

Far West Side Area Commission: Bylaws



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Preamble

These bylaws establish the procedure under which the Far West Side Area Commission shall execute those duties and functions set forth in and with authority granted under Chapter 3109 and 3111 of the Columbus City Codes (herein abbreviated as CC).

Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Far West Side Area Commission, herein referred to as the “Commission.”

Article II: Area

On the North:

Columbus corporation limits from Alton Darby Creek Road to I-270.

[Northern boundary meets Hilliard City limits.]

On the East:

I-270 north of Norfolk Southern Railroad until I-70. Continuing north from I-70 along the eastern most track of Buckeye Rail Yards until Scioto Darby Road.

[Eastern boundary abuts western boundaries of Greater Hilltop AC and West Scioto AC.]

On the South:

Centerline of Norfolk Southern Railroad Tracks. [Southern boundary abuts northern edge of Westland AC.]

On the West:

The Hamilton Run north of Norfolk Southern Railroad to Roberts Road. Continuing along the centerline of Roberts Road / Old Roberts Road to a point where, if extended, Old Roberts Road would intersect with Alton Darby Creek Road. Continuing along the centerline of Alton Darby Creek Road to Columbus corporation limits at a point approximately ¼ mile north of Pinefield Drive. Exclusive of incorporated Hilliard City sections within this area: Anderson Meadows, Hilliard Summit, and two elementary schools.

Interactive map available at goo.gl/HRvSDi

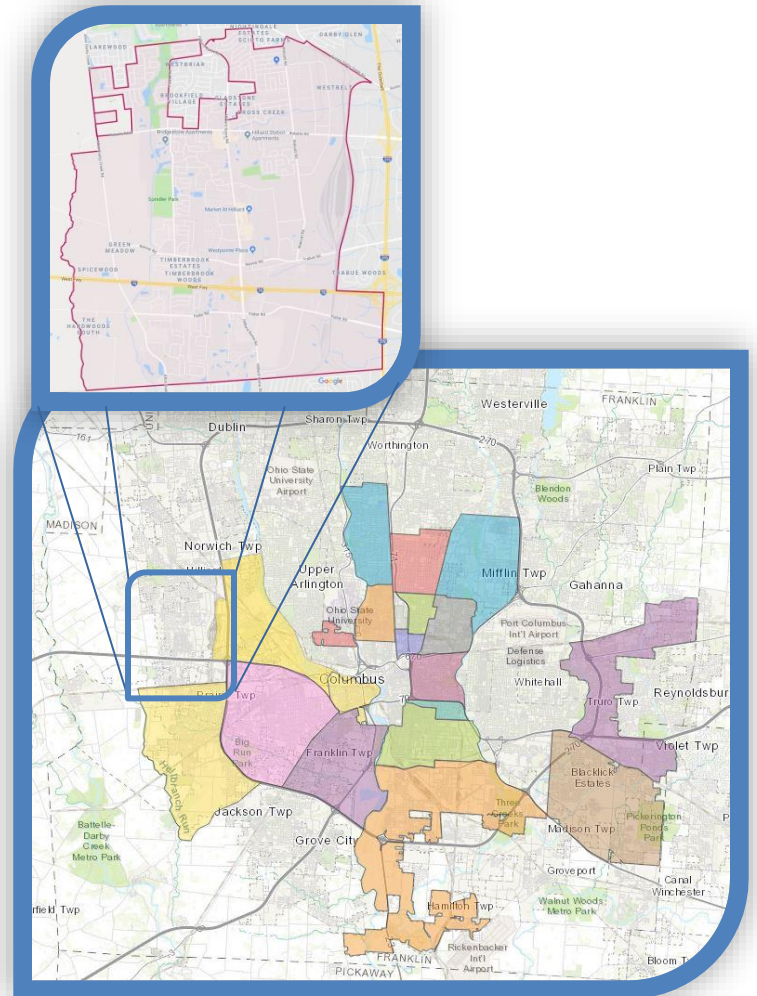


Figure 1: Columbus Area Commissions with Far West Side Area Commission.

