

TOWN of CARY NORTH CAROLINA

At the Town of Cary we focus every day on enriching the lives of our citizens by creating an exceptional environment and providing exemplary services that enable our community to thrive and prosper

Boards & Commissions



Citizen Issue Review Commission

Economic Development Commission

Environmental Advisory Board

Information Services Advisory Board

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Advisory Board

Public Art Advisory Board

Planning and Zoning Board

Sister Cities Commission

Town Center Review Commission

Zoning Board of Adjustment

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Planning and Zoning Board

Powers and Duties

The Planning and Zoning Board is an advisory body to the Town Council and deals with land use, zoning and development issues. In addition to attending monthly Planning and Zoning Board meetings, these board members are also expected to attend public hearings on plans, rezonings, and ordinance amendments held jointly with the Town Council.

Membership

The Planning and Zoning Board consists of 9 members appointed by the Town Council, one of whom the Town Council designates as chairperson. Eight members are appointed from within Cary's corporate limits and 1 member is appointed from the Town's extraterritorial jurisdiction. All appointments to the board are for three-year terms, except where unexpired terms are being filled.

Meetings

The board meets as follows at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 310 N. Academy St., Cary. Meetings can last up to four hours, and requires an occasional work session that can last up to two hours, as well as site visits and plan reviews. Members are also expected to attend numerous community meetings and joint meetings with Town Council during the preparation of land use plans, zoning ordinance amendments, and other special projects.

- Monday, January 25, 2010
- Monday, February 15, 2010 - **Cancelled**
- Monday, March 15, 2010
- Monday, April 19, 2010
- Monday, May 17, 2010
- Monday, June 21, 2010
- Monday, July 19, 2010
- Monday, August 16, 2010
- Monday, September 20, 2010
- Monday, October 18, 2010
- Monday, November 15, 2010
- Monday, December 20, 2010

All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public and will adhere to the Open Meetings Law and Public Records Law. More information on this commission can be found in its [annual report](#).

Please see the Town of Cary [calendar](#) to confirm meeting dates, times, and locations.

Questions concerning the Planning and Zoning Board should be directed to the Town of Cary Planning Department staff by calling (919) 469-4082 or by emailing jeff.ulms@townofcary.org or tara.adams@townofcary.org.

How do I Apply?

Applications are accepted each year from May 1 through June 30 for upcoming vacancies. Applicants applying for this board are required to complete a supplemental application. Current Town of Cary employees are not eligible to volunteer. Questions about the application process should be directed to the Town Clerk's Office by e-mailing karen.gray@townofcary.org or by calling (919) 319-4508.

[Current Membership Roster](#)

Additional information can be found in the Guide to Planning and Zoning Board Member Applicants and Recent Appointees

A Guide to Planning and Zoning Board Member Applicants and Recent Appointees In the Town of Cary

INTENT

Serving on an advisory board can be exciting, rewarding and challenging at the same time. There are many factors to consider when applying for a town advisory position, such as the Planning & Zoning Board. At the Town of Cary, we want our volunteers to be successful and happy, while understanding all that may be involved.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this informational guide is to educate applicants to the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Board and newly appointed members of what to expect when serving on the P&Z.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How long are the terms on the P&Z Board?

The Planning and Zoning Board consists of nine (9) members appointed by the Town Council, one of whom the Town Council designates as chairperson. Eight members are appointed from within Cary's corporate limits and one (1) member is appointed from the Town's extraterritorial jurisdiction. All appointments to the board are for three-year terms, except where unexpired terms are being filled.

Do I need to have any background in land use planning or zoning prior to applying?

In short, the answer is "No." Advisory boards are representatives of the community and come from all backgrounds and professions. Town of Cary Planning, Engineering and Legal Department staff are present at the Planning and Zoning Board meetings to provide professional and legal advice on land use, transportation, stormwater, utility and other planning-related matters.

What is a typical meeting like?

Planning & Zoning Board meetings generally follow the most current edition of [*Robert's Rules of Order*](#) for conducting public meetings. The typical format in public hearings includes:

- Introduction of item by chairperson
- Staff Report/Presentation
- Applicant presentation, if applicable
- Conduct of public hearing by chairperson, if applicable
- Discussion
- Action by the board

How much time do I need to dedicate to the P&Z Board?

P&Z Board meetings occur generally once a month and are held on the third Monday at 6:30 p.m. They seldom last less than one hour and can last up to several hours. In addition to the meetings, work sessions may occur monthly and last between 1-3 hours. Research on cases depend on the individual member and may include site visits, reading staff reports, talking with citizens and town staff, and other independent research.

What happens if I have to miss a meeting due to something out of my control?

There are attendance requirements for the P&Z Board and other volunteer board meetings. Section 2-166 of the [Cary Code of Ordinances](#) states that P&Z members who miss three (3) or more scheduled meetings within a 12-month period are required to re-apply to the Town Council to complete their term on the Board.

Should I read staff reports or talk to staff or citizens before the meetings or should I go into the meetings with no prior knowledge or bias on the cases?

The more information you have on an individual case, the better you be able to make an informed and educated decision. This does not mean that you should go into a meeting with a vote already in mind. As a representative of the community, your role is to balance staff's analysis and evaluations of each case based on current ordinances, rules and regulations with the input of the citizens and make a decision based on what is best for the community in whole.

When is a good time to ask questions?

The chairperson runs the meetings and will direct the Board when it is appropriate to ask questions. This is typically done after the staff presentation and application presentations but can vary based on the acting chairperson.

Are there any questions I should or should not ask?

There is no such thing as a bad question. There are, however, certain questions or information that, by law, you should not base a decision on. Asking questions is an excellent way to learn all about the cases. You are encouraged to contact staff prior to the meeting and ask questions regarding cases so that staff can be prepared at the meeting to provide you a well informed and researched answer.

Are there other things I should be careful not to do?

Planning & Zoning Board meetings are subject to [North Carolina Sunshine laws](#). This means that you are not permitted to discuss an upcoming case with other P&Z Board members prior to the public meeting. This includes e-mail correspondence with other P&Z Board members. More detailed information about the topic is addressed through the Town Clerk's orientation process.

Who do I call if I have questions about the Board?

You may contact the Planning Department at (919) 469-4082 and ask to speak to staff liaisons Jeff Ulma, Planning Director (jeff.ulma@townofcary.org) or Tara Adams, Plans Facilitator (tara.adams@townofcary.org).

USEFUL RESOURCES

The following resources are intended to provide additional information on various topics you may come across as a Planning and Zoning Board member.

- Roberts Rules of Order ([Overall](#))
- Roberts Rules of Order ([Simplified](#))
- Ethics Guidelines (link to pdf in r:planning/P&Z)
- Virtual Interactive Planner ([Overall](#))
- Virtual Interactive Planner ([Processes](#))
- [Sample P&Z Meeting](#)

[Cary's Land Development Ordinance](#)
[Public Hearing Cases](#)