

Memorandum



Date: May 20, 2026
To: Planning Commission Members
From: Kristen Gundersen, Planning and Community Development Director
Subject: **Consideration of Approval of Bylaws – Downtown Design Review Committee (DDRC), Construction Board of Appeals (CBOA) and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)s**

Background

To continue moving forward toward Redevelopment Ready Community Essential and Certified status, bylaws for the different boards and commissions must be adopted.

Downtown Design Review Committee

Staff have been working with the Downtown Design Review Committee (DDRC) to create bylaws. The Committee has reviewed, made changes and during their May 6, 2026, meeting approved the attached document which includes minor changes. The Committee has modified the name to include “downtown” to help clarify the boundaries requiring review and added language to include two alternate members. To help reduce quorum issues the committee now includes two alternate members.

Construction Board of Appeals

In anticipation of the re-establishment of the Construction Board of Appeals, staff drafted the attached bylaws and are similar to the bylaws reviewed and approved by the Downtown Design Review Committee format. The board will consist of five regular voting members and two alternates that when a regular voting member is absent can vote on a request. It is believed this will help decrease quorum issues.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Staff have been unable to find bylaws associated with the Zoning Board of Appeals and at this time there are not sufficient members to hold a meeting. Staff drafted the attached bylaws and are similar to the bylaws reviewed and approved by the Downtown Design Review Committee format. The board will consist of five regular voting members and two alternates that when a regular voting member is absent can vote on a request. It is believed this will help decrease quorum issues.

Requested Action

Please move to approve the bylaws as submitted for the Downtown Design Review Committee, Construction Board of Appeals and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

City of Buchanan, Michigan

Downtown Design Review Committee Bylaws

Article 1. Name

The name of this committee shall be the Downtown Design Review Committee, hereafter referred to as the “Committee.”

Article 2. Responsibilities

The Committees responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Review applications associated with exterior alteration, expansion of existing building or proposed new development of properties located within the D Downtown District and approve, approve with conditions or deny.
2. Uphold the adopted standards for review when acting on requests for Downtown Design Review.
3. Be ready to educate the community on the need for Downtown Design Review standards and the process for review and approval.

Article 3. Officers and Members

Section 1. Membership

Committee Size: The Committee shall consist of five (5) regular members and two (2) alternate members.

Eligibility: Membership shall be comprised of residents of the City of Buchanan or adjacent townships.

Term Length: Members shall serve three (3) fiscal-year terms, typically begin July 1st and ending June 30th, with the option for reappointment by the City Commission.

Compensation: Members shall serve without compensation.

Section 2. Voting.

For each matter before the Committee, no more than five (5) members shall be seated and eligible to vote. All regular members of the Committee present at a meeting shall vote on every matter unless a member of the Committee has a conflict of interest as determined under these Bylaws and/or the adopted Code of Conduct. The alternate members present may take part in all deliberations of the Committee but shall not have a vote or make or second a motion unless a regular member is unable to vote because of absence or a conflict of interest. The first alternate member, if present and able to vote, shall have priority to replace the first regular member that is absent or unable to vote. The second alternate member shall replace the first alternate member when the alternate member is eligible to vote but absent or unable to vote, or the second regular member that is absent or unable to vote.

Section 3. Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy among members or officers, the City Commission shall designate a successor to serve until the next regular election or appointment.

Section 4. Officers

The officers of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee and shall include:

1. Chairperson
2. Vice-Chairperson
3. Recording Secretary

Section 5. Officer Elections

Officer elections shall be held at the regular meeting in July of each calendar year, provided a quorum is present.

Section 6. Term of Office

All officers shall take office upon election. The term of each office shall terminate June 30th which corresponds with the end of appointments to the Committee.

Section 7. Officer's Duties

A. Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings in accordance with these bylaws and all powers under parliamentary procedure as governed by "Robert's Rules of Order" and work with the City Commission and city staff as needed.

B. Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall, in the absence of the Chairperson or at the Chairperson's request, perform the duties of that office.