Article III: Purpose

The purpose of this Commission shall be to afford additional voluntary citizen participation in decision making in an advisory capacity to the City Administration and City Council and to facilitate communication, understanding, and cooperation between neighborhood groups, city officials, and developers. In furtherance of this Purpose, the Commission shall:

1. In the interest of local planning for local needs, identify and study problems and requirements of the Commission Area in order to:
 - a. Create plans and policies which will serve as guidelines for future developments of the Area,
 - b. Bring the problems and needs of the Area to the attention of appropriate Government agencies, residents and/or local officials, and
 - c. Recommend solutions and/or legislation.
2. Aid and promote communication with the Commission Area and between it and the rest of the City by means of:
 - a. Regular, special and interim meetings of the Commission, which are open to the public,
 - b. Public hearings on problems, issues, and proposals affecting the area
 - c. Public forums and surveys to provide an opportunity for area residents, businesses and organizations, institutions and governments to comment,
 - d. Soliciting active cooperation of all segments of the area and city, including organizations, institutions, and government
 - e. Initiating proposals and supporting those introduced by individual citizens or area organizations that will enhance the quality of life enjoyed by area residents and preserve the unique residential and commercial mix of the Area, and
 - f. Promoting and encouraging business functions, methods of operation, architectural appearance, and locations are consistent with the character and requirement of the Area.
3. Initiate, review and recommend criteria and programs for the preservation, development, and enhancement of the Commission Area, including but not limited to parks, recreation areas, sidewalks, streets and traffic by means of:
 - a. Reviewing the proposed Capital Improvement Budget and proposing new items and changes relating to the Area,
 - b. Making recommendations for restoration and preservation of the historical and environmental elements within the Area, and
 - c. Receiving and reviewing for recommendation prior to the adoption by governmental bodies, any new or revised comprehensive plan affecting the Area.
4. Recommend priorities for and review government services and operation of the various government departments in the Commission Area by means of:
 - a. Requesting and receiving from departments or agencies periodic reports concerning governmental services in the Area,
 - b. Meeting with administrative heads of any department or agencies or any of their subordinates to obtain additional information deemed necessary for the Commission to fulfill its functions,
 - c. Requesting and receiving from departments or agencies, prior to implementation, full reports on any proposed changes,
 - d. Reviewing and evaluating pending legislation substantially affecting the area prior to its consideration by Council, and

- e. Review and comment on zoning issues and demolition presented to the Commission.
5. Recommend persons from Commission Area for nominations to membership on City boards and Commission to make decisions or recommendations affecting the Commission Area.
6. The Commission may meet with applicants for re-zonings, special permits, demolition permits, or variances regarding property wholly or partly within the Commission area to discuss the proposal, its relationship to the area, and possible modifications. In order to assist decision-making without disrupting existing procedures, the Commission shall conduct such meetings and notify the appropriate body of its recommendations in a timely manner. Upon good cause shown, inability of the Commission to make a recommendation may be grounds for postponement of subsequent action by other bodies.
 - a. Suggestions and comments of the Commission shall be advisory only and failure of the applicant to comply therewith shall not in itself constitute grounds for denial of the application. Failure of the applicant to consult the Commission in a timely manner, however, may be grounds for postponement of further action by other bodies.
7. The Commission shall not endorse any candidate for public office.

Article IV: Membership

Section 1: Appointment

- a. All Commissioners shall be appointed by the Mayor of the City of Columbus with concurrence of City Council in accordance with C.C. 3109. The Secretary shall notify the Mayor of all nominations, elections, and vacancies within ten (10) days of such action.
- b. Should the Mayor neither approve nor disapprove the action within thirty (30) days of notifications, the actions shall be deemed approved until notice from the Mayor as specified in C.C. 3109.
- c. A copy of each notice shall be sent to the City Council in care of the City Clerk.

