

Article 25
Planning Commission | Board of Zoning Appeals
Zoning Administrator and Administrative Variances

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SECTION 25-1 PLANNING COMMISSION ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

25-101. Membership and conduct.

- a. The City of Arkansas City Planning Commission is created in accordance with K.S.A. 12-741 *et seq.* and amendments thereto, and in accordance with Sec. 2-185 *et seq.* of the Arkansas City Municipal Code. The Commission shall consist of nine members. Members shall serve terms of three years.
- b. Membership of the Planning Commission shall at all times include two members who reside outside of the City, but within three (3) miles of the corporate limits of the City. The other seven members shall reside within the corporate limits of the City.
- c. The Commission shall cause a proper record to be kept of its proceedings.
- d. No Planning Commission member shall vote or act on any matter in which the member has a direct or indirect personal or financial interest.

25-102. Powers and duties.

- a. The Planning Commission shall approve plans and maps of the whole or any portion of the City and of any land outside of the City which in its opinion bears relation to the planning of the City, and make changes in such plans or maps when it deems the same advisable. Such plans or maps shall show the Commission's recommendation for new streets, alleys, ways, viaducts, bridges, parks, parkways, playgrounds, or any other public grounds or public improvements, and the removal, relocation, widening or extension of such public works then existing with a view to the systematic planning of the City.
- b. The Commission may make recommendations to the City Commission concerning the location of the streets, transportation and communication facilities, public buildings, and grounds.

25-103. Budget. In compliance with budgeting deadlines set for all city departments, the Planning Commission shall submit to the City Commission a budget of expenditures for the next fiscal year itemizing the expenses, the amount and purpose. The City Commission shall consider the submitted budget, determine an appropriate budget for the Planning Commission and add it to the general budget of the City.

SECTION 25-2 BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

25-201. Membership, officers and meetings.

- a. The Planning Commission is hereby designated also to serve as the Board of Zoning Appeals as provided for by K.S.A. 12-759, as amended, and hereinafter in this Article will be referred to as the "Board."
- b. The Board shall consist of the seven members of the Planning Commission who reside within the corporate limits of the City. The two members of the Commission who do not reside within the corporate limits of the City shall recuse themselves from any Board proceedings. When a quorum is declared present, all actions of the Board shall be made by a motion and decided by a majority vote of the members present and voting.
- c. The officers of the Board may differ from those of the Planning Commission.
- d. Board meetings may be held separately from a Planning Commission meeting or in conjunction with such a meeting, wherein the Commission may recess or adjourn sine die a portion of its meeting to conduct business of the Board and then reconvene to continue the Commission agenda. The Board shall keep minutes of its proceedings, showing evidence presented, findings of fact by the Board, decisions of the Board and the vote upon each question. Records of all official action of the Board shall be filed in its office and shall be a public record kept separately from the Commission records.

SECTION 25-3 APPEALS

25-301. The Board of Zoning Appeals shall have the power to hear and decide appeals when it is alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, decision or determination made by the Zoning Administrator in the enforcement of these regulations.

- a. Appeals to the Board may be taken by the person aggrieved, or by any officer, department or bureau of the government affected by any decision of the Zoning Administrator. Such appeal shall be filed with the Zoning Administrator within thirty (30) days after a ruling has been made by the Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Administrator shall transmit to the chair of the Board all papers constituting the record upon which the action appealed from is taken.
- b. An appeal stays all proceedings in furtherance of the action appealed from, unless the Zoning Administrator certifies to the Board, after the notice of appeal has been filed, that a stay would, in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator, cause imminent peril to life or property.

SECTION 25-4 VARIANCES

25-401. The Board of Zoning Appeals shall have the power to authorize in specific cases a variance from the specific terms of these regulations which will not be contrary to the public interest and where, owing to special conditions, a literal enforcement of the provisions of these regulations will, in an individual case, result in unnecessary hardship, provided the spirit of these regulations shall be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done. Such variance shall not permit any use not permitted by the zoning regulations in such district.

- a. The applicant must show that his or her property was acquired in good faith and where by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of this specific piece of property which existed at the time of the effective date of the district zoning regulations, or where by reason of exceptional topographical conditions or other extraordinary or exceptional circumstances that the strict application of the terms of the zoning regulations actually prohibit the use of the property in the manner similar to that of other property in the zoning district where it is located.

