

Planning Commission

TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE

The following guidelines are intended to assist applicants in determining their ability to serve, and to assist appointed members in serving well.

1. The Planning Commission has major responsibilities as to both advance and current planning. As to the first, the Commission is charged with continuing evaluation of the General Plan and recommending changes to the Council in order that the plan be dynamic, recommending implementing ordinances, and broad changes in zoning to conform with the Plan. As to current planning, the Commission hears and determines applications for individual zoning changes, subdivisions, planned use developments, variances, use permits, and design review. Decisions of the Commission on rezonings and large subdivisions are recommendatory to the Council; other current planning matters are final unless appealed to the Council.
2. The Planning Commission consists of seven members, appointed for a term of four years. It meets regularly on the first and third Mondays of each month, and often schedules special meetings to keep up with its work load. A packet of agenda materials, including staff analysis, is available on Fridays preceding Monday meetings. Study of this material and site visits may take up to half a day before each meeting.
3. While residence or place of business in the Town normally is desirable, the Council may, when it deems the public interest to be served, appoint an active volunteer not so situated. Similarly, the Council may continue in office a person who moves his residence or business to a nearby community.
4. A member is expected to attend all meetings, unless prevented from doing so by substantial reason. A member shall notify the appropriate staff or Chairperson at least 24 hours before the meeting time, if a meeting is going to be missed. Automatic removal will occur if more than three (3) consecutive regular meetings are missed, or more than four (4) regular meetings in six months, without prior notice of substantial reason.
5. A member is expected to study documents provided in advance and to make field inspections as necessary.

6. A member should have, or acquire soon after being seated, a lay person's understanding of relevant law, as well as of the physical characteristics and cultural aspects of the community.
7. A member should have a lay person's understanding of laws and rules governing conduct of meetings, including Roberts Rules of Order, Brown Act prohibitions on secret meetings, and conflict of interest laws and local code.
8. A member should avoid drawing or stating final conclusions or decisions until completion of public hearing, if any, and of deliberation by the body as a whole.
9. Decision making is a collective process by the body as a whole, in legally constituted session only. Staff serving the body is engaged to serve the community as a whole, under the general direction of the Council. Thus, information requests to staff should be limited, and should be made by the entire body in regular session only.
10. A member may not solicit employment or professional assignment relating directly or indirectly to an item that has appeared or is scheduled to appear on the agenda.
11. If a member is approached to take employment or professional assignment relating to an item that ultimately may come before the body, one of two options may be taken:
 - a. The engagement may be refused, provided the member makes a public declaration at the next meeting that an officer has been made and refused and that the member thus is in a position to judge the item with objectivity.
 - b. The engagement may be accepted, provided the member abstains from discussion and voting on the item. Frequent abstention would be indication that the employment or profession of the member is not compatible with his/her community service.