Section 2: Members

- a. The Commission shall consist of nine (9) Commissioners. Each Commissioner shall serve without compensation.
- b. Six (6) at-large elected Commissioners shall be selected from City of Columbus residents within the Commission Area and shall be 18 years of age or older. Elected Commissioners must maintain residence in the Commission Area until the completion of their term.
- c. A maximum of three (3) Commissioners may be selected from nominations from the following:
 1. Individuals residing in the townships within the Commission Area;
 2. Individuals employed by or owning a business within the Commission Area;
 3. Representatives from the Commission Area's public school districts including Hilliard City Schools, Columbus City Schools, or South-Western City Schools;
 4. Representatives of religious, social or other public interest organizations within the Commission Area.
- d. The Commission must maintain a minimum two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Commissioners who are residents of the City of Columbus.
- e. All Commissioners shall be selected in accordance with the selection Rules adopted by the Far West Side Area Commission.

- f. All Commission members are strongly encouraged to attend area commission training classes provided by the Department of Neighborhoods.
- g. Newly elected or appointed area commissioners are required to attend the new area commission training class provided by the Department of Neighborhoods within one (1) year of appointment or election.
- h. Newly elected Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Zoning Chairpersons are required to attend one (1) zoning training class provided by the Department of Neighborhoods and the Department of Building and Zoning Services within one (1) year of appointment or election.

Section 3: Terms

- a. The term of membership of the elected and appointed officials described in Article IV, Section 2(b) and (c) above shall be three (3) years. All terms shall expire the day prior to the October annual meeting in the year that the term expires.
- b. Upon first establishment of the Commission, terms shall be staggered as determined by lot, one-third (1/3) of the initial Commissioners shall serve for one (1) year; one third (1/3) for two (2) years; and the remaining one-third (1/3), for three (3) years or until their successors are appointed. Upon expiration of each initial Commissioner's term and thereafter, each Commissioner shall serve as described in Article IV, Sections 2(a), (b), (c) and (d) above to maintain continuity of experienced representation.

Section 4: Commission Representation

No Commissioner shall represent the Commission in its official actions before any other public body or official, except as specifically authorized in writing by the Commission. This shall not be construed as a restriction upon the right of the individual Commissioners to represent their own views before public or private bodies, whether in agreement or disagreement with the official action of the Commission.

Section 5: Disqualification

Commissioners shall maintain their residence, employment or business in the Commission Area from which they were elected or appointed. Failure of a Commissioner to maintain his or her residence, employment or business in the Commission Area, shall be deemed a resignation and the Secretary shall notify the Mayor, City Clerk, and the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods.

Section 6: Attendance

The year starts with the annual meeting in October. Commissioners shall, so far as possible, be regular in attendance. Attendance shall also include participation by means of communication or media equipment if all persons participating can hear each other and participate. A Commissioner's absence from three (3) regular meetings in any one (1) year shall be deemed a resignation from the Commission, unless a written petition has been received by the Chairperson of the Commission. The Commission must act upon the petition when it is received at either the regular next regularly scheduled meeting or the following regularly scheduled meeting. The petition must be made in writing and received by the Chairperson at least eight (8) days prior to the next regular meeting following the third absence. The petition is to request that some or all the absences be excused due to extenuating circumstances. The nature of the extenuating circumstances

shall be explained. If the Commission accepts, by majority vote, all or a portion of the absences may be excused. If a petition is not received, it shall be deemed a resignation from the Commission and notice of such will be communicated to the City of Columbus. After the second missed meeting, the secretary will remind the Commissioner of the attendance policy in writing within seven (7) days after the second missed meeting. After the third missed meeting, the secretary will remind the Commissioner in writing within seven (7) days after the third missed meeting about the need to submit a petition to the Chairperson if the Commissioner would like to maintain their position. Commissioners shall, as soon as possible, inform either the Chairperson or the Secretary, prior to the meeting, when they know they will be absent.

Section 7: Vacancies

The Commission shall nominate one (1) or more candidates to fill any vacancy caused by death, resignation, disqualification, or other means for the remainder of the unexpired term by letter to the Mayor pursuant C.C. 3109. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term by the Chairperson within sixty (60) days of the declared vacancy, with approval by the Commissioners by majority vote.