- b. Variances from these regulations may be granted in the following instances:
 - 1. To vary from the applicable lot area and width, height, and yard regulations.
 - 2. To vary from the applicable off-street parking and loading requirements.
- c. In accordance with Section 25-10, a request for a variance may be granted by the Zoning Administrator for variances of 15% or less of the requirement. Requests for variances of greater than 15% of the requirement of the regulation may be granted, upon a finding of the Board that all of the following conditions have been met. The Board shall make a determination on each condition, and the finding shall be entered in the record:
 - 1. The variance requested arises from a condition that is unique to the property in question and is not ordinarily found in the same zone or district; and is not created by action of the property owner or applicant.
 - 2. The granting of the permit for the variance will not adversely affect the rights of adjacent property owners or residents.
 - 3. The strict application of the provisions of the zoning regulations of which the variance is requested will constitute unnecessary hardship upon the property owner represented in the application.
 - 4. The variance desired will not adversely affect the public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or general welfare.
 - 5. The granting of the variance desired will not be opposed to the general spirit and intent of the zoning regulations.
- d. In granting a variance, the Board may impose such conditions, safeguards and restrictions upon the premises benefited by the variance as may be necessary to reduce or minimize any potentially injurious effect of such variance upon other property in the neighborhood, and to carry out the general purpose and intent of these regulations.

SECTION 25-5 EXCEPTIONS

25-501. The Board of Zoning Appeals shall have the power to grant exceptions to the provisions of these zoning regulations, when expressly authorized to do so by these regulations in a particular zoning district or districts.

- a. In no event shall exceptions to the provisions of the zoning regulations be granted where the exception contemplated is not specifically listed in the zoning regulations. The Board shall not grant an exception when the conditions established by this section are not found to be present.
- b. The Board shall not grant an exception unless it shall, in each specific case, make specific written findings of fact directly based upon the particular evidence presented to it, that support conclusions that:
 - 1. The proposed exception complies with all applicable provisions of these regulations, including intensity of use regulations, yard regulations and use limitations.
 - 2. The proposed exception at the specified location will not be adverse to the welfare or convenience of the public.
 - 3. The proposed exception will not cause substantial injury to the value of other property in the neighborhood in which it is to be located.

25-502. Exceptions Allowed. The following exceptions are expressly allowed to be granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals when such is consistent with Section 25-501:

- a. Where a use district boundary line crosses a lot, a use of either classification on the whole lot.
- b. Off-street parking areas, adjacent to or at a reasonable distance from the premises on which parking areas are required by the parking regulations of these regulations where practical difficulties, including the acquisition of property, or undue hardships are encountered in locating such parking areas on the premises.
- c. Special Yard Exceptions: The following yard exceptions may be approved by the Board:
 - 1. An exception in the yard regulations on a lot where an adjacent lot has a front, side or rear yard that does not conform with such yard regulations.
 - 2. A yard exception on a corner lot, or lots opposite or adjoining permanent open spaces, including parks and playgrounds.
 - 3. An exception in the depth of rear yard on a lot in a block where there are nonconforming rear yard conditions.
 - 4. An exception where there are irregularities in depths of existing front yards on a street frontage on the side of a street between two intersecting streets, so that any one of the existing depths shall, for a building, hereafter constructed or extended, be the required minimum front yard depth.

SECTION 25-6 DETERMINATIONS OF BOARD

25-601. In exercising the foregoing powers, the Board of Zoning Appeals may reverse or affirm, wholly or partly, or may modify any order, requirements, decision or determination, and to that end shall have all the powers of the Zoning Administrator from whom the appeal is taken, may attach appropriate conditions, and may issue or direct the issuance of a zoning certificate.

SECTION 25-7 BOARD HEARINGS

25-701. The Board of Zoning Appeals shall hold a public hearing on each application for an appeal, variance or exception. On all applications, notice of time and place of the public hearing shall be published once in the official City newspaper not less than twenty (20) days prior to the date of such public hearing. In addition, for all applications for a variance or exception all property owners within two hundred feet (200') of the subject property (1,000 feet when the subject property is adjacent to the City limits) shall be notified by mail of such public hearing, and be given an opportunity to attend and be heard regarding such application for a variance or exception.

25-702.

- a. The procedure for requesting a hearing before the Board of Zoning Appeals is as follows:
 - 1. All applications to the Board shall be in writing on forms provided by the Zoning Administrator. Applications shall be completed in their entirety and filed in the office of the Zoning Administrator with all supporting data. The Zoning Administrator may require any legal description submitted as part of an application to be certified by a registered surveyor, and shall determine whether the filed application is complete.
 - 2. The Zoning Administrator may either create the required ownership list or may require an application to be accompanied by an ownership list, certified by a registered abstractor, listing the legal description and the names and addresses of the owners of all property located within two hundred (200) feet of the boundaries of the property included in the application. Whenever any portion of the property that is the subject of the application is within two hundred feet (200') of the City limits, the applicant shall provide such an ownership list for the property within one thousand feet (1,000') of the boundaries of the property included in the application.

