



Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals & Downtown Development Authority Board Roles, Responsibilities and the Appointment Application Process

The Township Board is always seeking resident involvement in local government decision making. There are different ways to participate beyond attending public meetings – by serving on a board or commission. Individuals interested in serving on a board or commission are encouraged to attend board and/or commission meetings in advance of applying. Meeting schedules, agendas and meeting packets are available online at www.comstockmi.gov.

It is important that appointed members of the boards and commission attend each meeting. Individuals that cannot commit to attending regularly scheduled meetings are encouraged to participate as a member of audience rather than occupy a seat on a board or commission. Failure to attend meetings is considered misfeasance and can be cause for removal from an appointed board or commission by the Township Board.

The process to apply for a position involves an application and interview. Applications are available on the Township webpage, may be obtained in person at the Township Hall or by email request to the Supervisor at supervisor@comstockmi.gov. Applicants should indicate which board or commission to which they seek appointment on the application. Completed applications can be mailed to or dropped off at the Township Hall.

The Township Supervisor reviews applications and accompanying materials and interviews applicants. Interviews are typically conducted in the fall as most board and commission terms follow the calendar year. However, applications are accepted all year long; if an opening occurs during the year, interviews will be conducted as needed. The Township Supervisor makes a recommendation to the Township Board for appointments to the board and commission.

All information included on or attached to an application will become a matter of public record and viewable on the Township's website as an informational item attached to a Township Board agenda packet.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission is charged with reviewing site plans for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and the Vision 2025 Master Plan. The commission is also charged with considering applications for rezoning, reviewing amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and updating the master plan – on these matters, the Planning Commission serves in an advisory role to the Township Board. Meetings are held at 7:00 pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. All meetings are held in compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

By law, the membership of the Commission must represent different professions and occupations having an interest in the growth and development of the Township. The membership is to include a representation of important segments of the community, such as the economic, governmental, educational and social development of the Township, in accordance with the major interests as they exist in the Township, such as agriculture, natural resources, recreation, education, public health, government, transportation, industry and commerce. The membership must also be representative of the entire territory of the Township to the extent practicable.

Membership

The Comstock Planning Commission consists of seven members. Members must be qualified Township electors with the exception that one may be other than a qualified elector of the Township.

- Members are appointed by the Township Supervisor, subject to majority vote of the Township Board. Terms are three years long.
- One member, the ex-officio member, is also a Township Board member.
- Members hold office until their successor is appointed, except for the ex-officio member whose membership follows his or her elected term.
- An elected officer or employee of the Township is not eligible to be a member of the Planning Commission. The term 'elected officer' does not include the ex-officio member.
- The Planning Commission has adopted by-laws addressing officers, meetings, public comments, quorum and conflict of interest.
- A Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary are elected by the Planning Commission annually. The ex-officio member cannot be the Chair.

Planning Commission Duties

- Prepare, review and/or update the Master Plan at least every five years as a guide for the development of the Township addressing land use and infrastructure issues projecting up to 20 years.
- Consider applications for, conduct a public hearing on and make a recommendation to the Township Board on rezoning requests.
- Author/review amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and make a recommendation to the Township Board.
- Review proposed plats and site condominiums for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and make a recommendation to the Township Board.
- Review and approve or deny special exception uses and commercial site plans.

Compensation & Training

- Members are compensated per meeting attended.
- Members are reimbursed expenses incurred in the performance of their activities for the Township and as authorized by the Township Board. The Township Board encourages members to attend relevant workshops and conferences.

COMSTOCK ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is authorized to grant dimensional variances from the Zoning Ordinance and, upon request, interpret provisions of or hear an appeal from an administrative action in applying the Zoning Ordinance. The ZBA meets the 4th Tuesday of each month at 4:00 p.m.

