

Northampton County Planning Commission Questionnaire

According to the Code of Virginia, Planning Commission members must be “residents of the County, qualified by knowledge and experience to make decisions on questions of community growth and development.” This questionnaire is an effort to inform prospective Planning Commission appointees of the basic duties of the Commission and give the Board of Supervisors some background information about the prospective appointee.

Duties.

The general purpose of the Planning Commission is to advise the Board of Supervisors on all land development matters in the community. Specific duties include the preparation, administration and implementation of Northampton’s comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and other land use policies.

The Planning Commission’s work covers a wide range of issues with the County. While many issues may be acted upon quickly, other issues involve a significantly longer time commitment to reach completion. This variety of issues causes regular attendance and active participation by members to be fundamental to the completion of necessary tasks.

Perhaps the most significant responsibility Planning Commission members have is to maintain an open mind to all issues that come before the Commission. Listening, learning and the discussion of issues are important qualities of commissioners.

Decision making should be based on existing policies of the County and on information gathered during the study of a case. Maintaining objectivity in the face of special interest groups is often difficult but essential for a balanced approach. Both long term objectives and short term benefits should be considered on all issues.

Skills and Abilities.

There are no minimum skills and abilities that an applicant must have to be appointed as a Planning Commissioner, however, the following list has been identified as those skills and abilities that make a quality Planning Commissioner:

- Attention to detail
- Patience
- Ability to think in abstract terms
- Open mindedness
- Willingness to listen and learn
- Willingness to contribute, (i.e., speak in a public forum)
- Ability to compromise and work within a team framework
- Ability to make a decision based on the best interests of the community rather than the interest of the applicant or other special interest groups
- Basic understanding of the development process

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: _____

Questions. Please provide answers to the following questions to help the Board better understand your “knowledge and experience.”

1. How long have you been a resident of Northampton County? _____

2. Are you a registered voter in Northampton County? _____

3. Do you currently pay Northampton County real estate taxes? _____

4. Have you held any county-appointed positions in Northampton? _____
If so, please list them:

5. Have you served as an appointee in other jurisdictions? _____
If so, please list them:

6. Please list your other community activities (including civic organizations, youth activities, or any others that you would like to mention):

7. The Comprehensive Plan is the county’s basic policy statement regarding the future of the community. Have you read the Northampton County Comprehensive Plan? _____

8. Do you agree with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan? If you disagree with any of the goals, please explain.

9. If a Planning Commission decision rests heavily upon a Comprehensive Plan element with which you disagree, how will you approach that decision?

10. Do you commit to attending at least one monthly Planning Commission meeting plus additional ones called as necessary to handle the work load? _____

11. Do you commit to thorough preparation for Planning Commission meetings including review of staff reports and visits to the sites for which a zoning change or special use permit is being sought? _____

12. Do you commit to taking the Virginia citizen Planning Association’s certification course for Planning Commissioners within two years of your appointment? (The county reimburses the costs of this course.) _____