



# 2016 RCO Registration & Operations Workshop

## Table of Contents

- 1. Community Organizations and RCOs.....1**
  - What’s an RCO?
  - Why does Philadelphia have RCOs?
  - Application Requirements
  - Tips for Holding a Successful Meeting
- 2. Process Timeline.....4**
  - From Appeal Date to ZBA hearing or CDR Committee
- 3. RCO Procedures and Responsibilities .....5**
- 4. Templates for Zoning Applicants .....6**
  - Templates for Zoning Applicant**
  - 1. Notice from Zoning Applicant to RCOs and Neighboring Property Owners..... **7**  
(Coordinating RCO **has** scheduled a public community meeting)
  - 2. Notice from Zoning Applicant to RCOs and Neighboring Property Owners..... **8**  
(Coordinating RCO **has NOT yet** scheduled a public community meeting)
- 5. Meeting Summary Form Template .....9**
- 6. Contact Information.....10**
  - Philadelphia City Planning Commission
  - Zoning Board of Adjustment
  - Civic Design Review Committee
  - City Council District Offices
- 7. Online Resources.....11**
  - Planning & Zoning websites and Researching Property Ownership

## Additional Handouts:

- I Zoning and Use Variances, Step-by-Step: From Application to Approval**
- II Zoning Committee Policies and Procedures: Examples and Guidance**
- III “The Building Blocks of Philadelphia”**
- IV Philadelphia City Code (§ 14-303, Subsections (11A) and (12))**
- V Planning Commission Regulations (Section 12)**
- VI RCO Application Form, including RCO and Applicant Rights & Responsibilities**

# 1. Community Organizations and RCOs

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## What's an RCO?

Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods. Strong community groups help neighbors obtain and share information and support cooperative networks and efforts to improve the quality of life in these neighborhoods. Having an organized community group also allows a neighborhood to be represented more effectively with local government.

Community organizations can be involved with a great variety of issues such as social services, clean-up campaigns, and community gardens, to name a few. Community organizations that are concerned with the **physical development** of the community can become a “**Registered Community Organization**” (**RCO**) in order to receive early notification of zoning cases occurring within their stated boundaries.

## Why does Philadelphia have RCOs?

The RCO framework was written into the Zoning Code with the intention of providing a standard and predictable method for community input on development projects throughout the city. This framework establishes the criteria for becoming an RCO and delineates the relationships between RCOs, City Council, and the City Planning Commission. Most importantly, the Zoning Code outlines a specific set of responsibilities and procedures to which RCOs and applicants must adhere prior to hearings by the Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA) and Civic Design Review (CDR) Committee.

**Remember, ANYONE can testify at a Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) hearing about any particular development project. You don't have to participate in the RCO process to weigh in.**

## Application Requirements

With the exception of Ward Committees\*, Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NIDs)\*\*, and Special Services Districts (SSDs),\*\* RCOs must meet **all** of the following criteria:

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### **1. Has an adopted statement of purpose for the organization concerning land use, zoning, development, or preservation**

A “statement of purpose” could be the same as the organization’s mission statement. This statement should be available for the general membership to see, such as posted on a website.

### **2. Has a geographic area with no more than 20,000 parcels**

Planning Commission staff will assist organizations with this calculation. Organizations that identify geographic boundaries exceeding this size will be asked to reduce their stated boundaries.

### **3. Has governing rules that include a description of geographic boundaries, a description of its leadership selection process, and a definition of its membership that does not discriminate against any group protected under the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance**

Governing rules or bylaws describe the organization’s structure and procedures. Common issues included are the following: categories of membership and dues; leadership positions, terms, and how they are elected; responsibilities of committees; how meetings are conducted; and how governing rules are changed. The geographic boundaries of the organization’s concern are usually stated as street names and their intersections, but may also use other features such as railways or bodies of water. Boundaries *cannot* be based on street addresses, such as “both sides of X Street,” such that the drawn boundary would run mid-block.

### **4. Conducts open meetings on a regularly scheduled basis**

Well-organized community groups hold regularly scheduled meetings in order to maintain communication and increase awareness of issues in the community. A publicly-available schedule also increases membership attendance. Many organizations in Philadelphia meet once a month. The prospective RCO needs to provide either specific meeting dates, or a recurring predictor of regular meetings, such as “first Tuesday night of each month.” RCOs must meet a minimum of once per quarter and must be available to convene a timely meeting to review ZBA or CDR cases year-round.

### **5. Publicly announces its meetings through media such as flyers, newsletters, newspaper notice, or electronic/social media**

The organization needs to show evidence of notifying its membership and the public of upcoming meetings. A meeting calendar on the organization’s website is a useful way to keep membership updated of scheduled meetings. Other ways to distribute meeting notices include newspaper ads, email blasts, flyers and social media.

### **6. Has leadership chosen by the membership of the body at large.**

A description of how leadership is selected should be in the organization’s governing rules. RCOs will be asked to provide the positions of leadership, the names of the individuals who fill each position, and a description of how these positions are filled.

Once accepted, an organization’s RCO status will be valid for **2 years**.

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\* Ward Committees must be recognized by their party and have boundaries that match those of the entire Ward. No other supporting documentation is required

\*\* NIDs and SSDs must submit a copy of the City Council Ordinance that established their district as well as a description of their boundaries

## Tips for Holding a Successful Meeting

Operating successfully as Registered Community Organization requires the convening of well-organized, open, meaningful, and civil meetings. If participants do not feel that their time was well spent, they are unlikely to remain engaged and the organization may lose respect or standing within the broader community. **In general, good meetings have the following factors in common:** (from: *“How to Build An Effective Neighborhood Association”*, published by the Neighborhood Resource Center.)

- Advance preparation
- An agenda (appropriate for the desired outcome)
- A leader with a positive attitude
- An agreed upon starting and ending time
- All stakeholders present
- Adequate information
- Clear decisions made, with next steps identified.

The distribution of a sign-in sheet is good practice so attendees can share their contact information

### Sample Agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Introduction and Announcements
3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
4. Committee Reports
5. Guest Speaker Presentations
6. Unfinished Business
  - Unfinished business item 1
  - Unfinished business item 2
7. New Business
  - New business item 1
  - New business item 2
8. Adjourn



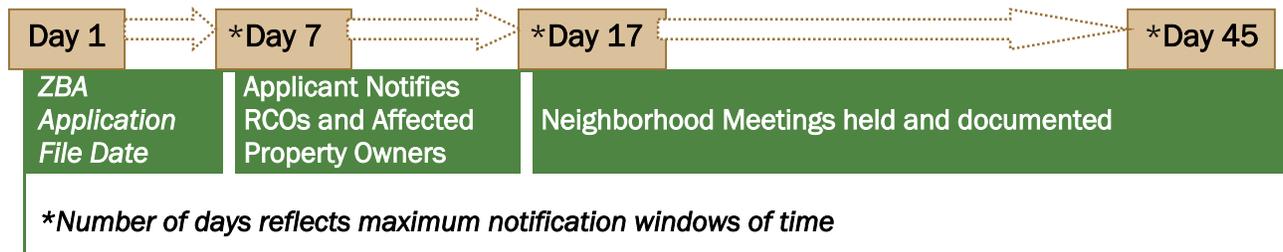
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### RCO Meetings

Committees play a critical role in organizations. Standing committees for RCOs often include a Zoning Committee, which is responsible for the review of development projects and zoning appeals. Many organizations seek local professionals with expertise in planning and economic development to serve on committees, which is why it's important for an organization to seek a diverse membership.