C. Recording Secretary

City staff will act as the recording secretary to the Committee and shall record attendance, actions, and proceedings of meetings of the Committee and provide copies of approved minutes to the City of Buchanan.

Article 4. Meetings: Open Meetings, and Freedom of Information

The Committee is currently scheduled to meet on the first (1st) Wednesday of each month beginning at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Special Meetings may be called by the Chairperson or upon the request of two (2) committee members. On occasion, city staff will discuss with the Chairperson the need to call a Special Meeting. Notice must be given at least 24 hours prior to the meeting and be given in a reasonable manner under circumstances then existing.

The business of the Committee shall be conducted at a public meeting of the Committee held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.261 to 15.275. Public Notice of the time, date and place of a regular or special meeting shall be given in the manner required by that act.

Any writing prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by the Committee in the performance of an official function shall be made available to the public in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 1976 PA 442, MCL 15.231 to 15.246.

Committee members shall notify the staff liaison if they cannot attend a meeting. A meeting shall be cancelled due to lack of a quorum.

Article 5. Rules of Order and Amendments

The Committee shall follow procedures and rules set forth in these bylaws. When not covered by these bylaws, the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall apply. No changes shall be made to these bylaws without an affirmative vote of a majority of the Committee membership.

Article 6. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of at least three (3) of the five (5) Committee members. When a quorum is not present, no official action, except closing the meeting, may take place.

Article 7. Attendance

Members who miss more than 50% of regular meetings during a calendar year may be deemed ineligible to retain their seat. The Committee shall vote on continued eligibility.

Article 8. Removal of Members

A member may be recommended for removal from the Committee for cause, including but not limited to:

1. Failure to meet attendance requirements (see Article 7)
2. Conduct detrimental to the Committee
3. Inability to fulfill the responsibilities of membership

Removal shall require:

1. Notice to the member prior to the meeting when the vote will occur; and
2. An affirmative vote of a majority of the seated Committee members, provided a quorum, is present.

Article 9. Conflict of Interest

Committee members shall avoid conflicts of interest and shall disclose any financial or personal interest in matters under discussion. Conflict of Interest is established within the City of Buchanan Code of Conduct. Matters of personal interest can include but are not limited to:

1. directly involving them;
2. concerning work on or the use of land owned by them or which is adjacent to land owned by them;
3. involving a corporation, company, partnership, or any other entity in which they are part-owner, or any other relationship where they may stand to have a financial gain or loss;

4. concerning their relatives including spouse, children, stepchildren, grandchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, parents, parents-in-law, etc. or other members of the household;
5. concerning a person with whom they have such a close personal relationship that the member is unable to have a fair and impartial opinion;
6. where their employee or employer is an applicant or agent for an applicant or has direct interest in the outcome.

If a conflict exists, the member shall discuss with the city staff liaison prior to the meeting. Once the meeting begins, the member shall disclose the conflict to the Committee; and Refrain from voting on the matter, and when appropriate, abstain from discussion.

Article 10. Follow Adopted City of Buchanan Code of Conduct

All members of the Committee shall conduct themselves in accordance with the adopted City of Buchanan Code of Conduct.

Signature and Adoption Section

Chairperson

Vice-Chairperson

Adopted by vote of membership: _____

Date: _____

Revised (if applicable): _____

Approved by the Downtown Design Review Committee on the ____ day of _____, 2026.

Attest: _____

City of Buchanan, Michigan

Construction Board of Appeals Bylaws

Article 1. Name

The name of this board shall be the City of Buchanan Construction Board of Appeals, hereafter referred to as “CBOA ” or the “Board”.

Article 2. Responsibilities

The Board responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Duties as outlined in Section 125.1514 of the State of Michigan Construction Code Act, Public Act 230, of the Public Acts of 1972, as amended.
2. Act as the local administrative recourse for matters relating to construction code administration and enforcement, and to handle highly technical issues related to construction code compliance.
3. Represent and advocate what is best for the City of Buchanan as a whole, putting aside personal or special interests while upholding the adopted Michigan Construction Codes.

