



City of Ishpeming Boards & Commissions Orientation

Statement of Purpose

Most officials are appointed with little or no experience / understanding of their new responsibilities. Frequently, these officials are appointed, given a copy of the master plan and the zoning ordinance, and expected to learn on the job without other training, guidance, or resources.

The City of Ishpeming welcomes diversity on boards and commissions which can ensure a wide range of perspectives are considered when making decisions for development and financial incentives. Having intentional community recruitment and orientation procedures for newly appointed or elected officials and board members creates a solid foundation for the community to build upon. Communities that prioritize training and collaboration, provide officials and staff with an opportunity to expand their knowledge and ultimately make more informed decisions about land use and redevelopment issues.

Once an official is appointed, it is important to schedule some time to meet with the staff person who will be at the meetings and/or the person who is responsible for meeting packet preparation. This person(s) has a wealth of knowledge which will aid in your learning and understanding.

This training document is intended to assist newly appointed members of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Planning Commission or City Council with an introduction and awareness of initial materials which will aid in the successful performance of the position to which you have been appointed or elected.

Initial establishment of contact: *Please provide your email address to the City Clerk so that we may contact you with any new information and updates. The Clerk will provide you with a packet containing orientation materials related to your new position and briefly discuss each of them for your initial understanding. It is recommended that upon further review, at your leisure, you make an appointment with your Board / Commission Chairperson and discuss any questions, concerns or other related matters pertaining to your role and how these materials are applied and / or guide you in this new service to the community.*

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What is Required?

1. Knowledge of the comprehensive role plans and implementation priorities for the appointment.
2. Member attendance is required each month, located (see specified area by Authority/Commission/Council below) as scheduled.
 - a. **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)** meets the *fourth Monday* of the month occurring every other month. Meetings are generally held at 4PM with some exceptions generally associated with joint meetings of the DDA and Planning Commission.
 - b. **Planning Commission** meets the *first Monday* of the month occurring monthly. Meetings are generally held at 6:30PM with some exceptions generally associated with joint meetings of the DDA and Planning Commission.
 - c. **City Council** meets the *first Wednesday following the first Monday* of each month. Meetings are held as 6PM at City Hall, second floor, Council Chambers. City Council is subject to holding “Special” meetings in addition to the regular meetings.
3. All meeting Schedules are subject to change when affected by holidays or other known events which are published in advance.
4. If you miss more than 3 meetings within the year, of the DDA or Planning Commission the position may be vacated, and the Authority / Commission will choose to replace you with a different applicant.
5. Council Members shall not miss 3 meetings within the year, the position may be vacated, and the Council will follow City Charter procedures to appoint another person to fill the vacated seat.
6. If you know that you can't make the meeting, follow up with the City Clerk **and** the Authority / Commission / Chairperson or Mayor (City Council) is required in advance of the scheduled meeting date/time.
7. Agenda are posted on the website, which includes the previous meeting minutes for you to review and print, for the next meeting.
 - a. Downtown Development Authority (DDA): [Members and Meetings Schedule](#)
 - b. Planning Commission: [Planning Commission Minutes](#)
 - c. Ishpeming City Council: [Ishpeming City Council Agendas/Minutes/Meeting Packets](#)
8. Review the relevant By-laws for the Authority, Commission, or City Charter based on your appointment.



What's expected during a meeting?

1. Each member must be prepared for the meeting, having read the meeting minutes provided in the Agenda packet.
2. The Chairperson (or Mayor – City Council) leads the meeting with support from the appropriate City staff.
3. If you have an item to add to the agenda, report this to city staff at least a week in advance. You can also bring up the topic in Other Business, toward the end of the meeting.
4. If you need additional information on a topic, please discuss with the City Staff or Chairperson, prior to the meeting.
5. Each member must consider all sides of the argument and make an informed decision that are deemed best for the community.
6. When on a topic, a member can make a motion. When someone makes a motion, a different member must support for the motion to proceed. If the motion gains support then the Chair will ask who supports by “Aye” or “Yes”, or who doesn't support by “Nay” or “No”.
7. Be involved in projects outside of the meetings. Each Authority, Commission or Council may have projects, assignments or research with relevant purpose. City staff needs your help to make these plans and projects come to fruition; be involved, city staff can't do it alone.

Open Meetings Act

Don't discuss items of business with more than one other commissioner/board member outside of a meeting. This includes talking to multiple commissioners individually about the same topic.

The Open Meetings Act Handbook for Michigan serves as a guide outlining the regulations and protocols governing public meetings. It covers:

- Legal Framework: Provides an understanding of the legal obligations and responsibilities concerning open meeting in Michigan.
- Transparency and Accountability: Emphasizes the importance of transparency and accountability in public meetings.
- Public Participation: Outlines procedures to ensure public engagement and participation in meetings.
- Compliance and Updates: details the compliance requirements and any recent updates or amendments to the Open meeting Act specific to Michigan.

This Handbook aims to educate individuals involved in public meetings in Michigan about the legal requirements and expectations regarding open and transparent proceedings.

