall make an annual report to the City Council concerning its operations and the status of planning activities in the City, including recommendations regarding actions by the City Council related to planning issues. The Chair of the Commission shall make (or designate another Commission member to make) the report, after the entire Commission has had opportunity for input.