Article 3. Officers and Members

Section 1. Membership

Board Size: The Board shall consist of five (5) regular members and two (2) alternate members

Eligibility: Membership shall be comprised of persons with knowledge and expertise in the construction field as required by the State of Michigan Construction Code Act.

Term Length: Members shall serve a two (2) fiscal-year terms, typically begin July 1st and ending June 30th, with the option for reappointment by the City Commission.

Compensation: Members shall serve without compensation.

Section 2. Voting.

For each matter before the Board, no more than five (5) members shall be seated and eligible to vote. All regular members of the Board present at a meeting shall vote on every matter unless a member of the Board has a conflict of interest as determined under these Bylaws and/or the adopted Code of Conduct. The alternate members present may take part in all deliberations of the Board but shall not have a vote or make or second a motion unless a regular member is unable to vote because of absence or a conflict of interest. The first alternate member, if present and able to vote, shall have priority to replace the first regular member that is absent or unable to vote. The second alternate member shall replace the first alternate member when the alternate member is eligible to vote but absent or unable to vote, or the second regular member that is absent or unable to vote.

Section 3. Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy among members or officers, the City Commission shall designate a successor to serve the unexpired term.

Section 4. Officers

The officers of the Board shall be elected by the Board and shall include:

1. Chairperson
2. Vice-Chairperson
3. Recording Secretary

Section 5. Officer Elections

Officer elections shall be held at the regular meeting in July of each calendar year, provided a quorum is present.

Section 6. Term of Office

All officers shall take office upon election. The term of each office shall terminate June 30th which corresponds with the end of appointments to the Board.

Section 7. Officer's Duties

A. Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings in accordance with these bylaws and all powers under parliamentary procedure as governed by "Robert's Rules of Order" and work with the City Commission and city staff as needed.

B. Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall, in the absence of the Chairperson or at the Chairperson's request, perform the duties of that office.

C. Recording Secretary

City staff will act as the recording secretary to the Board and shall record attendance, actions, and proceedings of meetings of the Board and provide copies of approved minutes to the City of Buchanan.

Article 4. Meetings: Open Meetings, and Freedom of Information

The Board is currently scheduled to meet on the fourth (4th) Thursday of each month beginning at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Meeting dates, submittal deadlines and filing fees are found on the City of Buchanan's website. When there is no business on the agenda the meeting will be cancelled.

Special Meetings may be called by the Chairperson or upon the request of two (2) board members. On occasion, city staff will discuss with the Chairperson the need to call a Special Meeting. Notice must be given at least 24 hours prior to the meeting and be given in a reasonable manner under circumstances then existing.

The business of the Board shall be conducted at a public meeting of the Board held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.261 to 15.275. Public Notice of the time, date and place of a regular or special meeting shall be given in the manner required by that act.

Any writing prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by the Board in the performance of an official function shall be made available to the public in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 1976 PA 442, MCL 15.231 to 15.246.

Board members shall notify staff liaison if they cannot attend a meeting. A meeting shall be cancelled due to lack of a quorum.

Article 5. Rules of Order and Amendments

The Board shall follow procedures and rules set forth in these bylaws. When not covered by these bylaws, the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall apply. No changes shall be made to these bylaws without an affirmative vote of a majority of the Board membership.

Article 6. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of at least three (3) of the five (5) Board members. When a quorum is not present, no official action, except closing the meeting, may take place.

Article 7. Attendance

Members who miss more than 50% of regular meetings during a calendar year may be deemed ineligible to retain their seat. The Board shall vote on continued eligibility.

Article 8. Removal of Members

A member may be recommended for removal from the Board for cause, including but not limited to:

1. Failure to meet attendance requirements (see Article 7).
2. Conduct detrimental to the Board's mission.
3. Inability to fulfill the responsibilities of membership.

Removal shall require:

1. Notice to the member prior to the meeting when the vote will occur; and
2. An affirmative vote of a majority of the seated Committee members, provided a quorum, is present.