Article V: Officers

Section 1: Officers

- a. The officers of the Commission shall be: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. At the first meeting of the Commission, officers shall be elected by majority vote of the Commissioners. Thereafter, election of officers shall be at the annual meeting.
- b. Officers shall serve one (1) year or until a successor is elected.
- c. The Chairperson may serve no more than six (6) consecutive years but may be re-elected after a gap of at least three (3) consecutive years. A Chairperson's six (6) year term limit may be extended by a three quarter (3/4) majority vote of the Commission.
- d. An individual serving six (6) consecutive years as the Chairperson is not eligible to serve as Vice-Chairperson of the commission for three (3) consecutive years after their term as Chairperson expires, but may serve in another officer capacity. This individual is eligible to continue to serve as an area commissioner.
- e. There is no limit to the number of terms a Commissioner may serve in the same office as Vice-Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer.
- f. Each officer shall have the right to vote on any question barring any conflict of interest (see Article IX, Section 3). All officers shall be Commissioners.

Section 2: Chairperson

The Chairperson shall be a resident of the City of Columbus within the Far West Side Area Commission and will preside at all meetings of the Commission; prepare the agenda for each meeting; in consultation with other Commissioners, appoint standing and special committees of the Commission; serve as an ex officio member of all committees; coordinate the action of officers and committee chairpersons; and perform other duties associated with the office as required.

Section 3: Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall be a resident of the City of Columbus within the Far West Wide Area Commission; shall assist the Chairperson; perform all the duties of the Chairperson in his or her absence, or at the request of the Chairperson; and perform other such duties as may be assigned by the Commission.

Section 4: Secretary

The Secretary shall be a resident of the City of Columbus within the Far West Side Area Commission; shall call and record roll; remind a Commissioner of his or her absences per Article IV, Section 6; record and maintain accurate voting records and meeting summaries that shall be open to public examination; maintain such other records as the Commission may direct; notify the Mayor of any vacancy; perform related duties as may be assigned by the Commission; and in the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson, call the meeting to order and preside until the immediate election of Chairperson pro tempore. The Secretary shall also maintain public records such as emails, memos, meeting notes, minutes, etc. that the Commission creates as the Commissioners go about commission business. The records shall be available to the public at request.

Section 5: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall receive all funds and disperse all funds with the Commission's approval; cause all financial records of the Commission to be maintained and reported to the Commission at each regular meeting and to the City of Columbus as required; be responsible for assuring sound financial practices are maintained; and perform any other duties the Commission may require. The Commission shall provide for reconciliation of the financial records of the accounts prior to each annual meeting.

Section 6: Vacancies

A vacancy in the office of the Chairperson shall be filled by the Vice-Chairperson. A vacancy in any other position shall be filled in the same manner as the original selection.

Article VI: Meetings

Section 1: Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise directed by the majority vote of the Commission in sufficient time to notify constituents and the City Administration of such change. Each meeting shall be held in the Commission area unless suitable facilities are unavailable. Commissioners may seek suitable facilities contiguous to the commission area. The facility will have an appropriately large room convenient for Commissioners and the public and will be chosen by the Commission as its regular meeting place unless otherwise specified at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. Notice of the meeting with an agenda shall be published on the website prior to changing meeting time or location.

Section 2: Interim Meetings

Interim meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The primary purpose of the interim meetings shall be to conduct zoning committee business. Other committees may use this date.

Section 3: Annual Meeting

The annual meeting shall be the first regular meeting in October.

Section 4: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by a majority of Commissioners present at any Commission meeting. The person or persons calling a special meeting shall give written notice of the special meeting's purpose, date, time, location and agenda to all commissioners. No business will be considered at the special meeting unless it was stated when the meeting was called. Except in cases of emergency, three (3) days' notice shall be given for a special meeting. The commission shall maintain a list of persons who have requested to be contacted prior to a special meeting being called.

Section 5: Public Notice

All meetings shall be open to the public, and notice shall be published, when possible, at least seven (7) days in advance on the website unless stated otherwise in these bylaws. Annually, the Commission shall provide to the Department of Neighborhoods the schedule of regularly scheduled meetings for the upcoming year to be published in the Columbus City Bulletin.

Section 6: Quorum

A majority of the current Commissioners shall constitute a quorum for conducting business.

