

# **STANTON TOWNSHIP**

## **PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY MANUAL**

**20 June 2006**

---

Policy Subject	Policy Number
Conflict of Interest .....	001
Meeting Dates and Times .....	002
Public Hearings .....	003
Member Attendance.....	004
Petition Requirements .....	005
Members/Officers .....	006
Special Meetings .....	007
Meeting Rules .....	008
Minutes .....	009
Agenda Items .....	010
Motions/ Voting / Tie Votes .....	011
Quorum Required for Action on Items .....	012
Retention of Planning Commission Meeting Tapes .....	013
Order of Action.....	014

---

**Conflict of Interest .....001**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to eliminate the appearance of conflicts of interest involving members of the Planning Commission, this policy is hereby adopted by the members of the Planning Commission.**

Members of the Stanton Township Planning Commission shall refrain from voting or discussing any business matters of properties which:

- 1) Involve properties which are owned, rented, leased or managed by the member.
- 2) Involve properties which are owned, rented, leased or managed by the immediate family of the member. Immediate family shall include mother, father, sister, brother, spouse or child.
- 3) Involve properties for which the member will receive any personal or financial gain of any type as a result of any action taken concerning the property.
- 4) If a member has an actual or perceived conflict of interest, he/she shall notify the commission of the possible conflict and shall not vote on the matter.

**Meeting Dates and Times**

**002**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to establish a consistent time for meetings to better serve the public; this policy is hereby adopted by the members of the Planning Commission.**

Stanton Township Planning Commission meetings shall normally be held on the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Stanton Township Meeting Room.

Meetings may be cancelled or rescheduled for purposes including:

- 1) National holidays.
- 2) Election Day.
- 3) Lack of a Quorum.
- 4) Or other reasons determined by the Planning Commission Chair.

**Public Hearings .....003**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to efficiently handle public hearings and questions and comments from the general public, the following policy is hereby adopted by the Planning Commission:**

1. The chair opens the meeting on time and announces the subject of the hearing.
2. Staff presents main points of application and staff report.
3. The applicant speaks first.
4. Residents speak next. (Questions/comments from the public may be limited to five minutes per person at the Chair's discretion)
  - If necessary, ask for a representative to speak on behalf of many.
  - Allow everyone interested, an opportunity to speak
  - Overrule irrelevant remarks.
5. Rebuttal and question, including questions from the Planning Commission.  
All questions and comments must be directed to the Chairperson.
6. Close public hearing to public commit.
7. Deliberation begins
  - Fact Finding (application, ordinance requirements, physical characteristics of lot and adjacent parcels, staff reports and impact on public service, natural resources, character of area, street, parking, traffic and neighbors)
8. Discussion (The public is not involved in this discussion)
  - Review pertinent facts from all information presented.
    - Seek majority viewpoint
    - Focus on insuring conformance with ordinance standards
    - The discussion should proceed until a commissioner is confident in proposing a complete motion that embodies the important findings.

**Member Attendance .....004**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to avoid any misunderstanding pertaining to reimbursement for members' attendance at meetings, the following policy is hereby adopted by the Planning Commission.**

Meeting attendance will be recorded by the Clerk and members will be credited for all meetings attended. Special committee meetings may also be reimbursed at the normal per diem rate.

Payroll for Planning Commission members will be as designated by the Township Clerk.

In the event of expected absence, Planning Commissioners should contact the Planning Chairman prior to the Commission meeting.

**Petition Requirements .....005**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to efficiently process all petitions brought before the Planning Commission, the following policy is hereby adopted by the Planning Commission.**

**PETITIONS:** All petitions should include the following:

- (1) Legal description of the property involved.
- (2) Address of the property involved. If the property is vacant, the Director of Community Development will assign an address or address range, as appropriate, to the site.
- (3) Signature of the owner and all directly involved parties on rezoning applications.
- (4) Signature of the applicant on Special Use Permit applications.
- (5) Dimensional sketch/site plan of the property on all Special Use Permit applications.

Petitions lacking any of the above information may be returned to the petitioner.

The petitioner shall be present or represented by authorized personnel at all Planning Commission meetings where their petition is an agenda item.

**Members/Officers .....006**

**SUBJECT: PLANNING COMMISSION OFFICERS**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to clearly define officers' and members' responsibilities, the following policy is hereby adopted by the Planning Commission.**

The Stanton Township Planning Commission shall consist of five (5) members. An annual election shall be held the first meeting in April each year, wherein a majority of the five-(5) members shall nominate and elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.

**DUTIES:** A Chair shall preside at all meetings and shall conduct all meetings in the public hearing procedure identified in procedure number 003:

The Vice-Chair shall act in the capacity of the Chair in the absence of the Chair and shall succeed to the office of Chair in the event of a vacancy in that office in which case the Planning Commission shall select a successor to the office of Vice-Chair at the earliest practical time.

**TENURE:** The officers shall take office at the first regular meeting in the month of April. No member shall hold the same office for more than two (2) consecutive years.

**Special Meetings .....007**

**PURPOSE: To avoid any misunderstandings in allowing or scheduling special meetings, the following policy is hereby adopted by the Planning Commission.**

A special meeting shall be defined as any meeting which is not on the regular Planning Commission schedule. A special meeting may be called by two (2) members upon written request to the Clerk or by the Chair.

