



VILLAGE OF SKOKIE

PLAN COMMISSION

Welcome to the Plan Commission

The Village of Skokie Community Development Department welcomes you as a Petitioner before the Plan Commission. The Commission consists of a chairman and eight members who are appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the Board of Trustees. The Commissioners are residents of the Village or persons employed within the Village.

The purpose of the Commission is to review and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on Petitioner requests and study cases involving the following areas:

- Amendments to the Zoning Chapter listed in the Village Code - involving changes to any section of the Zoning Chapter.
- Amendments to the Zoning Map - any change in the zoning classification of land in the Village or the creation of new zoning districts.
- Comprehensive Plan - develop plans for the present and future development and redevelopment of the Village.
- Planned Developments - review and offer recommendations on proposed planned developments of large sites intended to encourage innovation in the planning.
- Site Plan Approvals – review and offer recommendations on proposed site plans for uses that are permitted in a district but require Site Plan Approval under the Special Use process to assure that district regulations are met and to maintain a high quality of development.
- Special Uses - review and offer recommendations on proposed Special Uses listed in the Zoning Districts.
- Subdivisions and Re-subdivisions - establishment of standards of design for subdivisions. Review and offer recommendations on subdivision requests.
- Vacations - the vacation of any public street or alley.
- Sign Code Relief - review and offer recommendations on requested relief from the Sign Code for developments on sites under the Site Plan Approval or Planned Development process.

The Plan Commission is a recommending body; thus, all decisions must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

As a Petitioner before the Plan Commission the following steps must be followed in order for your case to be heard and progress to review and possible approval by the Board of Trustees:

Step 1.

Review your project/request with the Community Development Department staff. The Village's professional staff will, at no cost, review plans and make recommendations to improve projects for compliance with Village codes and ordinances. This review can reduce the risk of costly and time-consuming delays.

Step 2.

File a petition on the appropriate application form that can be obtained by visiting the Planning Division of the Community Development Department, calling (847) 933-8447, or by visiting www.skokie.org. The application lists all required fees and documents.

Step 3.

When your application is reviewed and accepted the Planning Division will assign your request a case number and meeting date. You also will be provided with a legal notice to be distributed to property owners and renters in the vicinity of your property. The legal notice includes the meeting date, time, location and description of your request. Detailed instructions will be given to you on how to distribute the notice. The Village will also post signs on your property and advertise the case in the newspaper.

Step 4.

The Plan Commission usually meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Village Hall Council Chambers. At the meeting you will be able to present your case including any evidence and witnesses. Staff will present a report regarding necessary and relevant information about the case. Any individuals opposing or supporting the request wishing to speak will be given the opportunity. After all testimony is presented the Plan Commission will discuss and vote on the case. Unless the case is continued or withdrawn it will be sent to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

Step 5.

The case will be presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration at a regularly scheduled meeting on the 1st or 3rd Monday of each month at 8:00 p.m. in the Village Hall Council Chambers. The Plan Commission Chairman will present a report to the Board of Trustees that summarizes the Commission's review of the case and recommendation. The Board of Trustees, after hearing the report and testimony, will discuss and vote on the case. If the request for a Special Use Permit is approved an ordinance will be prepared and approved by the Board of Trustees at a future meeting. This ordinance will be recorded with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds. If the request is denied the case cannot be brought back to the Plan Commission for a period of 6 months.

The entire public hearing process takes approximately 90 days to complete unless the case is continued for additional information or analysis. If the request involves site modifications to a building, landscaping, signs, etc., a review by the Village Appearance Commission will also be required. A Building Permit may be applied for once the ordinance for the project is approved and recorded.

If you have any questions about the Plan Commission hearing process or would like to discuss a project/plan with Village staff please call the Community Development Department at (847) 933-8447.

Questions & Answers

Q. Numerous businesses open every day without going through a public hearing process. Why is my business different?

A. Certain businesses have the potential of creating adverse impacts upon the immediate neighborhood and Village as a whole. These uses require a greater degree of review of site characteristics to determine their suitability in a given location.

Q. Why do I need to pay a filing fee for Plan Commission cases?

A. A fee is required to file a Plan Commission petition to pay for advertising the case, recording the ordinance and plans, and paying other expenses incurred by the Village. Unlike other Village services that benefit all residents and are paid for by taxes, Plan Commission requests generally only benefit the petitioner who is requesting something that requires special consideration by the Village.

Q. If I cannot provide all documents requested on the application can my request be heard?

A. No. All documents and fees must be submitted prior to the scheduling of a case.

Q. I will be renting a commercial space for my business. Does my landlord need to sign the case application/petition?

A. Yes. The property owner must sign all petitions. In the case of a Special Use Permit request, for example, the property owner will be the real holder of the Special Use Permit and will be responsible for the tenant's compliance with all permit conditions.

