



**GAHANNA
AREA COMMISSION
FRAMEWORK**

2016

AREA COMMISSION PURPOSE

The establishment of an Area Commission system within Gahanna is intended to bolster communication and understanding between neighborhoods and City government regarding questions of land use, policy, capital improvements, and city planning. Area Commissions are intended as a recommending body to give feedback on subjective criteria that could affect Gahanna's neighborhoods, but not to review specifics of the zoning code.

FUNCTION AND DUTIES

The Area Commissions shall serve as an advisory panel for the Gahanna Planning Commission, Gahanna City Council, and City staff. No duty or function of an Area Commission shall invalidate any action of City Council or Planning Commission. The Area Commissions shall fulfill their functions as duties with the aim to:

A. Provide feedback on Qualifying Zoning and Annexation Proposals prior to review by Planning Commission or City Council in order to:

1. Provide a better conduit to gather feedback from neighborhood and community residents and businesses
2. Function as a forum for discussion and inquiry to the project or proposal
3. Voice support or opposition for projects or proposals
4. Give recommendations on how a project or proposal could be improved

B. Provide feedback on Qualifying City Projects, Programs, and Budgets as initiated by the City in order to:

1. Initiate, review, and recommend criteria and programs
2. Recommend priorities for and review government services, programs, or capital projects that would affect the Area Commission's district
3. Assist in municipal planning efforts including, but not limited to:
 - a. Comprehensive Plans
 - b. Strategic Plans
 - c. Area Plans
 - d. Vision Plans

C. Aid and promote communications between neighborhoods and the City by means of:

1. Public meetings on ideas, issues, and opportunities affecting the area;
2. Public forums to provide an opportunity for area residents, businesses, and organizations to provide public comment or feedback to the City;
3. Soliciting active cooperation of all segments of the area and City, including organizations, businesses, institutions, and government.

D. Recommend persons from the commission area for nomination to membership on City boards and Commissions.

QUALIFYING PROJECTS

As a primary duty of the Area Commissions, the review of private projects, proposals, and applications is important to allow the Planning Commission and City Council to make informed decisions that balance the views of the community.

The following projects, proposals, applications, or requests shall be required at least one review from an Area Commission:

A. Projects or proposals requiring Area Commission review:

1. Zoning changes
2. Conditional use applications
3. Annexations
4. Any project at the Mayor's request
5. Any project may request review by an Area Commission at the applicant's discretion

PROCEDURES

A. For the City

1. All Qualifying Projects shall be subject to review from Area Commissions prior to a formal application being submitted for review by Planning Commission. Any application of any Qualifying Project submitted to Planning Commission without prior review by the Area Commission shall be deemed incomplete and not accepted.

2. If a Non-Qualifying Project is formally submitted to the City, and the applicant wishes the project to be reviewed by an Area Commission, it may do so, and the feedback from the Commission can be forwarded to Planning Commission and/or Council.
3. Once a formal application has been submitted for any of the required projects, the Planning and Development Department shall contact all members of the applicable Area Commission to notify of the necessity of a meeting. A quorum of three members shall be necessary to hold a meeting.
4. The City may add any public initiative or project to the Area Commission's agenda for review and comment.
 - a. City staff shall email digital copies of the final agenda and all materials one week prior to the date of the meeting.
 - b. One hard copy of all materials shall be provided by City staff at the date of the meeting.
5. Special meetings shall be attended by at least three of the Commission members for full review of projects or proposals.
6. City staff shall collect all feedback from Area Commission members and the general public through Feedback Forms, for inclusion into Planning Commission's and City Council's formal review packet. The Area Commission review shall be separate from staff review, and clearly marked as Area Commission comment materials. An audio recording of each meeting shall be taken, to be posted to the City's website.
7. The City shall post information online for each Area Commission, showing the boundaries of the Commission, the meeting calendar, each month's agenda, audio recordings of each meeting, and a roster of each Commission's members.

B. For the Area Commissions

1. Regular meetings shall be held twice a month as needed, in a designated location.
2. Where meetings do not have specific items included in the agenda, City Staff may cancel the scheduled meeting.
3. If City Staff requests additional special meetings for items, Area Commission members shall notify City Staff prior to the meeting date of their ability to attend.
4. Area Commission members shall provide feedback for Qualifying Projects through Feedback Forms, collected at the meeting by City Staff.
5. Where other business has been brought before the Area Commission, either by their own action or by the public, notice shall be given to City Staff for inclusion

on the next agenda for further discussion.

6. Area Commissions may draft reports, findings, or memorandums outlining any matter not specifically included in the official agenda to be forwarded to any government division of the City. Such documents shall be clearly marked with the subject and recipient of the material.
7. Each Area Commission shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair upon the creation of the Area Commission. Members shall hold the position until the first meeting of the year, when the Commission will re-appoint the positions. Any Chair or Vice-Chair position that becomes vacant through resignation of the position or membership of the Area Commission shall be re-appointed at the next Area Commission meeting.

C. For the Applicant

1. Attendance by the applicant or a designated representative shall be mandatory.
2. A Pre-Application Form shall be submitted along with the proposal for review by the Area Commission.

COMMISSION MAKEUP

The boundaries of each Area Commission shall be determined by the existing City wards. Each Commission shall have at least five members and up to eleven members, all appointed by the Mayor. Applicants shall submit a completed application form to be considered for an Area Commission seat. For any seat that is vacated before the term has expired, the Mayor shall appoint a new member to fill the rest of the term. The appointment of members shall be as follows:

D. For the first year:

1. Each commission shall be designated an appointment of one or two years.

E. For following years:

1. The Commission seats that were originally designated with a one-year term will be filled on even-numbered years for a two-year term.
2. the commission seats that were originally designated with a two-year term will be filled on odd-numbered years for a two-year term.

Commission members shall be residents, property owners, business owners, or stakeholders of the ward in which they serve.

COMMISSION FUNCTION

Where not otherwise outlined within this section, Robert's Rules of Order shall guide the facilitation of each Area Commission meeting.

Area Commissions shall conduct each meeting according to the agenda as provided by City Staff. Each item shall receive full review and feedback from the Commission, as well as time given for public comment. Additional time at each meeting shall be given at the end for discussion of any items not specifically outlined in the agenda.

Area Commission members and general public in attendance, shall be given Feedback Forms which shall be submitted to the Planning Commission for Qualifying Projects.

IMPLEMENTATION

The City shall establish a comprehensive marketing and communications campaign to advertise the availability of open seats on the Area Commissions. The goal is to have all the Area Commission seats filled by the end of 2016.

PRIORITY STEPS

- **Action 1** – City Staff, Elected Officials, and Board Members shall solicit applicants for Area Commission membership. Completed applications for Board membership should be submitted to the Planning and Development Department.
- **Action 2** – The Mayor shall appoint qualified persons for the first Area Commission.
- **Action 3** – City Staff shall begin the process of amending applicable City development applications and processes to accommodate the addition of the Area Commissions.
- **Action 4** – City Staff shall select a designated staff person to represent the City at each Area Commission meeting.
- **Action 5** – City Staff shall identify an appropriate recurring date, time, and location for each Area Commission meeting.