In cases where a project's location falls within more than one RCO's boundaries, the District Council office will select the RCO that will act as a **“Coordinating RCO”**. This RCO will be responsible for scheduling and convening the public meeting regarding the applicant's proposal in coordination with all other RCOs whose boundaries overlap the project location. The Coordinating RCO is also responsible for recording the findings of the meeting and distributing them.

## 2. Process Timeline



**Day 1:** The date that a zoning Applicant files an application to appear before the **Zoning Board of Adjustment - ZBA**. *[In the case of Civic Design Review, the date that L&I informs the applicant that CDR is required.]*

**Day 7:** Deadline for Planning Commission to provide notification information to the zoning applicant. This includes

- 1) Contact information for affected RCOs and for the district councilmember whose district includes the property;
- 2) A list of affected properties (within 200' of the property line and including all properties on the block on which the property is located and those included on the opposite block face);
- 3) Template forms to be used by the applicant to notify these properties; and
- 4) A copy of the refusal generated by L+I (when available)

**Day 17:** Deadline for Applicant to contact affected RCOs to schedule a meeting and to provide written notification to affected RCOs, affected surrounding property occupants, the District Council office, and, if applicable, the ZBA.

**Day 45:** Deadline for the public meeting to be held and documented.

The ZBA or CDR Committee will hear the case after

- They have received a meeting summary or letter of explanation from the Coordinating RCO, **OR**
- The applicant contacted the Coordinating RCO to schedule a public meeting within 10 days of receiving notice from the City Planning Commission AND if no meeting has been held, has documentation of having made a good faith effort to schedule a meeting with the Coordinating RCO AND 45 days have lapsed since the Applicant filed the appeal to the Zoning Board or was notified that the project requires Civic Design Review.

## 3. RCO Procedures and Responsibilities

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### Coordinating RCO Selection Procedure

- In cases where a given parcel is within the boundaries of only one RCO, that RCO will be assigned the responsibility of coordinating a public meeting.
- In cases where a given parcel is not within the boundaries of any RCOs, the relevant District Council office will coordinate a public meeting or select a nearby organization (RCO or otherwise) to do so.
- In cases where a given parcel is within the boundaries of multiple RCOs, the relevant District Council office will designate one or more as Coordinating RCO.

### Coordinating RCO Responsibilities

- The Coordinating RCO is responsible for either holding a public meeting or coordinating with other affected RCOs to convene the public meeting.
- The **Coordinating RCO is responsible for ensuring that ALL affected RCOs are consulted** during the scheduling of the public meeting
- The Coordinating RCO is responsible for ensuring that a written summary of the meeting is sent to the City Planning Commission ([RCO.Notification@phila.gov](mailto:RCO.Notification@phila.gov)), and the relevant District Council office (contact info provided on the notification letter to the applicant from the City Planning Commission), and the ZBA ([RCOZBA@phila.gov](mailto:RCOZBA@phila.gov)) and/or Civic Design Review Committee, as applicable.
- If no meeting was held, an explanation as to why not and written documentation of the efforts made to schedule the meeting must be provided.

### Non-Coordinating RCO Rights

- Affected RCOs who are not selected as Coordinating RCO are entitled to be informed of, attend, and participate in the public meeting convened by the Coordinating RCO.
- All RCOs, including those whose boundaries do not include the given parcel, are entitled to send a letter for consideration by the ZBA

### RCO Meeting Requirements

- The Coordinating RCO MUST offer the applicant a meeting date that is within 45 days of the application, regardless of the RCO's regular meeting schedule or other requests made of the applicant.
- RCOs cannot demand that applicant pay any fees or make any other contributions in order for a meeting to be held.
- Notice must be posted and delivered to affected addresses in advance of the public meeting. RCOs are asked to notify the ZBA if this requirement is not met by the applicant so that the case can be continued and another meeting held.

## 4. Templates for Zoning Applicants

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The following pages are suggested letter templates for Zoning Applicants.

The Planning Commission staff will provide zoning applicants with the contact information for all parties they must notify. This includes:

- Each applicable RCO including the RCO that acts as the “Coordinating RCO”, which is responsible for scheduling and hosting the public meeting
- Each property owner on the same block, across the street and within 200 ft of the subject property. (Notification must be via regular mail or hand delivery.)
- The District Councilmember
- The Zoning Board or Civic Design Review Committee, as applicable.

### Templates suggested for Zoning Applicant:

1-Notice from Zoning Applicant to RCOs and Neighboring Property Owners  
(Coordinating RCO Has scheduled the public community meeting)

2-Notice from Zoning Applicant to RCOs and Neighboring Property Owners  
(Coordinating RCO Has Not Yet scheduled the public community meeting)

**TEMPLATE 1 –Notice from Zoning Applicants to RCOs and Neighboring Property Owners**  
(Coordinating RCO **Has** Scheduled the Public Community Meeting)

*[Name of Applicant]*  
*[Address of Applicant]*  
*[City, State ZIP Code]*

*[Date]*

Re: *[Property Address]*

ZBA Appeal File Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
OR  
CDR Referral Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Registered Community Organization or Property Owner:

This is a notification of a **PUBLIC MEETING** to discuss the project described below. All Registered Community Organizations that have geographic boundaries containing the project property and all community members are welcome to attend.

**Property Description:**

*[Add a description of the property by general vicinity, street address, size, nearest cross street, and the zoning district in which the property is located.]*

**Project Description:**

*[Add a description of the nature, scope, and purpose of the application. If the hearing is a Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing, describe the type of special exceptions and variances being sought. Indicate where copies of the zoning application and any related information can be obtained.]*

**Summary of Refusal:** *[Summarize or Attach a copy of refusal]*

*[Insert Name of Coordinating RCO]* as Coordinating RCO has scheduled a **PUBLIC MEETING** in advance of a public hearing to discuss the project at the following date, time and location:

**Public Meeting Date & Time:** *[Date] [Time]*

**Location:** *[Address, City, State ZIP Code]*

Please review the zoning posters for the date of the **PUBLIC HEARING** to be held by the City of Philadelphia *[Zoning Board of Adjustment or Civic Design Review Committee]* **located at** 1515 Arch Street, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19102 on the issue.

