

TOWN OF
CHARLESTOWN
RHODE ISLAND



PASSED AT A GENERAL ELECTION
HELD ON NOVEMBER 4, 1980.

**HOME RULE
CHARTER**

1980

Chapter 5

Planning Commission

14-5-1 - Organization

There shall be a Planning Commission composed of five (5) members. They shall be elected at large on a non-partisan basis for terms of six (6) years, except that the initial elections shall be for terms of two members for two (?) years, two members for four (4) years, and one member for six (6) years, respectively. In addition there shall be two (2) alternate members elected for terms of two (2) years; and any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by one of the alternates until the next general election. All members shall serve until their respective successors have been elected. The Administrator, the Director of Public Works and the Superintendent of Schools shall serve as ex-officio members, and a member of the Council may also serve as an ex-officio member of this Commission.

The Commission shall organize annually by electing a chairman, vice chairman, and appointing a secretary. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed out of appropriations for any expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

14-5-2 - Meetings and Quorums

Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held at least once a month on such days as the Commission may determine, and special meetings shall be held at the call of the chairman or on written request of two members. Three members shall constitute a quorum, but no action shall be taken by the Commission without the concurring vote of three members. The Commission may adopt rules for the transaction of business.

14-5-3 - Powers and Duties

a. Studies. The Planning Commission shall make studies and prepare plans for the utilization of the resources and satisfaction of the needs of the Town, with reference to its physical growth and development as affecting the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the people and the economy and efficiency of community life. Such studies and plans may include, among other things, the following:

The utilization of land for residential, commercial, industrial, public, institutional, and other purposes;

The location and character of transportation routes, including railroads, highways, streets, sidewalks, bridges, terminals, heliports, and other facilities;

The location and character of public facilities, including offices, fire or police stations, schools, recreation areas, and other public places and structures;

The location and character of public service and utility systems such as water supply, drainage, sewerage, street lighting, and power or fuel transmission;

Blighted areas including the designation of general areas for redevelopment or renewal;

Environmental pollution - air, land and water;

The conservation and utilization of natural resources, including soil, ground or surface water, minerals, plant and animal life, and topographic features;

Historic sites or buildings;

Survival from possible disaster; and

The economic and sociological aspects of the Town.

b. Comprehensive Plan. The Commission shall periodically update the comprehensive plan for the development and improvement of the Town. That plan shall, among other things, show the proposed location and arrangement of the uses of the land; transportation routes; public facilities; utility systems; deteriorating or blighted neighborhoods planned for redevelopment, rehabilitation or other improvement; natural resources and historic sites to be preserved; and disaster survival proposals. The plan shall also include recommendations for the enactment of development controls deemed necessary to properly implement the features of the plan, such as zoning, subdivision control, official street map, minimum housing standards, pollution control, etc. No portion of the comprehensive plan or amendment thereto shall be adopted without a public hearing.

c. Capital Budget. The Commission shall prepare and recommend to the Budget Commission a capital budget for the following year and a comprehensive five (5) year capital improvement program on an annual basis.

d. Regulatory Powers. The Commission shall regulate the platting or any other subdivision of land in accordance with the provisions of the general laws of Rhode Island.

e. Opinions. The Commission shall file an opinion with the Council on all proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance, giving due consideration to the relationship of such amendments to the Town's comprehensive plan, and shall recommend to the Council

amendments to the zoning ordinance wherever there is a proposed major change in or extension of land use, transportation routes, public facilities, or public utility systems. At least once every two years the Planning Commission shall review the zoning ordinance and make recommendations concerning its revision.

f. Annual Report. The Commission shall report annually to the Council at the end of the fiscal year, summarizing the work of the preceding year and recommending plans for future development of the Town. A copy of this report shall be filed with the Rhode Island Development Council in accordance with the provisions in the general laws of Rhode Island. All plans and reports of the Commission shall be first submitted to the Council, and thereafter the Commission may publish and distribute copies of plans and reports in order to promote public interest in and understanding of the work of the Commission.

g. Miscellaneous. The Commission shall undertake such other work as may be assigned by the Council in connection with the physical growth and development of the Town. The Commission shall have the authority to call upon other departments, boards, committees, or commissions of the Town and agencies of the State and Federal governments for assistance in performing its designated functions, and shall cooperate with other departments and with State and Federal agencies on community, regional, and state planning and development. The Commission may employ such technical assistance as it may deem necessary within the funds appropriated to it, and may enter into agreements with the State, Federal, or regional agencies; the Commission may incur any expense necessary therefor, but it shall not for any purpose contract for or incur any expense greater than the amount appropriated or available therefor.

14-5-4 - Planning Coordination

Any proposal for the construction of a public improvement or for the acquisition of land for public use shall be first submitted to the Planning Commission for its recommendation. Nothing, however, shall be construed to prevent the proposal from being effected in the absence of a recommendation of the Commission after thirty days from the date of submission or subsequent to a negative recommendation of the Commission.

All proposed ordinances and resolutions of the Council which concern the existing and proposed location and arrangement of the uses of the land, transportation routes, public facilities; public utility systems; deteriorating or blighted neighborhoods planned for redevelopment, rehabilitation, or other improvement; natural resources and historic sites to be preserved; and disaster survival proposals shall be submitted to the Commission for its recommendation. Nothing, however, shall be construed to restrict or prevent the Council from acting on any ordinance or resolution contrary to or in the absence of a recommendation of the Commission.

In the preparation of the annual capital budget and capital improvement program, all departments, boards, committees, commissions and officers of the Town shall cooperate with the Planning Commission.

The Commission may also act in a review capacity in other matters as may be specified in the general laws of the State of Rhode Island.

Chapter 6

Senior Citizens Commission

14-6-1 - Organization

There shall be a Senior Citizens Commission composed of seven (7) members, appointed by the Council. At least four (4) members of the Commission shall be age sixty (60) or older.

14-6-2 - Duties

It shall be the duty of this Commission to advise the Council on the needs of the senior residents of the Town, and to make recommendations for Council consideration.

Chapter 7

Zoning Board of Review

14-7-1 - Organization

There shall be a Zoning Board of Review consisting of five (5) members and two (2) alternate members, all appointed by the Council. Each member shall be appointed for a term of five (5) years, except that the original appointments shall be made for terms of one, two, three, four and five years respectively. The alternate members shall be appointed for a term of one year. If a vacancy on the Board should occur, the Council shall appoint one of the alternates as a member for the unexpired term.

14-7-2 - Powers and Duties

a. The Board shall hear and decide appeals where it is alleged there is error in any order, requirement, decision or determination made by an administrative officer in the enforcement of Zoning Ordinances of the Town.

b. The Board shall hear and decide special exceptions to the terms of the ordinance upon which the Board is authorized to pass under the ordinance.

c. The Board shall authorize upon appeal in specific cases such variance in the application of the terms of the ordinance as will