



2026 PLANNING COMMISSION

CITY ORGANIZATION

- Incorporated in 1921 as a Home Rule Charter City
- Weak Mayor- Council Organization
- City Manager



MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL



Rachel James, Council President
2026 Planning Commission Liaison



Amáda Márquez Simula, Mayor
2026 Sustainability Commission Liaison



Laurel Deneen, Councilmember
2026 Library Board Liaison



Connie Buesgens, Councilmember
2026 Park and Recreation Commission Liaison



Justice Spriggs, Councilmember
2026 Charter Commission Liaison



CITY DEPARTMENTS & SERVICES

- Administration
 - Public Information and Records
 - Council Support
 - Human Resources
 - Communication
 - Elections
- Finance
 - Disbursements, receipts and billing
 - Payroll
 - Financial Reporting
 - Budgeting
 - Liquor Operations
- Community Development
 - Planning and Zoning
 - Economic Development
 - Building Inspections
- Public Works and Engineering
 - Streets and Parks
 - Utilities
 - Public Improvement
- IT (Information and Technology)
 - Computer Networks, Telephone System, etc.
- Police
 - Public Safety and Policing
 - Community Oriented Policing
 - Crime Prevention
- Fire
 - Fire and Emergency Response
 - Emergency Management
 - Commercial Inspections
 - Rental Licensing
 - Property Maintenance
- Library
 - Public Library Services
 - Adult Enrichment Programming
 - Children Enrichment Programming
 - Public Computer Use
- Recreation
 - Murzyn Hall Management
 - Youth Sports and Enrichment Programming
 - Senior Fitness and Enrichment Programming
 - Adult and Family Sports and Enrichment Programming



CITY MISSION

Columbia Heights is a vibrant, healthy and connected City. We are here to actively support the community, deliver equitable services, build and strengthen connections, improve upon our past, and uphold our successes. We strive to be better and ensure Columbia Heights is a great place for everyone, today and in the future.



SHORT TERM GOALS

1. Develop architectural and financial plan for replacement of the Public Works building, especially as it relates to other priorities (before structural failure)
2. Update Parks Master Plan, develop financing plan, and establish interactive communications about the plans with the community
3. Develop Murzyn Hall renovation plan or identify an alternative new community center plan
4. Prepare long-term, comprehensive plans for single family homes transitioning to rental, including increased tenant/renter protections and new rental licensing program (following moratorium)
5. Update the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) focusing on long term maintenance and replacement of existing facilities
6. Finalize plans for Central Avenue improvements
7. Establish/Re-Establish the City Art Commission and invest in Public Art
8. Find external grants and evaluate establishing a city grant program for Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) properties
9. Develop a formal process to review goals, develop a system of accountability, and communicate with the public regarding the City Council's goals and strategic plan
10. Build End-to-End communications infrastructure for City buildings and sites
11. Educate staff and elected officials on National Incident Management System (NIMS)
12. Develop and implement integrated online services
13. Complete 43rd and Central PUD approval and initiate construction
14. Improve and expand code enforcement, evaluate point-of-sale program
15. Continue working towards creating a City workforce that accurately represents the community
16. Establish centralized translation services for all departments and provide language support services at all public meetings
17. Strengthen brand awareness across projects, activities, goals, and at the liquor store



PURPOSE OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- Advise and make recommendations to City Council to inform its decisions.

Duties include:

- Gather citizen input;
- Promote and inform;
- Explore alternatives; and
- Weigh in on proposed policy/projects and provide input.



PLANNING COMMISSION

- Meetings: First Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm.
- Agendas and related materials distributed 3 days in advance.
- All items for consideration must be submitted in writing 10 days in advance of meeting with contact info of submitter.
- 7 members plus non-voting Student Commissioners and Council Liaison. Members are appointed to three-year terms by Council.
- The Community Development Director, Planner, Building Official and City Attorney shall serve as ex officio members of the Commission.
- Quorum is 4 members.
- Officers: Chair, Vice-Chair elected annually.



CITY CODE: PLANNING COMMISSION

Authority and duties. The Planning Commission shall have the following authority and duties:

- (1) The Commission shall prepare a program of work outlining activities to be undertaken by the Commission. Such a program will include an outline of data and information to be assembled as a basis for a city plan, an outline of subjects to be covered by a city plan, and an outline of types of procedure necessary to make the city plan effective. The work program may be revised from time to time.
- (2) The Commission shall prepare, adopt and maintain a comprehensive city plan for the physical development of the city. Said plan shall include proposed public buildings, street arrangements and improvements, public utility services, parks, playgrounds, and other similar developments, and the projected use of property, density of population, and other matters relating to the physical development of the city. Such a plan may be prepared in sections, each of which shall relate to a major subject of the plan, as outlined in the Commission's program of work.
- (3) The Commission may from time to time recommend to the Council changes or additions to the city plan or any section thereof whenever changed conditions or further studies by the Commission indicate that such amendment or addition is necessary or desirable.