For reference, contact information for all affected Registered Community Organizations and the District Councilperson is provided as follows:

*[District Council Office contact information]*

*[Each Registered Community Organization's contact information]*

*[The following sentence must be included and worded as follows.] If you have received this notice as the owner, managing agent, or other responsible person at a multi-unit building, you are requested to post this notice at a prominent place in a common area of your building.*

Sincerely,  
Name of Applicant

*[The law requires that the following receive copies of this notification]*

cc: *District Council Office contact*

*Planning Commission - rco.notification@phila.gov*

*Each affected RCO including the Coordinating RCO*

*ZBA- rcozba@phila.gov or Civic Design Review Committee- cdr@phila.gov [as applicable]*

**TEMPLATE 2 – Notice from Zoning Applicants to RCOs and Neighboring Property Owners**  
(Coordinating RCO **Has Not Yet** Scheduled the Public Community Meeting)

[Name of Applicant]  
[Address of Applicant]  
[City, State ZIP Code]

[Date]

Re: [Property Address]

|   |
|---|
| ZBA Appeal File Date: _____<br>OR<br>CDR Referral Date: _____ |
|---|

Dear Registered Community Organization or Property Owner:

This is a notification of an upcoming **PUBLIC MEETING** to discuss the project described below. All Registered Community Organizations that have geographic boundaries containing the project property and all community members are welcome to attend.

**Property Description:**

[Add a description of the property by general vicinity, street address, size, nearest cross street, and the zoning district in which the property is located.]

**Project Description:**

[Add a description of the nature, scope, and purpose of the application. If the hearing is a Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing, describe the type of special exceptions and variances being sought. Indicate where copies of the zoning application and any related information can be obtained.]

**Summary of Refusal:** [Summarize or Attach copy of refusal]

[The following sentence must be included and worded as follows.] A public meeting to discuss this proposal will be convened by [Insert Name of Coordinating RCO], but the date, time, and place of that public meeting has not yet been set. Please contact [Insert Name of Coordinating RCO] or your District Councilperson for more information about the public meeting.

Please review the zoning posters for the date of the **PUBLIC HEARING** to be held by the City of Philadelphia [Zoning Board of Adjustment or Civic Design Review Committee] **located at** 1515 Arch Street, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19102 on the issue

For reference, contact information for all affected Registered Community Organizations and the District Councilperson is provided as follows:

[District Council Office contact information]

[Each Registered Community Organization's contact information]

[The following sentence must be included and worded as follows.] If you have received this notice as the owner, managing agent, or other responsible person at a multi-unit building, you are requested to post this notice at a prominent place in a common area of your building.

Sincerely,  
Name of Applicant

[The law requires that the following receive copies of this notification]

cc: District Council Office contact

Planning Commission - rco.notification@phila.gov

Each affected RCO including the Coordinating RCO

ZBA- rcozba@phila.gov or Civic Design Review Committee- cdr@phila.gov [as applicable]

## 5. Meeting Summary Form Template

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*[Coordinating RCO Name]*  
*[Coordinating RCO Address]*  
*[Coordinating RCO City, State ZIP Code]*

*[Date]*

Dr. James Moylan  
Chair, Zoning Board of Adjustment  
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard – 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

**Re: RCO Meeting Summary Form**

*[Calendar No. of ZBA Case]*  
*[Zoning Application No.]*  
*[Project Address]*  
*[Hearing Date and Hearing Time]*

Dear Dr. Moylan:

Below is summary of a public community meeting held regarding the above-referenced zoning proposal.

**Final Position Taken by Coordinating RCO is one of:**

- Support
- Oppose
- Non-Opposition
- Did not reach agreement on the application

**Vote Count(s)** *[as applicable]*

|                       | RCO Board/Committee | Affected Addresses | All Meeting Attendees |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Support</i>        |                     |                    |                       |
| <i>Oppose</i>         |                     |                    |                       |
| <i>Non-Opposition</i> |                     |                    |                       |

**Date of Meeting:**

**Location of Meeting:**

**Participating RCOs:**

**Number of Attendees:**

**Letter with Explanation of/Rationale for Position Attached?** *[Y/N]*

Sincerely,  
*Coordinating RCO representative*

*[The law requires that the following receive copies of this summary]*

cc: *District Council Office contact*  
*Planning Commission - rco.notification@phila.gov*  
*Each affected RCO including the Coordinating RCO*

## 6. Contact Information

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### PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

1515 Arch St, 13th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
[RCO@phila.gov](mailto:RCO@phila.gov)  
Tel: 215-683-4612  
Fax: 215-683-4630

### ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Boards of Administration  
1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd – 11<sup>th</sup> Flr  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
[Tanya.sunkett@phila.gov](mailto:Tanya.sunkett@phila.gov)  
Hours: M-F 8:30am - 4:00pm  
Tel: 215-686-2573  
Fax: 215-686-2565

### CIVIC DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

1515 Arch St, 13th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
[CDR@phila.gov](mailto:CDR@phila.gov)  
Tel: 215-683-4615  
Fax: 215-683-4630

### CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT OFFICES

#### First District

Councilman Mark Squilla  
City Hall, Room 332  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3290  
(215)686-3458, (215)686-3459  
Fax: (215) 686-1931

#### Second District

Councilman Kenyatta Johnson  
City Hall, Room 580  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3290  
(215) 686-3412, (215) 686-3413  
Fax: (215) 686-1932

#### Third District

Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell  
City Hall, Room 408  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Phone: 215-686-3418/3419  
Fax: 215-686-1933

#### Fourth District

Councilman Curtis Jones Jr.  
City Hall, Room 404, Philadelphia, PA  
(215) 686-3416, (215) 686-3417  
Fax: (215) 686-1934

#### Fifth District

Council President Darrell L. Clarke  
City Hall, Room 313  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3290  
(215) 686-3442, (215) 686-3443  
Fax: (215) 686-1901

#### Sixth District

Councilman Bobby Henon  
City Hall, Room 484  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3290  
(215) 686-3444, (215) 686-3445  
Fax: (215) 686-1935

#### Seventh District

Councilwoman Maria D. Quiñones-Sánchez  
City Hall, Room 592  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3290  
(215) 686-3448, (215) 686-3449  
Fax: (215) 686-1936

#### Eighth District

Councilwoman Cindy Bass  
City Hall, Room 594  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3290  
(215) 686-3424, (215) 686-3425  
Fax: (215) 686-1937

#### Ninth District

Councilwoman Cherelle Parker  
City Hall, Room 577/584  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3290  
(215) 686-3454, (215) 686-3455  
Fax: (215) 686-1938

#### Tenth District

Councilman Brian J. O'Neill  
City Hall, Room 562  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 686-3422  
Fax:(215) 686-1939

## 7. Online Resources

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### *Planning Commission related:*

**Philadelphia City Planning Commission-** <http://www.phila.gov/cityplanning> . You will find many links there on different types of plans, project reviews, zoning resources, as well as downloadable reports, guides, and neighborhood plans.

**Click on top tab—“Project Reviews”** to find resources for “Zoning”, Civic Design Review”, “Regulations” and “Registered Community Organizations”.

**“Zoning” tab:** Zoning Administrative Manual (ZAM) is Step by step guide for all processes involving zoning. Zoning Code “Quick Reference Guide” provides illustrative examples for each zoning district, basic measurements and standards, and categories of allowed uses.

**“Registered Community Organizations (RCO)” link-** Find zoning links to zoning maps and RCO boundaries and contact persons.

**Click on top tab—“Plans”** to find links to District Plans, Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan, Central Delaware Master Plan, Lower Schuylkill Master Plan, Community Plans and more.

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**Philadelphia 2035-** <http://phila2035.org>

Website hosted by Planning Commission staff to find information about “Philadelphia2035: the Comprehensive Plan” and the status of the **18 District Plans** being done since 2012.