Section 7: Voting

A majority of the Commissioners present and voting shall be required to approve any action. A tie vote is disapproval. The Chairperson shall state each issue in a positive form such as, "The question before the commission is," "Shall the application for _____ be approved?" and "Request approval for _____ be approved?"

Section 8: Records

- a. All votes shall be recorded, including Commissioner's name and "yay" or "nay" vote.
- b. The Commission shall also abide by the City of Columbus's Record Retentions schedule, which describes the dates and process for retaining and destroying documents.

Section 10: Order of Business

The order of business may be determined by the Chairperson. A suggested format is:

1. Call to Order
2. Reading and Approval of previous meeting minutes
3. Invited Guests
4. Reports from officers and standing committees

5. Reports from special committees
6. Unfinished Business
7. New Business
8. Program
9. Adjournment

Section 11: Public Participation

The Chairperson shall recognize members of the public who wish to address the Commission concerning issues under discussion. The Chairperson shall uniformly limit debate to an equal amount of time for each side of the issue. Time limits may be set by the Commission. When appropriate, further action on the issue may be deferred to the next Commission meeting.

Section 12: Dissenting Reports

Dissenting or non-concurring reports may be filed with the Secretary by any Commissioner and shall be attached to the majority report.

Section 13: Topic Specific Reports

Individual citizens or Commissioners may be asked to research a specific topic and report findings to the Commission.

Section 14: Agenda

The agenda for each regular meeting shall set forth all matters for discussion. When possible, all matters for the agenda, including minutes and committee reports shall be submitted in writing to the chairperson at least ten (10) days prior to a meeting. When possible, the Chair shall send all Commissioners a notice of the meeting including the agenda, minutes, and committee reports at least seven (7) days prior to the Commission meeting.

Section 15: Discussion Limitation

Persons present at meetings who are not Commissioners shall have the right to participate in discussions of matters for consideration by Commission and the Chairperson shall recognize them for that purpose. The Chairperson shall determine limitation of discussion.

Section 16: Guest Speakers

When guests are invited to speak to the Commission, time will generally be limited to fifteen (15) minutes, or at the discretion of the Chairperson.

Section 17: Meeting Time Limits

Commission meetings shall be limited to not more than ninety (90) minutes unless deemed appropriate and approved by a majority of the Commissioners present.

Article VII: Committees

Section 1: Standing Committees

The chairperson shall appoint Commissioners to standing committees giving due consideration to their individual preferences and subject to approval by a majority vote of the Commissioners.

Section 2: Non-Commissioner Members

The Chairperson shall appoint non-Commissioners to Commission committees from recommendations by Commissioners appointed to that particular committee subject to approval by a majority vote of the Commissioners. Non-Commissioners appointed shall have full voting privileges in all proceedings of the committee to which they are appointed.

Section 3: Terms

Committee members shall serve at the pleasure of the Chairperson and their appointments shall expire at the next annual meeting unless extended by the Chairperson.

Section 4: Role of Chairperson

The Chairperson shall be an ex officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee and Elections Board.

Section 5: Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall keep a list of potential candidates to recommend to the Commission for appointments and in case a vacancy occurs.

Section 6: Chairpersons

After appointments are approved, the members of each committee shall select a Committee Chairperson from among the Commissioners appointed to the committee.

Section 7: Formation

Committees shall be formed and disbanded as needed.

Section 8: Meetings

Notice of all committee meetings and copies of all committee correspondence shall be filed with the Secretary and the Chairperson of the commission. Committee findings that propose action or resolution shall be submitted at a regular meeting of the Commission for consideration.

Article VIII: Elections and Appointments

Section 1: Elections and Appointments Board Members

The Elections and Appointments Board shall consist of a minimum of three (3) Commission Area residents appointed by the Chairperson with the approval of the Commission. No individual running election night activities may be related to or have business interests with any candidate appearing on the ballot for the Commission. No Board member may be involved in the process for selecting and nominating individuals to fill a Commissioner position as an appointee who is related to or has business interests with any Commissioner appointment candidate.