[Open Meeting Act Handbook https://www.michigan.gov/ag/foia/open-meetings](https://www.michigan.gov/ag/foia/open-meetings)



Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order are a set of rules to effectively run a meeting with the following democratic principles in mind:

- All rulings are run through a vote, where the majority vote rules
- However, the rights of the minority and absent members are protected
- Everyone has the right to present, speak and vote
- All leaders must be voted in, but there's no hierarchy of power
- All members have equal rights and responsibilities
- Impartiality and fairness throughout

Things have changed a lot since the original publication, and there have been multiple revisions since. All revisions respect the fundamental principles of Robert's Rules and have only been added based on feedback from those who use it. Today, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised or RONR is the latest version, published September 2020 with revisions since then to reflect remote and virtual meetings.

[Robert's Rules of Order: The Meeting Agenda Simplified - iBabs](#)

Public Comment

- All City Commission, Board, Authority, or Committee meetings and public hearings allow for public comment.
- Public comment is not a dialog between the public and the board, however; it is the ability for the public to make public comment on a topic of discussion or a topic not of discussion.
- Public comment is directed toward the chairperson which, the chairperson can decide to address the comment or not.
- Public comment is generally limited to 3 minutes.
- City Council Meetings follow slightly varied rules and members should know the Policy (attach).

Downtown Development Authority

Development Authority (DDA) responsibilities include:

- Meets monthly in the City Council Chambers.
- Developing and Implementing a Downtown Development Plan
- Focusing on downtown goals, policies, and strategies identified throughout the City's Master Plan
- Establishing Development Incentives
- Establishing incentives and supporting local businesses
- Annual goal setting
- Annual budgeting
- Annual update of the Capital Improvement Plan
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) & Development Plan [DDA Tax Increment Financing and Development Plan | City of Ishpeming \(ishpemingcity.org\)](#)



Planning Commission

Planning Commission responsibilities include:

- Meets monthly in the Women's Club Room.
- Site Plan review.
- Special Land Use review.
- Zoning requests.
- City Master Plan review, creation, amendments, and updates
- Zoning Ordinance review, creation, amendments, and updates
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Various planning documents for the City of Ishpeming
- Downtown Plans.
- Small Area Plans.
- Parks & Rec Plans.

Additional Planning & Zoning Resources:

- Michigan Association of Planning: www.planningmi.org
- Michigan Municipal League: www.mml.org
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation: www.miplace.org
- American Planning Association: www.planning.org
- Michigan Planning Enabling Act: [Michigan Legislature – Act 33 of 2008](#)
- Michigan Zoning Enabling Act: [Michigan Legislature – Act 110 of 2006](#)

City Council

City Council responsibilities include:

- Meets once per month (other special meetings possible).
- Annual budgeting.
- Annual goal setting.
- Adopting ordinances.
- Determining projects and expenditures.
- Appointing board members for City boards and Commissions.
- Appointing City Manager, and City Clerk.
- Capital Improvement Planning.
- Comprehensive Planning.
- Adhering to the City Charter.
- Adopting plans, resolutions and policies.
- Implementing a fee schedule

Additional City Council Resources:

- Michigan Association of Planning: www.planningmi.org
- Michigan Municipal League: www.mml.org
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation: www.miplace.org



Zoning Board of Appeals

Zoning Board of Appeals responsibilities include:

- The Zoning Board of Appeals meets as needed.
- Interpreting the Zoning Code and/or map.
- Evaluating lot split(s)
- Hearing appeals from administrative decisions.
 - Site plan reviews
- Zoning requests
 - Granting use
 - Non-use variances
- Various Zoning documents for the City of Ishpeming
 - Zoning Ordinance [Ordinances | City of Ishpeming \(ishpemingcity.org\)](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/ordinances)
 - Zoning Map (s) [Zoning | City of Ishpeming Zoning Map \(ishpemingcity.org\)](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/zoning)
 - Development Guide City of [Ishpeming | Development Guide \(Ishpemingcity.org\)](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/development-guide)
 - City Master Plan [Master Plan | City of Ishpeming \(ishpemingcity.org\)](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/master-plan)

Important City Documents

- City Master Plan [Master Plan | City of Ishpeming \(ishpemingcity.org\)](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/master-plan)
- City five-year Recreation Plan [Recreation Plan | City of Ishpeming \(Ishpemingcity.org\)](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/recreation-plan)
- Zoning Ordinance [Ordinances | City of Ishpeming \(ishpemingcity.org\)](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/ordinances)
- City Charter (Obtain a copy by contacting the City Clerk's Office).
- Capital Improvement Plan [Capital Improvement Project | City of Ishpeming \(ishpemingcity.org\)](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/capital-improvement-project)

Trainings

- Many times, staff will share upcoming opportunities for you. If you are interested in a training that is relevant to your position, please let Community Development staff know.

Bylaws

All City of Ishpeming bylaws can be found here: Board & Commission Bylaws (Link)

- Planning Commission Bylaws [Ishpeming Planning Commission Bylaws](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/planning-commission-bylaws)
- Downtown Development Authority Bylaws [Ishpeming Downtown Development Authority \(ishpemingcity.org\)](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/downtown-development-authority)
- Zoning Board of Appeals Bylaws [City of Ishpeming | Zoning Board of Appeals Bylaws Zoning Board of Appeals](https://www.ishpemingcity.org/zoning-board-of-appeals)