### **Citizens Planning Institute**

<http://citizensplanninginstitute.org/> The Citizens Planning Institute’s mission is to empower citizens to take a more effective and active role in shaping the future of their neighborhoods and of Philadelphia, through a greater understanding of city planning and the steps involved in development projects. Six-week course sessions are held twice a year and are filled through an application process

### **More Zoning:**

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**The Philadelphia CODE–** <http://www.amlegal.com/library/pa/Philadelphia.shtml>

The American Legal Publishing Corporation publishes the Official Philadelphia Code. This website provides access to **all titles** of the Philadelphia Code, including the Zoning Code, Title 14 of the Philadelphia Code.

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**Zoning Maps–** <http://www.phila.gov/map>. On the pop-up menu, you will have a list of maps at your disposal. Scroll down to "Zoning" for the zoning districts and overlays map, or to "RCO" for the RCO map. Take the website's tour to learn how to use the maps for many other types of information.

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**Zoning Archive-** <http://www.phila.gov/zoningarchive>

This service by the Department of Licenses & Inspections offers electronic scans of over 200,000 zoning applications, approved usages, and site drawings dating to the 1930's. Searchable by address.

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**Licenses and Inspections-** <http://www.phila.gov/LI>

"Zoning" tab includes a checklist of when zoning approval is needed. "Appeals" tab shows a calendar where you can click on the specific type of hearing you want more information about on that date—such as ZBA cases being heard. Also searchable by property address.

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**Other Philadelphia City sites:**

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**City of Philadelphia government home page**

<http://www.phila.gov>

City departments, City Council

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**Business Services Portal-** <http://business.phila.gov>

Provides all the information you need from the City to start or grow your business. Incorporates interactive features that allow business owners to apply for licenses, pay taxes, and conduct other business with the City.

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**Philadelphia police crime maps and statistics**

<http://www.phillypolice.com/about/crime-statistics/>

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**Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD)**

<http://www.phila.gov/ohcd/>

Housing initiatives, housing programs and residential developments

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**Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (PRA)**

<http://www.phila.gov/pr/>

Neighborhood stabilization, low-interest loans, properties for sale

Interactive Philadelphia Property Sales site- select city-owned property and apply to buy; find information on selected properties for competitive bidding by all city agencies

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**Other good sites:**

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**PlanPhilly**

<http://planphilly.com/>

News, issues and participation (WHYY/newsworks.org)

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**Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC)**

<http://www.pacdc.org/>

News, policy issues, list of member organizations

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**American Factfinder (census data)**

<http://factfinder.census.gov/>

Searchable data provided by the Bureau of the Census

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**TRF (The Reinvestment Fund) Policymap**

<http://www.policymap.com/>

Demographics, real estate data, city crime rates, health data

Data on schools, housing, employment, energy, and public investments

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**University of Pennsylvania Neighborhood Information System (NIS)**

<http://cml.upenn.edu/nis/>

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### Google Maps and Google Earth

<http://maps.google.com/> and <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>

Street maps, aerial photos, and street view with photos of properties

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### Community Health Database

<http://www.chdbdata.org>

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### Everyblock Philadelphia

<http://philly.everyblock.com>

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### Philadelphia historic photo archive

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive>

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## Researching Property Ownership:

1. Office of Property Assessment database: current assessments, address, name of last recorded owner and date of last recorded deed or transfer:  
<http://www.phila.gov/OPA/Pages/PropertyInformation.aspx>
2. If owner lives elsewhere, find the deed which may contain an address at the Department of Records.
3. For apartment buildings and commercial properties, speak directly to property manager or tenants.
4. Also try Water Department's stormwater billing program—most accurate addresses:  
[www.phila.gov/water/swmap/](http://www.phila.gov/water/swmap/)
5. If owned by the city (1 of 4 agencies), go to <http://secure.phila.gov/PAPLPublicWeb/> to find listing of parcels for sale.

## Finding ZBA Appeals:

1. [www.phila.gov/li/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.phila.gov/li/Pages/default.aspx)
2. "Zoning appeals" (bottom rt)- filter under "region" to show council districts or planning districts
3. Click on appeal# to find detailed info about case- (shows up by address and date of hearing)

OR

Go to: [www.phila.gov/map](http://www.phila.gov/map)

scroll down to "Violations" map

Scale of justice symbol on properties = "appeals"

**Handout I:**  
**Zoning and Use Variances, Step-by-Step: From  
Application to Approval**

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Slides from the workshop presentation



# DIMENSIONAL AND USE VARIANCES, STEP-BY-STEP

From Application to Approval

Updated 6/15/16

## Why seek a variance?

2

- **Dimensional (zoning):** Building design does not conform to dimensional standards
  - Open Space
  - Set-backs
  - Height or Floor-Area-Ratio
  - Lot Size

## Why seek a variance?

3

- **Use:** Proposed use is not permitted
  - Classes of use (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial)
  - Specific uses (e.g. multi-family housing, bars/restaurants, auto repair)
  - Parking (# of spaces, type, location, and access)
  - Fences (height and transparency)
  - Landscaping (trees, screening from parking)
  
- **Special Exception:** Proposed use requires review
  - Same process as a use variance, lower standard of review by ZBA

## Process: Initial Application

4

- 1) **Applicant submits application to L+I**
  - L+I may request additional information before making a decision
  
- 2) **L+I approves or issues a refusal or referral**
  - Refusals require variances; referrals require special exceptions
  - Applicant can request second review by L+I
  
- 3) **Applicant submits petition to appeal to ZBA**
  
- 4) **L+I sends appeal info to PCPC; PCPC contacts the office of the District Councilperson**

## Process: Notification

5

- 5) **PCPC sends information to applicant and Registered Community Organization (RCO)**
  - ▣ Must occur within 7 days of appeal
  - ▣ Identifies Coordinating RCO (selected by District Council) and other affected RCOs (if any)
  - ▣ Identifies affected properties that need to be notified
  - ▣ Outlines timeline for process
  
- 6) **Applicant contacts affected RCOs**

## Process: Notification

6

- 7) **Coordinating RCO sets meeting**
  - ▣ Date/time/location determined in consultation with other affected RCOs
  - ▣ Coordinating RCO must make meeting available within 45 days of appeal, **unless applicant fails to deliver notice within 10 days of PCPC notice.** In such cases, the meeting must be within 45 days of that notice being delivered.
  