Section 2: Board Duties

The Board shall appoint any necessary officers; provide for printing and distribution necessary for such as, but not limited to: petitions, ballots and tallies; receive petitions; certify persons who have qualified as candidates; locate polling places; conduct the election; tally the votes; hear and decide complaints concerning the election or campaign; determine and nominate candidates for Commissioner position appointments, and certify the winning candidates to the Commission pursuant to C.C. 3109 and the selection procedure, including all activities incidental thereto.

Section 3: Candidates

Candidates for selection shall not be members of the Elections and Appointments Board or polling staffs in the year or years in which their names appear on the ballot. Candidates for appointment selection shall not be members of the Election and Appointments Board in the year or years in which their names are under consideration for nomination.

Section 4: Election Schedule

- a. No election shall be scheduled if the number of candidates is less than the number of elected commissioners with expiring terms.
- b. If the number of candidates is equal to the number of elected Commission expiring terms, no election shall be held and the candidates shall be considered to be elected.

Section 5: Write-In Candidates

No write-in candidates shall be allowed.

Section 6: Balloting

- a. No elector shall cast more than one (1) ballot.
- b. Elections shall be by anonymous ballot and determined by the plurality of vote if three (3) or more candidates vie for a single position, otherwise a majority of votes cast shall elect.
- c. Any person eighteen (18) years of age or older who is a Commission Area resident or owner of a business or property in the Commission Area may be an elector. Electors need not be registered with the Franklin County Board of Elections. The initial election shall be conducted by a Task Force. Thereafter, each election shall be conducted by the Elections Board on a Tuesday in August prior to the annual October meeting or is otherwise hereafter determined by a majority vote of the Commission. Commissioners shall take office at the annual meeting.

Section 7: Election Rules

- a. The Elections and Appointments Board shall adopt Election Rules for governing the elections by majority vote of its members provided such rules shall conform to these Bylaws and Selection Procedure. The Election Board shall present the rules of election to the Commission for approval. Such rules shall not be changed during the ninety (90) days before an election nor thirty (30) days after an election.
- b. The adoption of amendment of such Rules shall be presented to the Commission at the beginning of a regular meeting. Should the commission not disapprove or table them prior to adjournment, such Rules take effect. The Commission may amend the Election Rules without action by the Elections Board in the same manner as an amendment of these Bylaws.

Article IX: Code of Conduct

Section 1: Professionalism

Area commissioners shall conduct themselves in a professional and civil manner. Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination, as defined in Columbus City Code 2331, in any form will not be tolerated

Section 2: Non-discrimination Policy

Area commissioners shall treat other area commissioners, developers, and members of the public with respect and consideration regardless of the other's opinion, income, homeowner status, renter status, political affiliation, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, familial status or military status.

Section 3: Conflict of Interest

Area commissioners, their family members, or business associates shall not benefit financially, or in any way as a result of their duties as an area commissioner or present the appearance of impropriety as a result of said duties. Area commissioners shall fully disclose to their area commission, at the earliest opportunity, information that may result in a perceived or actual conflict of interest. Area commissioners shall recuse themselves from all participation in any matters involving a conflict of interest on behalf of said commissioner.

Section 4: Conduct Form

All elected and appointed area commissioners shall complete the area commission appointment / code of conduct form and return the completed form to the Department of Neighborhoods. All forms shall be signed by the Commission chairperson and submitted to the Department of Neighborhoods annually.

Section 5: Code Compliance

- a. Failure to abide by the adopted bylaws may result in disqualification of an area commissioner. Disqualification of an area commissioner shall require a three quarter (3/4) majority vote of the area commission and the Secretary shall notify the Department of Neighborhoods.
- b. Failure of the Commission to abide by these adopted bylaws may result in the withholding of funding, the postponement of meetings and operations, or the exclusion of recommendations and actions to other bodies.

Article X: Amendment of Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Commission by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Commissioners provided the amendment was submitted in writing and read at the previous regular meeting. The Secretary shall notify the Department of Neighborhoods of any approved amendment immediately after its adoption for filing with the City Clerk for publication in the City Bulletin. Such amendment shall take affect ten (10) days after such publication per C.C. 121.05.