

City of Boerne Planning & Zoning Commission Rules of Decorum and Subcommittee Guidelines

1. Role of the Planning & Zoning Commission

The Planning & Zoning Commission (the "Commission") serves multiple roles in guiding the City of Boerne (the "City"). These include:

- Upholding the vision and objectives of the City's Master Plan.
- Encouraging proper land use and development density.
- Balancing public and private interests in City planning.
- Facilitating public participation in zoning decisions, ensuring fairness and transparency.
- Identifying key facts and issues crucial to the City's growth.
- Providing informed recommendations to the City Council.

2. Attendance Requirements

Commission members must attend all meetings and events. If unable to attend, members must notify City staff or the Chair to confirm quorum availability. Timeliness and full attendance are expected.

3. Absenteeism

Consistent absences harm the function of the Commission. Three consecutive unexcused absences may result in removal.

4. Meeting Preparation

Members are expected to prepare for meetings by:

- Reading staff reports and understanding proposals.
- Reviewing related property areas and identifying key issues.
- Preparing questions for discussion.
- Familiarizing with City procedures (Master Plan, UDC, variance processes).
- Verifying minutes from prior meetings.

5. Ex Parte Contact

To maintain transparency, Commissioners must ensure all discussions about a pending matter occur in public. Private conversations with applicants or the public should be handled with care:

- Listen without offering advice or opinions.
- Explain that decisions are made after reviewing all information.
- Avoid disclosing how you will vote.
- Share any external communications at the meeting, either verbally or by memorandum.

6. Active Meeting Participation

Members are encouraged to:

- Ask clarifying questions.
- Contribute to discussions.
- Express concerns and rationales for their decisions.

7. Interactions Among Commissioners

Commissioners should respect each other's opinions and work collectively toward decisions, recognizing each member's unique perspective. Spirited debates are encouraged, but mutual respect is essential.

8. Role of the Chair

The Chair ensures meetings run smoothly and fairly. Key responsibilities include:

- Leading the Commission and maintaining meeting focus.
- Encouraging diverse opinions while maintaining order.
- Ensuring each Commissioner and the public have the opportunity to contribute.
- Clarifying decisions and their reasons for the record.
- Adhering to proper meeting and hearing procedures.

9. Decision-Making Criteria

Commissioners should balance public and private interests, applying these principles:

- Base decisions on key planning issues.
- Be objective while considering the applicant's situation.
- Keep an open mind throughout discussions.
- Focus on broader community interests over individual concerns.
- Apply City regulations and represent the public's long-term interests.

10. Voting

Commissioners must vote on all items unless a conflict of interest exists. Votes are generally recorded electronically. If this is not feasible, a roll call vote will be conducted. Commissioners may briefly explain their vote if desired.

11. Model Good Governance

Commissioners must exemplify good governance by:

- Engaging respectfully with applicants and the public.
- Maintaining professionalism and attentiveness during meetings.

- Assisting in clarifying the matters under consideration.
- Encouraging clear communication from participants.
- Avoiding public criticism of fellow Commissioners or City staff.

12. Subcommittee Guidelines

Subcommittees may be formed to provide advisory support to the Commission. These subcommittees:

- Are appointed by the Chair, with 2 or 3 members.
- Have no authority to make decisions for the full Commission.
- Must adhere to the Rules of Decorum and document their meetings.
- Present their findings at public Commission meetings.
- Expire once their task is complete or at the discretion of the Chair.
- Adhere to the Texas Open Meetings Act and document their meetings.

This structure ensures that the Commission operates transparently, effectively, and in the best interests of the Boerne community.