- 8) **Applicant distributes written notice to affected addresses**
  - ▣ Applicant must complete within 10 days of PCPC notice, regardless of whether meeting date is set

## Process: RCO Meeting

7

### 9) **RCO meeting is held**

- ▣ *Applicant is required to attend one RCO meeting; additional meetings are purely voluntary by the applicant*
- ▣ Meeting cannot be held until after applicant delivers notice to affected addresses

### 10) **RCO sends meeting summary to ZBA**

- ▣ Must include summary of events of meeting and should indicate position of RCO (support, opposition, or non-opposition).
- ▣ Must include meeting summary form

## Process: ZBA Hearing

8

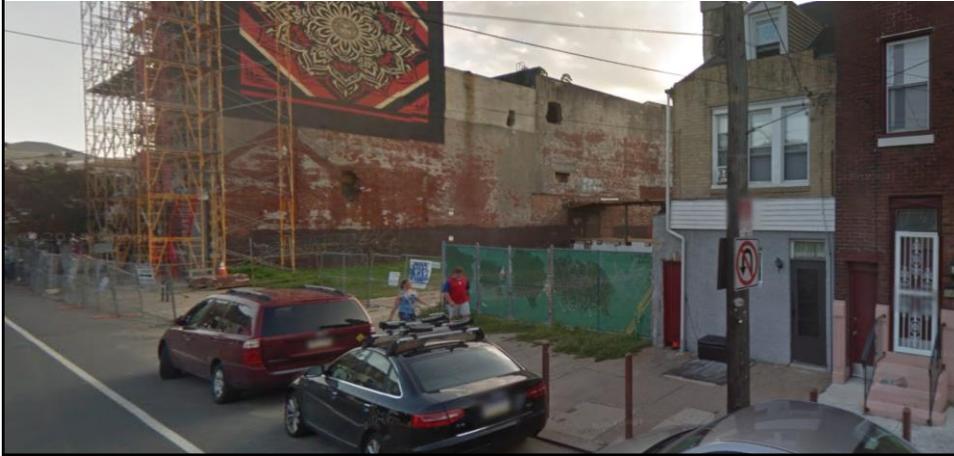
### 11) **ZBA Hearing**

- ▣ ZBA makes official ruling on whether to grant the variance or special exception
- ▣ If applicant does not meet previous requirements, ZBA may issue a continuance, hold its decision, or deny the appeal

## Example: 1224-40 Frankford Ave.

9

- ❑ **Use:** Vacant building and lots
- ❑ **Zoning:** ICMX and RM-1



## Example: 1224-40 Frankford Ave.

10

- ❑ **Proposal:** 125-room hotel with restaurant



# Example: 1224-40 Frankford Ave.

11

- ❑ **12/10/2014:** Zoning application submitted to L+I
- ❑ **2/11/2015 :** Revised zoning application submitted to L+I
- ❑ **2/19/2015 :** Refusal Issued by L+I

# Example: 1224-40 Frankford Ave.

12

|   |  |   |                            |                         |
|---|--|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>NOTICE OF REFUSAL</b>  |  | CITY OF PHILADELPHIA<br>DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES & INSPECTIONS<br>Municipal Services Building, Conference Room<br>140 John F. Kennedy Boulevard<br>Philadelphia, PA 19102 | DATE OF REFUSAL<br>2/19/15 | APPLICATION #<br>177459 |
| ADDRESS/LOCATION: <b>1224-40 FRANKFORD AVE</b>  |  |   |                            |                         |
| APPLICANT:<br>RONALD J. PATTERSON, ESQUIRE<br>FOR OWNERS  |  | ADDRESS:<br>1835 MARKET ST, SUITE 1400<br>PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103  |                            |                         |
| <p>RELOCATED FOR: RELOCATION OF LOT LINE TO CREATE ONE LOT FROM SEVEN (7) DEEDED / OWN LOTS. ERECTION OF AN ADDITION TO AN EXISTING ATTACHED STRUCTURE MAXIMUM HEIGHT 66 FT WITH CELLAR AND POOL &amp; POOL DECK ON ROOF DECK ABOVE THE EXISTING STRUCTURE. ROOF DECK SET BACK AT LEAST FIVE FEET FROM THE EXTREME FRONT BUILDING LINE. ACCESSORY STRUCTURE FOR HOTEL, BUSINESS &amp; PROFESSIONAL OFFICE AND RESTAURANT ON SECOND FLOOR. HOTEL LOBBY, BUSINESS &amp; PROFESSIONAL OFFICE, AND RESTAURANT ON THIRD FLOOR. BUSINESS &amp; PROFESSIONAL OFFICE ON SECOND FLOOR. HOTEL, VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS 120 ROOMS ON SECOND TO SIXTH FLOOR. BANQUET EVENTS ROOM ASSEMBLY &amp; ENTERTAINMENT ON FOURTH FLOOR. SIX DOWN RESTAURANT WITH OCCUPANCY ON OUTDOOR ROOF DECK ON FIFTH FLOOR. HOTEL POOL AND POOL DECK ON SIXTH FLOOR. SIZE AND LOCATION AS SHOWN ON THE APPLICATION.</p> |  |   |                            |                         |
| <p><b>PERMIT FOR THE ABOVE LOCATION CANNOT BE ISSUED BECAUSE IT IS NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING PROVISIONS OF THE PHILADELPHIA CODE. CODES CAN BE ACCESSED ON LINE AT: <a href="http://www.dli.a.gov">WWW.DLI.A.GOV</a></b></p>   |  |   |                            |                         |
| CODE SECTION  | THE PROPOSED USE IS REFUSED FOR THE FOLLOWING: THE PROPOSED USE, HOTEL, (VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS) IS PROHIBITED IN THIS ZONING DISTRICT |   |                            |                         |
| TABLE 14 - 602-3  |  |   |                            |                         |
| TABLE 14 - 701-2 & 14-701-4   | THE PROPOSED ZONING IS REFUSED FOR THE FOLLOWING:  | REQUIRED  | PROPOSED                   |                         |
| TABLE 14 - 701-2 & 14-701-4   | OPEN AREA (REQUIRED) (FOR RM-1 DISTRICT)   | 30%   | NONE                       |                         |
| TABLE 14 - 701-2 & 14-701-4   | REAR YARD MINIMUM DEPTH  | 5 FT  | NONE                       |                         |
| TABLE 14 - 701-2 & 14-701-4   | REAR YARD MINIMUM AREA   | 144 SQ FT   | NONE                       |                         |
| TABLE 14-802-3  | OFF STREET PARKING SPACES  | 42 SPACES   | NONE                       |                         |
| TABLE 14-802-4  | PARKING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  | 2 SPACE   | NONE                       |                         |
| TABLE 14-806-1  | OFF STREET LOADING SPACES  | 5 SPACES  | 2 SPACES                   |                         |
| TABLE 14-804-1  | BICYCLE PARKING SPACE  | 8 SPACES  | NONE                       |                         |
| TABLE 14 - 701-2 & 14-701-4   | MAXIMUM HEIGHT (RM-1 DISTRICT)   | ALLOWED<br>30 FT  | 66 FT                      |                         |
| TABLE 14 - 701-2 & 14-701-4   | MAXIMUM HEIGHT (CKM DISTRICT)  | 60 FT   | 71 FT                      |                         |
| TABLE 14 - 701-2 & 14-701-4   | FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)   | 500%  | 542%                       |                         |
| <p><b>REMARKS:</b><br/><b>FIVE (5) USE REFUSALS</b><br/><b>SIX (6) ZONING REFUSALS</b><br/><b>FEE FOR FILING AN APPEAL - \$250.00</b></p>   |  |   |                            |                         |
| Cc: DMNR<br>RIVER DE PLATS LP<br>629 N 30TH ST<br>PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103  | <br>PHILADELPHIA<br>PLANS EXAMINATION ENGINEER      |   | 2/19/15                    | DATE                    |
| <p>PHONE NUMBER: 215-680-2951 email: Pauline.Moran@pldli.gov</p>  |  |   |                            |                         |
| <p>NOTICE TO APPLICANT:<br/>AN APPEAL FROM THIS DECISION MUST BE MADE TO THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT, MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 117 FLOOR, 1401 JFK BOULEVARD, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102, WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS OF DATE OF REFUSAL.</p>  |  |   |                            |                         |

