

Department of Neighborhoods

Standardization of Area Commission Bylaws Proposed Columbus City Code Changes

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF
NEIGHBORHOODS

DRAFT

Proposed changes for Columbus City Code Chapter 3109:

- 3109.07 Commission Members**
- 3109.08 Selection Procedure**
- 3109.09 Terms & Officers**
- 3109.14 Functions & Duties**

Section 3109.07: Commission Members

Proposed Changes: Each area commission shall consist of the number of members prescribed in its by-laws, limited, however, to no less than seven (7) no more than fifteen (15). An odd number of commissioners is are recommended for a decisive vote. All members shall be appointed by the mayor with the concurrence of council. All members shall be required to attend Area Commission Training classes provided by the City of Columbus within one (1) year of appointment or election and report their participation to the Department of Neighborhood. Area commissioners may not serve on more than one (1) area commission.

Section 3109.08: Selection Process

Proposed Changes: After selection of the first area commission, the following rules shall apply to all subsequent selection procedures for area commissions:

- A. Selection procedures shall take place at a location determined by the area commission annually in the month of September.
- B. Area Commissions shall certify elections results annually at the October full Area Commission meeting.
- C. Area Commissions shall select any appointed, at-large or other vacant seats at the October full Area Commission meeting.

- D. All elected and appointed commissioners shall complete the area commission appointment form and return the completed form to the Department of Neighborhoods. All forms shall be signed by the Commission Chair and submitted to the Department of Neighborhoods in October.
- E. No selection procedure shall be scheduled if the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of selected Commissioners with expiring terms.
- F. For area commissions with geographic districts associated with specific seats, no selection procedure shall be scheduled if the seat (s) is / are uncontested.

- G. No write-in candidates shall be allowed.
- H. No elector shall cast more than one (1) ballot in an election.
- I. Elections shall be determined by plurality of vote if three (3) or more candidates vie for a single position, otherwise a majority of votes cast shall elect.

3109.09 Terms

Proposed Title Change: Terms & Officers

Proposed Language:

A. Terms:

1. Members of an area commission shall serve without compensation for a term of three (3) years. The by-laws shall provide that initial appointments be made for three (3) years.
2. Terms shall be arranged to assure future continuity of experienced service; subsequent full-term appointments shall be of uniform length. Commission members presently serving on those commissions ratified by C.C. [3109.06](#) shall continue to completion of their terms.

3. Area commissioners shall begin their term on January 1, the year following their selection in September of the previous year.
4. Area commissioner terms shall end on December 31 in the year that their term expires.

B. Officers:

1. The officers of Area Commissions shall be Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Zoning Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.
2. Commission officers shall serve without compensation for the term of no less than one (1) year or no more than three (3) years, as specified in the commission's by-laws.

3. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Treasurer may serve no more than six (6) consecutive years but may be re-elected after a gap of at least three (3) consecutive years.

4. An individual serving six (6) consecutive years as the Chairperson is not eligible to serve as any other officer of the commission for three (3) consecutive years after their term as Chairperson expires.

3109.14: Functions & Duties

Proposed Language:

F. Area commissioners shall recuse themselves from any participation in any matters involving a conflict of interest on behalf of any said commissioner. A conflict of interest generally exists when the area commission's decision may produce a benefit, or a detriment, for the area commissioner or a commissioner's family member.

G. Meetings

1. All area commission meetings shall be open to the public at all times.

2. In December annually, Area Commissions shall provide to the Department of Neighborhoods the schedule of regularly scheduled meetings for the upcoming year to be published in the Columbus City Bulletin.
3. Area commissions shall establish a method for any person to determine the time and place of all regular meetings.
4. Area commissions shall establish a method for any person to determine the time, place and purpose of all special meetings.
5. Area commissions shall establish a distribution list for any person, upon request, to obtain reasonable advance notification of all special meetings.

6. All meetings other than the regularly scheduled monthly meeting or subcommittee meetings shall be published in the Columbus City Bulletin no less than seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting. A meeting is defined as a gathering of a quorum, as defined in each area commission's bylaws, of the commission members where commission business is conducted, transacted, deliberated, or discussed.

7. Area commissions may not hold meetings through teleconferencing, videoconferencing, e-mailing or through social and electronic media.

H. Voting

- a. Area commission members must be present in person at a meeting in order to be considered present or to vote at the meeting.
- b. Area Commission members may not vote by secret ballot for commission appointments, officers, or for any other commission business.

I. Meeting Minutes

1. Meeting minutes shall be promptly prepared, filed, and maintained and shall be open to public inspection.
2. A copy of all meeting minutes shall be provided to the Department of Neighborhoods.

J. Public Records

1. Area commissions shall identify a person responsible for maintaining all public records of the area commission.
2. All public records shall be retained for the applicable period of time specified by the records retention schedule for the Department of Neighborhoods.
3. Area commission records shall be organized and maintained in a manner that they can be made available for inspection or copying.
4. Upon request, all public records responsive to the request shall be promptly prepared and made available for inspection to any person.

K. Bylaws

1. Area commissions are required to submit their bylaws to the Department of Neighborhoods and adhere to their bylaws, rules and selection procedures.
2. Area commissions shall adopt bylaws that are consistent with Chapter 3109 of the Columbus City Code and the bylaws filed are a declaration that provides for the operation of the area commission.

3. The bylaws serve as an operating agreement and method of regulation for the members, the officers, or any other matter affecting the management of area commissions including, but not limited to, books and records of account, minutes of proceedings, requirements for notices of meetings, computation of time for notice, method of giving notice, quorum requirements and written action in lieu of a meeting.
4. Failure to abide by the adopted bylaws may result in the withholding of funding, the postponement of meetings and operations, or the exclusion of their recommendations and actions to other bodies at the discretion of the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods.

For questions, contact your Neighborhood Liaison

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Many Neighborhoods, One Columbus

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