3. The Board shall fix a reasonable time for the hearing of an application and notice of the time, place and subject of each hearing shall be published in the official City newspaper at least twenty (20) days prior to the date fixed for the public hearing. A copy of the notice of public hearing shall be sent to each party of interest and each person on the ownership list fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing.
 4. An application shall be accompanied by the filing fee required by the City Commission. A separate filing fee shall be required for each application.
- b. In addition to the above requirements, certain applications must meet additional requirements as follows:
1. Appeals.
 - (a) An application for an appeal shall be filed within thirty (30) days after a ruling has been made by the Zoning Administrator.
 - (b) A copy shall be submitted of the order, requirement, decision or determination of the Zoning Administrator which the applicant believes to be in error.
 - (c) A clear and accurate written description of the proposed use, work or action in which the appeal is involved, and a statement justifying the applicant's position.
 - (d) Where necessary, a plot plan, drawn to scale, showing existing and proposed plans for the area in question shall be submitted.
 2. Variances.
 - (a) The applicant shall submit a statement, in writing, justifying the variance requested, indicating specifically the enforcement provisions of the zoning regulations from which the variance is requested, and outlining why it is believed that this application will meet each of the five (5) conditions as set out in Section 25-401(c).
 - (b) The applicant shall submit a sketch drawn to scale and showing the lot or lots included in the application; the structures existing thereon; and the structures contemplated necessitating the variance requested. All appropriate dimensions and any other information that would be helpful to the Board in consideration of the application should be included.
 3. Exceptions.
 - (a) The applicant shall submit a statement in writing justifying the exception applied for, and indicating under which article and section of the zoning regulations the Board is believed to have jurisdiction.
 - (b) The applicant shall prepare and submit at the time of filing the application a plot plan drawn to scale, showing all existing and proposed structures, property lines with dimensions, parking spaces, points of ingress and egress, driveways, and any other information that would be helpful to the Board in consideration of the application.

SECTION 25-8 PERFORMANCE UPON GRANT OF VARIANCE OR EXCEPTION

25-801.

- a. In making any decision varying or modifying any provisions of the zoning regulations or in granting an exception to the district regulations, the Board of Zoning Appeals shall impose such restrictions, terms, time limitations, landscaping, screening and other appropriate safeguards as needed to protect adjoining property.

- b. The Board may specify a time limit for the completion of such required improvements and, in the event the improvements are not completed within the specified time, the Board may declare the granting of the application null and void.
- c. After the Board has approved an exception or granted a variance, the exception or variance so approved or granted shall lapse after the expiration of one year if no substantial construction or change of use has taken place in accordance with the plans for which such exception or variance was granted, and the provisions of these regulations shall thereafter govern.

SECTION 25-9 APPEALS FROM BOARD DECISIONS

25-901. In exercising its powers, the Board of Zoning Appeals, in conformity with the provisions of this article, may reverse or affirm, wholly or partly, or may modify the order, requirement, decision or determination, and to that end shall have all the powers of the officer from whom the appeal is taken; may attach appropriate conditions and may issue or direct the issuance of a permit. Any person, official or governmental agency dissatisfied with any order or determination of the Board may bring an action in the District Court of Cowley County, Kansas, to determine the reasonableness of any such order or determination within thirty (30) days of the rendering of the order or determination by the Board, in accordance with state law.

SECTION 25-10 ADMINISTRATIVE VARIANCES

25-1001.

- a. Except where variances are expressly prohibited by these Regulations, any requirement under these Regulations which may be varied from in accordance with the provisions of Section 25-4 may be submitted to the Zoning Administrator with a request for an administrative variance.
- b. No application for an administrative variance may reduce the requirement sought to be varied from by an amount greater than 15%.
- c. The Zoning Administrator may approve, disapprove, modify and approve, or refer directly to the Board of Zoning Appeals an application for administrative variance.
- d. Any final decision by the Zoning Administrator on an application for an administrative variance may be appealed to the Board.

SECTION 25-11 ZONING ADMINISTRATOR; POWERS AND DUTIES

25-11.

- a. The Zoning Administrator is the City's officer responsible for carrying out the duties and responsibilities of administering the City's zoning and subdivision regulations. In general, the Zoning Administrator shall inspect structures and uses of land to determine compliance with the provisions of such regulations and any application made pursuant to those regulations.
- b. The Zoning Administrator shall:
 - 1. Compile and maintain the official text of the City's zoning and subdivision regulations, and the zoning maps and any amendments thereto.
 - 2. Receive, file, review, make recommendations on and forward for action all applications for, and appeals of, rezonings, conditional use permits, subdivision plats, and variances. The Zoning Administrator shall have such authority as is necessary to request and acquire from an applicant or appellant information needed for the processing of such applications and appeals, including land surveys.
 - 3. Maintain zoning and subdivision administration records.

4. Issue permits and review permit applications made pursuant to the City's zoning and subdivision regulations.
5. Approve or disapprove requests for administrative variances in accordance with Section 25-10 of these regulations.
6. Provide such technical and secretarial assistance as is required by the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and City Commission, and other boards and commissions in the exercise of their duties relating to these regulations.
7. Advise the Planning Commission and City Commission on the adequacy of the comprehensive plan and zoning and subdivision regulations, and at least annually make recommendations to the Planning Commission concerning the same.
8. Ensure that public notice is provided for proceedings related to applications made pursuant to these regulations.
9. Advise the City Attorney of possible violations of these regulations.