## Example: 1224-40 Frankford Ave.

13

- ❑ **2/25/2015** : Petition to appeal submitted
- ❑ **11 variances sought:**
  - ❑ Open space (% of total)
  - ❑ Rear yard depth and area
  - ❑ Parking Spaces (total, disabled, loading, and bicycle)
  - ❑ Height
  - ❑ Floor-Area-Ratio

## Example: 1224-40 Frankford Ave.

14

- ❑ **3/3/2015** : PCPC notification sent
- ❑ **2/27/2015** : Public meeting held by RCO
  - ❑ Preceded PCPC notification due to outreach by applicant to RCO. Acceptable only because applicant met notification requirements in advance
- ❑ **3/28/2015** : Meeting summary sent to ZBA by RCO

## Example: 1 224-40 Frankford Ave.

15

Our mission is to serve our families and neighbors by promoting community activities, civic involvement, education, and safety by fostering the smart growth of our unique and diverse riverfront neighborhood.



Our mission is to serve our families and neighbors by promoting community activities, civic involvement, education, and safety by fostering the smart growth of our unique and diverse riverfront neighborhood.



March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Honorable Julia Chapman  
Chair, Zoning Board of Adjustment  
Municipal Services Building, Room 1130  
1401 JFK Blvd  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Calendar No. 24716 (1224 Frankford Ave)

Dear Chair Chapman and Board Members:

I am writing you on behalf of the Fishtown Neighbors Association supporting the project at the above address. On February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the FNA hosted a well-publicized meeting for the developer to introduce plans to the community proposing the creation of a hotel with 125 rooms, restaurant, jazz bar, banquet hall, and rooftop restaurant.

The local neighbors (within 500') voted 57' yes and 9' no, the community voted '82' yes and 7' no. The total vote was 139' yes to 16' no, supporting the project.

The project was described as a 125 room boutique hotel with a restaurant, jazz bar, banquet hall, and rooftop restaurant. The program also contains a shared office space, and rooftop pool club. The loading dock for the hotel will be located on Leopard St and will only be used for loading between 9am and 4pm (see proviso). The parking for the hotel will be done through a valet on Frankford Ave and the cars will be held at 1320-48 North Front St (see proviso). The trash area for the hotel will be enclosed in the loading area.

The existing building on the site will be preserved and expanded by one bay to the East designed to match the existing facade. The existing mural on the building will be preserved and visible inside of the new hotel structure.

The neighbors were receptive and supportive of:

- The reuse of a long vacant building
- There was praise for the included valet parking and remote parking lot.
- Businesses on Frankford Ave would be impacted for the positive with the influx of people to the building's functions.
- Proposed security cameras on the site.
- New streetscape lighting to the parking area
- The pool not being used for the hotel guests

The neighbors were concerned with and opposed to:

- The proposed remote parking lot is not believed to be sufficient to hold all of the cars that come to the hotel and the restaurants inside.
- The reduction of natural light and views on Leopard and Frankford Ave
- Increase in noise on the street from the hotel and the rooftop pool.

### Requested Provisos:

- 1) The lot at 1320-48 North Front is used for valet parking for this project and its variance is approved by the ZBA (Appeal number 24363)
- 2) Use of the loading dock on Leopard St restricted to 9am-4pm

On behalf of the neighbors of Fishtown, we would ask you to grant the requested variances. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Matt Karp, Chair, FNA Zoning Committee

Cc: Ronald Patterson, Applicant  
Roland Kassiss, Owner  
Jeffrey Young, Councilman Clarke's office  
Michaela Allwine, NKDCD

## Example: 1 224-40 Frankford Ave.

16

- **3/31/2015 : ZBA hearing; variances granted, with provisos**

|   |  |  |                         |
|---|--|--|-------------------------|
| <b>NOTICE OF:</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REFUSAL<br><input type="checkbox"/> REFERRAL | CITY OF PHILADELPHIA<br>DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES & INSPECTIONS<br>Municipal Services Building, Concourse Level<br>1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard<br>Philadelphia, PA 19102 | DATE OF REFUSAL<br>2/19/2015   | APPLICATION #<br>577490 |
|   |  | ZONING DISTRICT(S)<br>ICMX – INDUSTRIAL AND RM-1<br>RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT |                         |

ADDRESS/LOCATION **1224-40 FRANKFORD AVE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| APPLICANT:<br>RONALD J. PATTERSON, ESQUIRE<br>FOR OWNERS | ADDRESS:<br>1835 MARKET ST, SUITE 1400<br>PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103 |
|--|--|

APPLICATION FOR:  
 RELOCATION OF LOT LINE TO CREATE ONE LOT FROM SEVEN (7) DEEDED / OPA LOTS. ERECTION OF AN ADDITION TO AN EXISTING ATTACHED STRUCTURE MAXIMUM HEIGHT NE 71 FT WITH CELLAR AND POOL & POOL DECK AND ROOF DECK ABOVE THE EXISTING STRUCTURE (ROOF DECK SET BACK AT LEAST FIVE FT FROM THE EXTREME FRONT BUILDING LINE). USES- ACCESSORY STORAGE FOR HOTEL, BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL OFFICE AND SIT-DOWN RESTAURANT ON CELLAR; HOTEL LOBBY, BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL OFFICE AND SITE DOWN RESTAURANT ON FIRST FLOOR; BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL OFFICE ON SECOND FLOOR; HOTEL (VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS) 125 ROOMS ON SECOND TO SIXTH FLOOR; BANQUET / EVENTS ROOM (ASSEMBLY & ENTERTAINMENT) ON FOURTH FLOOR; SIT-DOWN RESTAURANT WITH OCCUPANCY ON OUTDOOR ROOF DECK ON FIFTH FLOOR; HOTEL POOL AND POOL DECK ON SIXTH FLOOR. SIZE AND LOCATION AS SHOWN ON THE APPLICATION.