**Meeting Rules .....008**

**PURPOSE: To avoid any misunderstanding during the meeting process, the following policy is hereby adopted by the Planning Commission.**

The elected Planning Commission Chair shall preside over all meetings. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall carry out the duties of the Chair. If both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent from the meeting those duties shall be carried out by a Planning Commission member.

Prior to speaking, each person shall give their name and address for public record.

1. Chairperson calls the meeting to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance is given.
3. Public Comment – where an individual may speak on a topic not on the agenda for up to three (3) minutes.
4. Public Hearings (following procedures outlined in #003 for a public hearing)
5. New and Old Business
6. Adjournment

All meetings of the Planning Commission shall be open to the public and held in a place available to the general public. All deliberations and decisions of the Commission shall be made at a meeting which is open to the public.

All records, files, publications, correspondence, and other materials are available to the public for reading, copying and other purposes and are governed by the Freedom of Information Act.

**Minutes .....009**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to maintain clear and concise records of meetings, the following policy is hereby adopted by the Planning Commission.**

Planning Commission minutes shall be prepared by the Clerk and, after formal approval by the Commission, shall be signed by the Clerk.

The minutes shall contain a synopsis of the meeting, including a complete restatement of all motions and recording of votes; complete statement of the conditions or recommendations made on any action; and recording of attendance. All records shall be deposited in the office of the Stanton Township Clerk.

**Agenda Items .....010**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to eliminate any confusion and to provide the members of the Planning Commission with the proper time and materials to make appropriate decisions in the best interest of the Stanton Township community, this policy is hereby adopted by the members of the Planning Commission.**

**Preparation of the Agenda**

The agenda for the Planning Commission meeting will be prepared by the Clerk.

- ◆ A meeting agenda.
- ◆ Minutes of the previous meeting.
- ◆ Supporting documentation for any zoning cases.

**Amendments to the Agenda**

At the discretion of the Chair, the agenda may be amended at the appropriate time or at the beginning of the Planning Commission meeting for the purpose of deleting items from the agenda, changing the order of items on the agenda, or adding items to the agenda that are of significant importance to be considered at that meeting. Generally, amendments to the agenda are not intended for addition of late items that have missed the agenda deadlines as previously set.

**Motions and Voting/Tie Votes .....011**

**SUBJECT: VOTING**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to provide the Planning Commission and the community with a clear policy of voting outcomes, this policy is hereby adopted by the members of the Planning Commission.**

**Motions**

Any member of the Planning Commission can recommend modifications, additions or deletion to the motion.

**Action and Recommendations**

Action on non-public hearing items will require a simple majority vote of members present in order to pass any motion that is made. Voice votes lacking unanimity will be retaken by roll call. Votes on all public hearing matters will be by roll call. Action on any public hearing item will require no less than a majority of votes in the affirmative in order to pass any motion that is made. Tie votes result in no action.

**Quorum Required for Action on Items .....012**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to provide the most fair outcome to all persons involved in Planning Commission actions, this policy is hereby adopted by the members of the Planning Commission.**

**Attendance required**

All meetings of the Planning Commission will require the attendance of a quorum, a minimum of three (3) members. A quorum is required for Planning Commission action on any item. Any public hearings not held at the time scheduled and advertised, due to lack of a quorum, will be automatically rescheduled for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission.

**Retention of Planning Commission Meeting Tapes .....013**

**SUBJECT: RETENTION OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING TAPES**

**PURPOSE: In an effort to clearly establish a retention period for recorded tapes of meetings for the Planning Commission, this policy is hereby adopted by the members of the Planning Commission.**

All recorded tapes of Planning Commission and other planning related meetings shall be kept until the meeting minutes are approved at the next Planning Commission meeting. When copies of meeting tapes are requested under the Freedom of Information Act or other relevant action, the original tape shall be retained in order to provide an accurate record.



**Order of Action .....014**

**Purpose: To give guidance to the general public, property owners, developers or other petitioners, and to the Planning Commission, on the order of action for approval of the different types of plans and petitions that are presented to the Planning Commission.**

The Planning Commission will generally approve submissions for a project in the appropriate order listed below. The purpose of this procedure is to assure that project approvals occur in a logical sequence consistent with the intent of the *Zoning Ordinance* and as authorized by State Law. The Planning Commission will not conditionally approve submissions except in very unusual circumstances at the discretion of the Commission.

1. Rezoning: Generally, the basic underlying zoning district must be in place before action on special use permits, subdivisions, or site plans can proceed.
  
2. Special Use Permits:
  - a. Recommendation for action will be forwarded to the Township Board only after the underlying zoning district(s) have been approved.
  
  - b. The public hearing for a Special Use Permit may be held concurrently with a public hearing for a zoning map amendment request, if requested by the petitioner, at the discretion of the Planning Commission.
  
3. Final Site Plan approval:
  - a. Final action on a site plan will only be made after final approval of any required zoning map amendment(s) or Special Use Permit(s), or any action by the Township Board which is necessary for a site plan's compliance with the *Zoning Ordinance*.
  
  - b. Approval of a Final Site Plan will be made only after verification of approvals from Township Board and county agencies have been received. In addition, the Planning Commission may require verification that application has been made for any applicable State or Federal approvals.