

Welcome To The

Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) for 2009. The following is some background on the County zoning and master plan review function and the role of the CZC.

Zoning Review

By state law (P.A. 110 of 2006, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act), the County has the authority to review and comment on all township rezoning requests. There are 21 township governments in Oakland County; this number includes the 3 smaller townships of Novi, Southfield, and Royal Oak. Together, these 21 townships cover over 3/5's of Oakland County's land area. Zoning review is confined by state law to townships. The County does not review city or village rezonings.

Process

Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services Division receives zoning petitions after the Township Planning Commission has held a public hearing on the rezoning and made a recommendation. After the County has reviewed the petition, it goes back to the Township Board for their final decision. By law, the County has 30 days from the receipt of the petition to conduct its review.

Role of the CZC

The responsibility of the CZC is to review only border and county property zoning cases and all Master Plan changes. Prior to 1982, the Coordinating Zoning Committee reviewed all township zoning petitions. On April 22, 1982, the Planning and Building Committee of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners adopted modifications to the review of township zoning proposals. Now, the CZC only reviews and makes recommendations on those cases that:

1. Involve the border of an adjacent community; or
2. Involve any County property.

The County is the only level of government charged with the responsibility of boundary coordination. Therefore, the review of zoning activity at the boundary is an important function of the CZC.

Prior to 1995, the Coordinating Zoning Committee also reviewed non-boundary or non-county property cases at the request of the Township. It was decided that cases internal to one township would no longer be brought before the CZC. Townships may still request a review but it will be done by Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services' staff after receiving a resolution from the Township Board.

Review Considerations

When a boundary case is received, the adjacent community is immediately notified of the proposed change at their border. That community is invited to attend the CZC meeting or make comments to the Planning and Economic Development Services' office.

In reviewing boundary cases, the CZC should consider compatibility of the proposed rezoning with the zoning in the adjacent community.

Another consideration is the proposed rezoning's conformance to the township's Master Plan. A Master Plan is a community's guide book of how it wants to develop in the future. Most communities update their master plans periodically to account for changes that have occurred. By law, communities are to review their plans every five years to determine if an update is needed. The Master Plan is considered the legal basis of zoning.

Occasionally, other considerations will be brought to the Committee's attention that may affect a case, including proper planning principles. Information on the natural resources present on the site will be provided for the Committee's information.

Cases where 1.) the local planning commission recommends approval, 2.) the rezoning is consistent with the local master plan, and 3.) it is compatible with the zoning and master plan in the adjacent community are considered "Compatibility Cases." Our practice is to provide you with a full written review of these cases but not prepare detailed maps for your packets.

Master Plan Review

Another role of the CZC that has taken on greater importance in the last few years is the review of all new, updated, or amended master plans. Changes to state law took effect January 9, 2003 requiring all communities (cities, villages, and townships) to send a copy of the draft master plan to the county and to all adjacent communities. Prior to this change, only townships sent their master plans to the Coordinating Zoning Committee for review, and these plans were sent after they were adopted. Now, master plans are sent to the county and adjacent communities before the planning commission has approved and adopted the plan. The County has 63 days from the receipt of the master plan to conduct its review; adjacent communities have 63 days as well to provide comments. For plan amendments, the review time is reduced to 42 days. A summary and analysis of the plan will be provided as part of our review. Again, coordination at the borders is a prime consideration in reviewing the master plan or amendment. Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the elected board (township board, city or village council) may choose to adopt the plan as well.

CZC Meetings

CZC meetings are scheduled on an as needed basis. Based on past experience, on average at least one meeting a month will be needed. In scheduling meetings, the main concerns are meeting the 30, 42, or 63-day deadline, while providing enough time for the adjacent community to review and respond. At the discretion of the Chair, we schedule the CZC meetings either before or after a regularly scheduled Planning and Building Committee meeting. However, occasionally a special meeting may need to be scheduled so that state law requirements are met.

I serve as staff to the Coordinating Zoning Committee. If you have questions, feel free to call me, Charlotte Burckhardt, AICP, PCP, Project Manager for the zoning and master plan function at (248) 858-5443 or email me at burckhardtc@oakgov.com.