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**REMARKS:**  
**FIVE (5) USE REFUSALS**  
**SIX (6) ZONING REFUSALS.**  
**FEE FOR FILLING AN APPEAL - \$250.00**

Cc:  
 OWNER,  
 RIVER CITY FLATS, LP  
 829 N 29<sup>TH</sup> ST  
 PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

  
 -----  
 PAULOSE ISSAC  
 PLANS EXAMINATION ENGINEER

2/19/15  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE

Phone number 215 686 2563. email: Paulose.Issac@phila.Gov

**NOTICE TO APPLICANT:**  
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Sincerely,

Matt Karp, Chair, FNA Zoning Committee

Cc: Ronald Patterson, Applicant  
Roland Kassis, Owner  
Jeffery Young, Councilman Clarke's office  
Michaela Allwine, NKCDC

## **Handout II: Zoning Committee Policies & Procedures: Examples & Guidance**

---

Comparison of a few RCOs and brief summary of procedures on page 1

Page 2 lists “things to consider when reviewing a Zoning Appeal Case (not comprehensive)



## Sample RCO Zoning committee policies and procedures- Comparison Summary

| Item of comparison  | East Passyunk Crossing Civic Assoc. & Town Watch (EPX)  | GENA- Girard Estates Neighbors Association (online)  | South Kensington Community Partners (online)   | South of South Neighborhood Assoc (SOSNA) (online)  |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Purpose / Mission:</b>   | Planning & Zoning committee mission statement; reviews all applications for variance, certificate, CDR, liquor transfer, etc.                       | Provide a public forum of discussion & review of all zoning variance applications; provide a means for direct neighborhood input | Zoning Committee purpose to facilitate a public forum for discussion and review of zoning variance requests through community vote for all applications...and convey the vote at ZBA hearings for variance requests. | “Zoning Committee Protocols” – provides a public forum for discussion and review of all zoning variances within the SOSNA area; residents can register their opinion on voting sheets forwarded to Councilperson’s office |
| <b>Committee member roles &amp; responsibilities:</b>   | Nominated and approved by the Board   | Members named; terms, nominated by general membership; approved by Committee   | <b>Neutrality</b> ; facilitation at zoning meetings; notifications; monitoring projects re: provisos; attend ZBA hearings; non-voting  | 9-member Committee appointed by SOSNA Board of Directors; Chair & Vice-Chair; term limits; Chair presides & writes opinion  |
| <b>Applicant submission requirements:</b>   | List of documents that must be submitted (no deadline)  | Submit 2 weeks prior; electronic, if hard copies- (9) copies   | Submit 1 week prior to DRC meeting; prefer electronic  | List of required documents must be submitted min. 10 days prior to mtg; (6) copies  |
| <b>Decision-making process:</b>   | Discussion with opinions of community welcome; straw poll of support or opposition; Committee votes following the public meeting; reviewed by Board | Public comment, Committee deliberates in closed session and votes 4 Positions: Support, Non- Opposition, Deferral, Opposition    | Community ballots- 1 per project; 1 vote from DRC; Letter of support, Support with Provisos, Opposition, or Continuance  | Attendees (must be resident within area) indicate ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ on voting sheets; Zoning committee tries to reach consensus on (1) position: Support, Non-opposition, Deferral, Opposition, or No Opinion    |
| <b>Meeting Procedures:</b>  | Chair presides; applicant presents; Committee asks questions, then open to public comment- encourage near neighbors to comment                      | Chair presides; applicant presents; Committee asks questions, then open to public comment  | Outlined for each type of review process; “Proviso process”- conditions to statements of support;  | General “Guidelines”; Committee presides and moderates; Committee comments first; option for mediation in the case of “opposition”  |
| <b>Meeting Notification:</b> (first 3 reflect policies prior to March 2014 change in notification to “affected” properties) | 5 days prior to meeting, post flyers in prominent locations; email list, EPX operated internet sites  | GENA website, newsletter and South Philly Review; coordinate with other RCOs if property within shared boundaries                | Website, weekly e-newsletter, monthly e-newsletter; newspapers; flyers posted at project site & public locations;  | Monthly meetings on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays; projects to be reviewed posted on website “events calendar”   |

### Things to consider when reviewing a Zoning Appeal Case:

- ✓ Is the area zoned for the type of development proposed?
- ✓ Is the proposed business a use that is currently desired or needed in the neighborhood, or is there a sufficient presence of the proposed use already in place?
- ✓ Has the RCO reviewed and assessed the project's site plan, floor plan, permit, basic drawings, and exterior/interior photos?
  - ZBA requires a site plan and or floor plans that shows the exact nature and extent of the variance(s) an applicant seeks
  - Site plan must show front and rear elevation drawings and the relationship to adjacent properties
- ✓ Are there any special circumstances or conditions applying to the lot or structure in question that do not generally apply to other lots or structures in your neighborhood?
  - Additional to the special circumstances or conditions, where a Variance is necessary
  - E.g. Balcony, roof deck, signage
- ✓ Has the RCO physically or remotely (via internet) visited the site to review the project in context to the surrounding environment? (*highly encouraged by the Planning Commission*)
- ✓ Will the Variance be in harmony with any existing or proposed community, neighborhood, or District plans for the area?
- ✓ Will the Variance be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare?
  - Are there components of the project that promote public health, safety or welfare (such as street lighting)?
- ✓ Does the owner or applicant have a history of developing (such as commercial businesses, housing, etc.) in the neighborhood or elsewhere?
  - Consider examining the existing conditions of those developments
- ✓ Is the Variance for a development that has market-rate, subsidized, or tax abated components?
- ✓ Will the new development affect parking and traffic?
- ✓ Will the new development have an impact on the density of the area?
- ✓ What are the provisions for trash storage and removal? (Especially consider for commercial and large scale developments)
- ✓ Does the project include American Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible housing?
  - Consider this for your neighborhood if there is a need and if the project is requesting a Variance for Multi-Family use or Commercial Mixed use

## **Handout III: The Building Blocks of Philadelphia**

---

Excerpt from the ZAM- Zoning Administrative Manual (2012)

Shows the city agencies with decision-making and reviewing authority pertaining to zoning.

# THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PHILADELPHIA



## DECISION-MAKERS

### CITY COUNCIL

City Council is the legislative body for the City of Philadelphia. The powers of City Council related to the Zoning Code include:

- ZONING REMAPPINGS
- ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS
- MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS

### ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

The Zoning Board of Adjustment is an independent agency of L&I comprised of five members appointed by the Mayor. The Zoning Board of Adjustment hears and decides appeals in zoning matters, considers special ordinances, and grants variances. The board handles the following matters:

- APPEALS OF ZONING DECISIONS MADE BY L&I
- DIMENSIONAL & USE VARIANCES
- SPECIAL EXCEPTION APPROVALS

### DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES & INSPECTIONS

L&I is the front door to any development or construction project in the city. As the issuer of permits and licenses and the provider of inspections, L&I ensures public safety and growth within the City of Philadelphia. Here are some of the services provided by L&I:

- USE REGISTRATION PERMIT
- ZONING PERMIT
- CONDITIONAL ZONING PERMIT

### CITY PLANNING

The City Planning Commission is charged with guiding the orderly growth and development of the City of Philadelphia. This involves the Commission in City-wide and community planning as well as project-specific reviews and approvals, such as:

- SUBDIVISION APPROVAL
- FLOODPLAIN APPROVAL
- REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT ON LOTS LOCATED IN THE WISSAHICKON WATERSHED
- REVIEW OF WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITIES
- REVIEW OF PARKING GARAGES
- FACADE REVIEWS
- REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE PLANS



## REVIEWERS

### HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Protecting three centuries of history, the Historical Commission is the regulatory agency responsible for preserving historical structures throughout the City of Philadelphia. Here are the main reasons a project would require the Commission's approval:

- ALTERATIONS TO A REGISTERED HISTORIC PROPERTY
- UNDEVELOPED PROPERTIES IN HISTORIC DISTRICTS

### ART COMMISSION

The Art Commission is responsible for the design of public buildings, works of art acquired by the City, and structures or architectural fixtures that extend over the city's public rights-of-way. Here are some projects that would need the Art Commission approval:

- SIGNS IN CERTAIN AREAS OF CENTER CITY AND OTHER COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS
- PUBLIC ART

### STREETS DEPARTMENT

The Streets Department is responsible for over 2,575 miles of streets and roads in the City of Philadelphia. The Department handles everything from building and maintaining the streets to trash collection and snow removal. Here are the most common reasons to interact with the Streets Department:

- SUBDIVISION REVIEW
- PARKING FACILITIES
- REVIEW OF CURB CUTS

### WATER DEPARTMENT

Whether providing safe water for residents to drink or supplying water for industries to manufacture goods here in Philadelphia, the task of the Water Department is to protect the region's water resources. Here are some projects that would require the Department's permission.

