

**CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION
APPLICATION**

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

I am a resident of the City of Beverly Hills and am interested in being considered for an appointment to the Planning Commission.

Name: _____ Email Address: _____

Residence Address **(required)**: _____ Zip Code: _____

Mailing Address (optional): _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Fax: _____

How long have you resided in Beverly Hills? _____ (Applicant must be a resident of the City for a minimum of two years prior to filing an application)

Occupation: _____ Do you work in Beverly Hills? _____

Have you ever been a paid lobbyist/legislative advocate? If so, when and before which commission(s)?: _____

Have you ever applied to the Team Beverly Hills Program? _____

Are you a member or alumnus of the Team Beverly Hills Program? _____

Have you applied previously for a commission appointment? If so, which commission(s)? _____

1. Please list community activities you are presently involved in and activities in which you have participated in the past (including years of service):

2. Please describe any technical expertise (building, architectural, construction management, development, planning, or landscape design), or other background information (education, business, or personal) that might be useful to you as a Planning Commissioner:

3. Have you attended one or more full Planning Commission meetings within the last 12 months? Please comment on your reactions.

4. How would you rate your ability to read and interpret plans:

Proficient [] Intermediate [] Novice [] Willing to Learn []

5. The Planning Commission regularly meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, in the afternoon. How much time do you envision giving to the Planning Commission? How often are you out of town? What other commitments might cause conflicts in your attendance at commission meetings or activities ?

6. Are you familiar with the City's General Plan? What do you see as significant planning issues currently facing Beverly Hills?

7. How do you view the balance between the rights of property owners (business and residential) to develop their property versus the rights of neighbors who may be impacted by such development? You may wish to reference a recent issue as an example.

8. How would you describe the appropriate relationship between the Commissioners and the applicants? Would you find it difficult to vote against a friend? Would you find it difficult to vote differently than fellow Commissioners?

9. Why do you wish to be a member of the Planning Commission? (Specifically, why have you chosen this form of community service over the many other avenues of community service available in our community?)

Date: _____ Signature _____

Completed applications may be returned to the City Clerk's Office, Room 290, 455 North Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. If you have any questions, please contact the City Clerk at 310.285.2400.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In order that we may preserve the integrity of the application and interview process, please direct all inquiries to the City Clerk, City Manager or the Director of Community Development. Please **DO NOT** contact the City Councilmembers or the members of the Planning Commission regarding the Planning Commission vacancies.

Serving on the Beverly Hills Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Adjustments and Planning Agency

The Planning Commission is one of eleven (11) Commissions appointed by the City Council to carry out a variety of delegated functions. The City Manager, Department Heads, and other City staff who work for the City Council provide staff support to the Commissions. The Community Development Department provides primary staff support to the Planning Commission, although depending on the issues, other Departments occasionally provide support as well. The Community Development Department also provides primary support to the City's Architectural Commission, Design Review Commission, Traffic and Parking Commission, and Cultural Heritage Commission. As with the other Departments, Community Development staff also provides support to other Commissions and to the City Council.

There are five Planning Commission positions, serving a staggered first term of two years, with a single four-year reappointment possible. Commissioners generally serve until their replacements are appointed. It is recommended that those seeking appointment attend a few Planning Commission meetings to familiarize themselves with some of the current issues and to see how the meetings are conducted.

When there is an anticipated vacancy, the City Council announces the upcoming vacancy and invites interested persons to submit application forms. A subcommittee of City Council and Planning Commission members will interview all interested candidates and make recommendations to the full City Council. The City Council makes its final selection and appointment at a formal public meeting. The City Clerk swears in the new Planning Commissioners, sometime before their first meeting, but generally immediately prior to their first meeting.

Legal Authorities and Responsibilities

State law sets out the areas over which the Planning Commission has authority, either as a decision-making body, or advisory to the City Council. The Commission is responsible for recommending broad development policies to the City Council, and once adopted in the form of the City's General Plan, for reviewing development applications for their conformance to the General Plan. The Commission acts as an advisory body to the City Council on applications for changes to the Municipal Code, and absent an appeal to the City Council, is the final authority over subdivision of land (including condominiums) and a variety of discretionary development applications (Variances, Conditional Use Permits, Development Plan Review Permits, etc.), and for the environmental assessment of such applications, as proscribed by law. Many applications require that the Commission be able to make certain findings about the circumstances and merits of the proposals and within certain time limits, once the applications are accepted as complete. The Planning Commission also acts as the Planning Agency in reviewing all of the City's capital improvement projects for conformance to the General Plan.

Operation, Staffing, and Time Commitment

The Planning Commission regularly meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month, with additional meetings (which may include evening sessions) as necessary. Study Sessions, where policy guidance is provided to staff, and Formal Sessions, where decisions are taken on development applications and formal recommendations made to the City Council on legislative matters, are held together beginning at 1:30PM. Occasionally there are evening meetings to discuss or make decisions on larger projects. Regular meetings are held in Room 280A, which is adjacent to the City Council Chamber on the second floor of Beverly Hills City Hall. Meetings typically end by 5:30 PM, however, depending on the number of projects and their related scopes of work, a meeting may run into the mid-evening hours. The meetings are conducted by the Chair, or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair. From time to time, Commissioners may serve on ad hoc committees or subcommittees of two members appointed by the Chair to study particular issues and make recommendations to the full Commission. The Chair and Vice Chair positions are rotated on an annual basis. On those occasions where a Commission decision is appealed to the City Council, the Chair or Vice Chair represents the Commission at those City Council meetings.

Approximately one week before each meeting, Commissioners receive an agenda and packet of staff reports, including applicable plans. Depending on the length and complexity of the agenda, Commissioners can expect to spend between four to ten hours reading the reports and visiting sites in advance of the meeting.

The presence of at least three Commissioners constitutes a quorum and is required to conduct a meeting and make decisions. The Commission must conduct its meetings and formulate its decisions in accordance with its Rules of Procedure and with State law (the "Brown Act"), which requires all meetings to be open to the public. All meetings of the Planning Commission are video recorded and available for viewing on the City's website. Action minutes of the meetings are taken by a staff recording secretary.

State law requires compliance with conflict of interest requirements. This involves filing a financial disclosure form with the City Clerk, which is available to the public for inspection. Interested persons may contact the City Clerk's office to inspect a sample report. A Commissioner may not deliberate or participate in any case in which that Commissioner has an interest. The City Attorney's office, which also provides staff support to the Commission, can provide guidance to individual Commissioners who may have questions on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioners may find that interested parties to an application (both pro and con) will attempt to engage them in conversation about a pending case; it is nevertheless important for Commissioners to maintain an impartial distance from those interested in applications coming before the Commission and must maintain this impartiality, sometimes in the context of impassioned pleas from their fellow residents, business colleagues, friends, and acquaintances.

Helpful skills for Commissioners to have include the ability to read plans and visualize three-dimensional buildings from two-dimensional drawings, the ability to apply general principles to a variety of specific circumstances, a good working knowledge of the City (physical, economic, and demographic), and lots of patience!

Service on any City Commission is a responsibility that may involve a significant time commitment, and should not be undertaken lightly. Aside from attending regularly scheduled meetings, preparation for meetings and special meetings sometimes warrants an additional time commitment, especially when serving as Chair or Vice Chair. Commissioners may also be requested to attend certain City Council meetings, community meetings and/or other City functions, such as Team Beverly Hills.

Resources

- City Commissioners' Handbook
- League of California Cities' Planning Commissioner's Guide
- Beverly Hills General Plan
- Beverly Hills Municipal Code

Planning staff provides each new Commissioner with a thorough briefing.