Article 9. Conflict of Interest

Board members shall avoid conflicts of interest and shall disclose any financial or personal interest in matters under discussion. Conflict of Interest is established within the City of Buchanan Code of Conduct. Matters of personal interest can include but are not limited to:

1. directly involving them;
2. concerning work on or the use of land owned by them or which is adjacent to land owned by them;
3. involving a corporation, company, partnership, or any other entity in which they are part-owner, or any other relationship where they may stand to have a financial gain or loss;
4. concerning their relatives including spouse, children, stepchildren, grandchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, parents, parents-in-law, etc. or other members of the household;

5. concerning a person with whom they have such a close personal relationship that the member is unable to have a fair and impartial opinion;
6. where their employee or employer is an applicant or agent for an applicant or has direct interest in the outcome.

If a conflict exists, the member shall discuss with the city staff liaison prior to the meeting. Once the meeting begins, the member shall disclose the conflict to the Committee; and Refrain from voting on the matter, and when appropriate, abstain from discussion.

Article 10. Follow Adopted City of Buchanan Code of Conduct

All members of the Board shall conduct themselves in accordance with the adopted City of Buchanan Code of Conduct.

City Commission approval

City of Buchanan, Michigan
Zoning Board of Appeals Bylaws

Article 1. Name

The name of this board shall be the City of Buchanan Zoning Board of Appeals, hereafter referred to as “ZBA” or the “Board”.

Article 2. Responsibilities

The Board responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Duties as outlined in P.A. 110 of 2006, as amended, being the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, (MCL 125.3101 et seq.)
2. Review and act on applications associated dimensional variances, use variances and appeals associated with zoning administrator decisions in accordance with standards found in the Unified Development Code.
3. Represent and advocate what is best for the City of Buchanan as a whole, putting aside personal or special interests.

Article 3. Officers and Members

Section 1. Membership

Board Size: The Board shall consist of five (5) regular members and two (2) alternate members.

Eligibility: Membership shall be comprised of residents of the City of Buchanan or adjacent townships.

Term Length: Members shall serve a three fiscal-year terms, typically beginning July 1st and ending June 30th, with the option for reappointment by the City Commission.

Compensation: Members shall serve without compensation.

Section 2. Voting.

For each matter before the Board, no more than five (5) members shall be seated and eligible to vote. All regular members of the Board present at a meeting shall vote on every matter unless a member of the Board has a conflict of interest as determined under these Bylaws and/or the adopted Code of Conduct. The alternate members present may take part in all deliberations of the Board but shall not have a vote or make or second a motion unless a regular member is unable to vote because of absence or a conflict of interest. The first alternate member, if present and able to vote, shall have priority to replace the first regular member that is absent or unable to vote. The second alternate member shall replace the first alternate member when the alternate member is eligible to vote but absent or unable to vote, or the second regular member that is absent or unable to vote.

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The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings in accordance with these bylaws and all powers under parliamentary procedure as governed by "Robert's Rules of Order" and work with the City Commission and city staff as needed.

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The Vice-Chairperson shall, in the absence of the Chairperson or at the Chairperson's request, perform the duties of that office.

C. Recording Secretary

City staff will act as the recording secretary to the Board and shall record attendance, actions, and proceedings of meetings of the Board and provide copies of approved minutes to the City of Buchanan.

Article 4. Meetings: Open Meetings, and Freedom of Information

The Board is currently scheduled to meet on the second (2nd) Thursday of each month beginning at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. When there is no business for the agenda the meeting is cancelled.

Special Meetings may be called by the Chairperson or upon the request of two (2) board members. On occasion, city staff will discuss with the Chairperson the need to call a Special Meeting. Notice must be given at least 24 hours prior to the meeting and be given in a reasonable manner under circumstances then existing.

The business of the Board shall be conducted at a public meeting of the Board held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.261 to 15.275. Public Notice of the time, date and place of a regular or special meeting shall be given in the manner required by that act.

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3. involving a corporation, company, partnership, or any other entity in which they are part-owner, or any other relationship where they may stand to have a financial gain or loss;
4. concerning their relatives including spouse, children, stepchildren, grandchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, parents, parents-in-law, etc. or other members of the household;
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City Commission approval