CITY CODE: PLANNING COMMISSION

- (4) (a) The Commission shall certify and submit to the Council an attested copy of the city plan or of any section, amendment, or addition to the city plan and recommend and advise to the Council reasonable and practicable means for putting into effect the plan, or amendments or additions thereto, so that the plan will serve as a pattern and guide for the orderly physical development of the city and as a basis for the efficient expenditure of city funds relating to the subjects of the city plan.
- (b) Such means shall consist of a zoning plan, the control of subdivision plats, a plan of future streets and street extensions, coordination of the normal public improvements of the city, a long term program of capital expenditures and such other matters as will accomplish the purposes of this section.
- (5) The Commission shall study and make recommendations for changes to the official plat map within 40 days after any proposed plat, plat subdivision, or change to the plat map has been referred to the Commission for study.



CITY CODE: PLANNING COMMISSION

- (a) The Commission may recommend to the Council that the proposal be approved; be disapproved, for specific reasons as are indicated; or proposal be approved after specified changes or revisions are made therein, deferral back to the Commission for review of said revisions or changes may be requested.
- (b) Upon the advice of the City Engineer, the Commission may recommend that the proposed future extension or widening of city streets be indicated on the plat map.
- (6) The Commission shall have such duties and functions as are prescribed by the zoning code and shall comply with all procedures provided therein. The Commission shall study and make recommendations on proposed changes to the zoning code and report thereon to the Council.
- (7) Prior to adoption of any amendment or change to the city plan or the zoning code, the Commission shall hold at least one public hearing with ten days' notice of the time and place of such hearing to be published in the official city newspaper.



CITY CODE: PLANNING COMMISSION

(8) The Commission shall list and classify all local public works permanent improvements proposed in the city budget for the ensuing fiscal year that have been referred to the Commission. The Commission shall prepare and recommend a coordinated program of proposed public works for the ensuing fiscal year to the Council and to such other officer, department, board, or governmental bodies as have jurisdiction over the accomplishment of such public work projects.

(9) The Commission shall submit to the Council a report of its work during the preceding year on or before January 1 of each year. Said report shall include a copy of the recommended programs of public works projects, as provided by division (8) of this section.

(10) The Planning Commission shall perform all duties and functions of the Housing Advisory and Appeals Board, as established by § 6.202(B).



MEMBER DUTIES

Attendance Requirements:

- Attend meetings. Immediately notify your staff liaison if you will be absent so a quorum can be assured.
- Notification to City Council will occur if you miss three or more meetings during a year.
- Review meeting agenda and packet.
- Must vote on all actions (unless conflict of interest).



MEMBER DUTIES (CONT.)

Effective Members:

- Recognize that serving the community as a whole is the priority.
- Advocate and inform.
- Are proactive.
- Compromise and work as a team.
- Do not let personal feelings impact judgment.

For further information, please review the [League of Minnesota Cities' Planning Commission Guide](#).



STAFF SUPPORT

- Develops and posts agendas, minutes, and support materials to the website.
- Resource on City policies and procedures.
- Helps the commission stay within scope.
- Provides technical assistance and prepares background memos.
- Keeps attendance and takes minutes.
- Meeting setup and coordination.
- Notifies interested parties of meeting changes.
- Does not work “for” or at the direction of the board.



ROLE OF COUNCIL LIAISON

- Link between Commission and City Council
 - Helps increase Council familiarity of Board
 - Communicates topics that City Council would like discussed
- Non-voting and generally do not actively participate



ROLE OF COMMISSION CHAIR

- Preside over all meetings.
- Maintain control and order at the meeting.
- Find ways to engage members.
- Encourage a positive tone.



HOW A MEETING IS RUN

1. Commission Chair states the item.
2. Staff member provides overview and background information.
3. Members ask questions and make comments.
4. Item is opened for comment to the public if it is a public hearing.
5. If a public hearing, public hearing is closed after those who wish to speak have and there is another opportunity for member comments and questions.
6. Once discussion has concluded, the board chair will ask for a motion based on the general consensus during the discussion.
7. One member will make a motion and if another agrees they will second.
8. If a motion is made and seconded a vote is made.
9. Motion passes or fails. Additional motions may be proposed.



OPEN MEETING LAW

- Gathering of a quorum or more of a public body where the public body discusses, decides, or receives information on issues relating to official business
- Chance or social gatherings are okay
- Proper notice
 - At least 3 days in advance
 - Date, Time, Place, Purpose (Agenda)
- Open to the public
- Be careful of serial meetings
 - $A \rightarrow B$ and $A \rightarrow C$
 - $A \rightarrow B$ and $B \rightarrow C$



WEBSITE