When a request or appeal involves specific property, a public hearing with proper public notice will be held. All meetings are held in compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

To be granted, a variance must be based upon practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship in strictly following the Zoning Ordinance. The ZBA makes this determination by following the standards established by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act which are provided in a staff report from the Planning & Zoning Administrator in advance of the meeting.

Membership

- The ZBA consists of five members and up to two alternate members. Three members must be present for the ZBA to conduct any business.
- The Township Board appoints all the members; terms are three years long.
- One regular member must be a member of the Township's Planning Commission.
- A Township Board member may be a regular or alternate member but cannot serve as chairperson.
- An employee or contractor of the Township Board may not serve.
- Any member who is also a member of the Planning Commission or Township Board cannot participate in a public hearing or vote on a matter that he or she has previously voted upon in his or her other capacity.

Compensation & Training

- Members are compensated per meeting attended.
- Members are reimbursed expenses incurred in the performance of their activities for the Township and as authorized by the Township Board. The Township Board encourages members to attend relevant workshops and conferences.

COMSTOCK DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD

The purpose of the Downtown Development Authority Board is to act in accordance with the provisions of Act 57 of the Public Acts of 2018, as amended. The overall goal of the DDA Board is to undertake public improvements and other activities that have the greatest impact to halt the property value deterioration and increase property tax valuation where possible in the Comstock Center business district, to eliminate the causes of such deterioration and to promote economic growth in and surrounding the district.

The projects and activities pursued by the DDA Board follow the Downtown Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan adopted in May, 2019 by the Township Board.

The DDA Board is a new board appointed in 2019. The DDA Board meets the 4th Wednesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. All meetings are held in compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

Membership

The DDA Board consists of not less than eight or more than 12 members, one of which is automatically the Township Supervisor, by law.

- The Township Board appoints all the members with the exception of the Township Supervisor; terms are four years long.
- Not less than a majority of the members shall be persons having interest in property located in the Downtown District (Comstock Center).

Committees

The DDA Board has created four committees to more efficiently carry out their tasks and activities:

- *Beautification*
- *Events*
- *Marketing*
- *Outreach*

The committees meet as necessary and provide a report on their progress or seek input from the full Board at the monthly DDA Board meetings.

Compensation & Training

- Members are not compensated.
- Members may be reimbursed expenses incurred in the performance of their activities for Comstock Center in their role as a DDA Board member. The Township Board encourages members to attend relevant workshops and conferences.

COMSTOCK BOARD OF REVIEW

The Comstock Board of Review consists of local citizens charged to examine and review property assessments and correct errors in ownership names, legal descriptions and assessments. The Board of Review has limited power to grant principal residence exemptions, qualified agricultural property exemptions and poverty exemptions.

The Comstock Board of Review is required to meet at least three (3) times in March: once to review the Assessment Roll and a minimum of two subsequent sessions to hear protests from taxpayers. One of the two sessions must occur after 6 p.m. for those taxpayers unable to attend an earlier session. The Board also meets once in July and once in December. All meetings are held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Membership

The Board of Review consists of three persons and not more than 2 alternate members. A majority of the members constitutes a quorum.

- Each member must be an elector of the Township, at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen, and have lived at least 30 days in the Township.
- Two out of the three members must be property owners.
- The Township Board appoints the Board of Review members; term length is two years.
- Township Board members are not eligible to serve.
- The spouse, mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter, or adopted child of the Township Assessor are also not eligible.
- The Township Supervisor is the secretary to the Board. If the Supervisor cannot be present, the Deputy Supervisor or a Township Board member must perform this duty.

Board of Review Duties

- Board of Review members must attend training and will receive updates as approved by the State Tax Commission.
- Hear and decide appeals of Assessment Roll.
- Grant or deny Poverty Exemptions.
- Limited power to grant Principal Residence Exemptions and qualified Agricultural Property Exemptions.
- Make corrections to the Assessment Roll of errors including clerical errors and mutual mistakes of fact.

Compensation and Training

- Members are compensated per meeting attended.
- Educational fees and related materials are paid for by the Township.