Q. Why do I have to send my neighbors notices regarding my request before the Plan Commission?

A. State law requires that notice be given to properties in the vicinity of a request before a Plan Commission. In Skokie, it is required that property owners and renters within 150 feet of the property be given notice of the meeting. Failure to provide proper notice will result in the case not being heard or continued.

Q. Will I be able to present my request to the Plan Commission and answer questions?

A. Yes. As a petitioner you will be given several opportunities to explain your request to the Plan Commission. Your application is your first opportunity to explain your request. Be sure to provide all the information requested on the application. You may also include any additional information that you feel is relevant to the case and will help clarify the request. At the Plan Commission meeting you will be required to verbally present your case to the Commission. Commissioners may ask you questions to clarify information. You will also be given a chance to respond to a staff report presented to the Plan Commission or to comments made by interested parties on your request. If you do not feel comfortable verbally presenting your case to the Commission or need assistance preparing the petition or sending out legal notices, an attorney may be of great assistance.

Q. Does it matter if a neighbor opposes my request?

A. Neighboring property owners and renters must be notified so they can provide testimony on a case if they wish. Although some neighbors may oppose a request, the Plan Commission and Village Board review the information and testimony presented in each case and reach a decision based on the merits of the case.

Q. Do the Plan Commission and Board of Trustees have criteria for reviewing and approving requests?

A. Yes. State statutes require that all requests for special use permits, site plan approvals, planned developments, and property rezoning meet specified findings of fact. When the Plan Commission and Board of Trustees approve a request these findings are reviewed and approved in each case. These findings are as follows:

Special Uses/Planned Developments

- The establishment, maintenance or operation of the special use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals or general welfare; and the proposed building or use at the particular location is necessary or desirable to provide a service or a facility which is in the public interest and will contribute to the general welfare of the neighborhood or community.
- The proposed building or use will not substantially change the character of the neighborhood, will not have an undue adverse effect upon adjacent property or property values in the neighborhood, will not unduly aggravate traffic conditions, and will not unduly burden essential public services such as drainage facilities, public utilities and those services pertaining to public health, public safety, and public welfare in general.
- The proposed building(s) or use will be designed, arranged and operated so as to permit the development and use of neighboring property in accordance with the applicable district regulations.
- The proposed use will not alter or be contrary to the primary purpose of the zoning district or the area in which it is proposed, when its effect is considered in conjunction with the cumulative effect of the number of various special uses of all types already in the adjacent area and in the Village as a whole.
- The proposed use and its plan conform to the general intent of the official Comprehensive Plan.

Site Plan Approval

- The site plan and any requested relief will not unduly aggravate traffic conditions nor burden public services such as drainage facilities, public utilities, and those services pertaining to public health, public safety, and public welfare in general.
- The site design will permit the development and use of neighboring properties in accordance with the applicable district regulations.

Q. Will the Plan Commission vote on my request at the meeting or will I be informed of their decision?

A. In most cases, the Plan Commission will complete its review of a request in one meeting. After all testimony is presented and all information is reviewed the Plan Commission will take a vote on the case. All decisions are made by majority vote in a meeting that is open to the public. There are no closed meetings or delayed findings that are sent to the Petitioner.

Q. What happens if the Plan Commission recommends the denial of my request or recommends conditions with which I do not agree?

A. All requests to the Plan Commission are sent to the Board of Trustees for final consideration. The Plan Commission Chairman will present a report to the Board of Trustees with a discussion of the case, citizen comments, and the Commission's recommendation to approve or deny the request. The Board of Trustees may concur with the Plan Commission or decide not to concur based on their own findings of fact. As a Petitioner you will be given a brief opportunity to present your case or to dispute any condition recommended by the Plan Commission.

Q. Why must an ordinance or resolution be approved by the Board of Trustees after my request is approved?

A. The ordinance provides a permanent record of the Board of Trustees' action that is recorded with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds. In the case of a Special Use permit request, the ordinance serves as a type of special agreement between the property owner and Village to construct, maintain, and operate a use in compliance with specified conditions to prevent any adverse impacts on adjacent properties from the operation of the use.

Q. How soon after the Plan Commission and Board of Trustees hearing process will I be allowed to apply for a Building Permit?

A. You may apply for a Building Permit after the Board of Trustees approves your request to the Plan Commission. Review of plans can begin prior to the Board's approval of the ordinance. However, a Building permit will not be released until the Ordinance is passed and all required documents are signed.