- STORMWATER MANAGEMENT



**Handout IV:**  
**The Philadelphia City Code §14-303, Subsections**  
**(11A) and (12))**

---

The Zoning Code section on RCOs



 (11A) **Registered Community Organizations.** 103

An organization that seeks recognition as a Registered Community Organization ("RCO") for purposes of § [14-303\(12\)](#) ("Neighborhood Notice and Meetings") must first register with the Commission in accordance with the provisions of this § [14-303\(11A\)](#).

- (a) The Commission will only register an organization as an RCO if the organization:
  - (.1) Is a volunteer organization, a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation, an unincorporated association, a Pennsylvania municipal authority that either serves as a Neighborhood Improvement District Management Association or is itself a Special Services District, or a political committee that represents the members of a political party within a ward (such Pennsylvania municipal authorities and ward political committees are not required to satisfy any additional requirements set forth in subsections (.2) through (.7) of this subsection (a));
  - (.2) Has adopted a statement of purpose for the organization concerning land use, zoning, or similar subject;
  - (.3) Has a geographic area of concern that encompasses no more than twenty-thousand (20,000) parcels, except that parcels under the jurisdiction of DPR shall not be counted as parcels for the purposes of this subsection;
  - (.4) Has registered boundaries that are consistent with the geographic boundaries set forth in the organization's governing rules;
  - (.5) Conducts open meetings on a regularly scheduled basis;
  - (.6) Publicly announces its meetings through media such as flyers, newsletters, newspaper notice, or electronic or social media; and
  - (.7) Has a leadership chosen by the body at large.
- (b) An organization shall file a registration request with the Commission on a form provided by the Commission, which shall include the following:
  - (.1) The organization's official name and address;
  - (.2) The name of a contact person;
  - (.3) The name of a person designated to participate in the Civic Design Review process, if applicable;
  - (.4) The boundaries of the organization's geographic area of concern. The boundaries of a municipal authority that serves as a Neighborhood Improvement District Management Association shall be considered to be the boundaries of the Neighborhood Improvement District; the boundaries of a municipal authority that is itself a Special Services District shall be considered to be the boundaries of the Special Services District; and the boundaries of a ward political committee shall be considered to be the boundaries of the ward;

(.5) Whether the organization wishes to be notified of applications in its geographic area of concern electronically or by mail;

(.6) The address of the location at which the organization routinely conducts meetings, provided that if the organization does not have a location at which it routinely conducts meetings, the organization shall indicate that meetings are not held at a routine location within the boundaries of the organization's geographic area of concern; and

(.7) Such other information as may be required by the regulations of the Commission.

(c) After review of a registration request form, the Commission shall register an organization as an RCO if it finds that the organization meets the requirements of subsection (a). The Commission shall notify an organization whether its registration request has been granted. If the organization's request has been denied, the Commission must clearly state, in written form, the reason for such denial. The denial of an application shall not preclude an organization from reapplying during the next or any subsequent registration period.

(d) The registration of an organization as an RCO shall remain valid for two years. An RCO may re-register with the Commission for additional two year periods, on re-registration forms provided by the Commission.

(e) An RCO must promptly inform the Commission of any changes to the information provided on a registration or re-registration request form.

## (12) **Neighborhood Notice and Meetings.** 104

### (a) **Applicability.**

This subsection (12) applies to applications that:

(.1) Require Zoning Board approval of a special exception under § [14-303\(7\)](#) (Special Exception Approval);

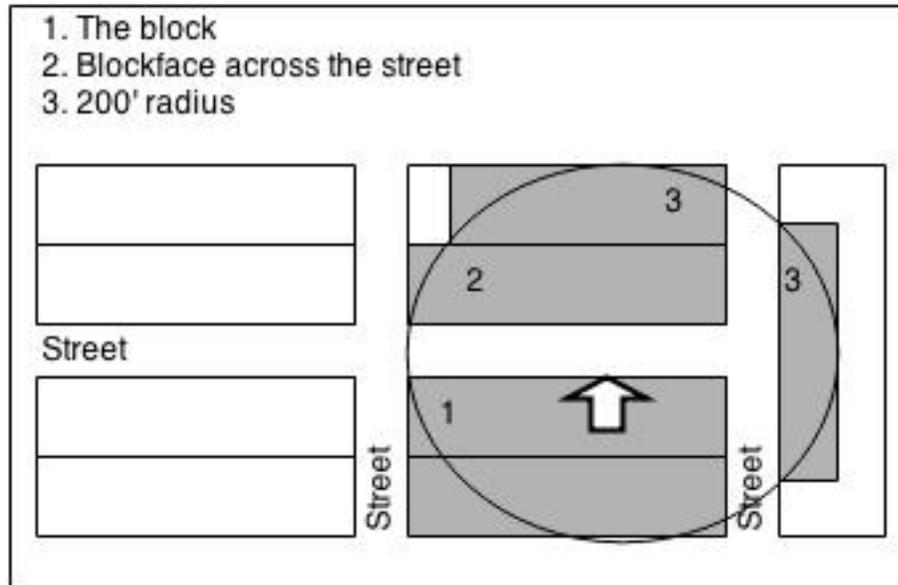
(.2) Require Zoning Board approval of a zoning variance under § [14-303\(8\)](#) (Zoning Variances); or

(.3) Meet the requirements for Civic Design Review in § [14-304\(5\)](#) (Civic Design Review).

### (b) **Required Notice from the Planning Commission to Applicants and Others.**

Within seven days after an appeal has been filed with the Zoning Board for approval of a special exception or variance, or after the notification by L&I to an applicant that an application will require review under the Civic Design Review Process, the Commission shall provide notice to the applicant, with a copy to each RCO whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property and to the district councilmember whose district includes the applicant's property, of:

- (.1) The requirements of this subsection (12);
- (.2) Contact information for each Registered Community Organization ("RCO") whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property, and the name of the RCO or RCOs that will serve as the "Coordinating RCO" for the application, selected as follows:
  - (.a) If there is only one RCO whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property, that RCO shall be the Coordinating RCO.
  - (.b) If there is more than one RCO whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property, the district councilmember whose district includes the applicant's property shall select one of those RCOs as the Coordinating RCO, or may select two or more RCOs whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property to serve jointly as the Coordinating RCO.
  - (.c) If there is no RCO whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property, then the district councilmember or an organization designated by that district councilmember shall serve as the Coordinating RCO.
  - (.d) The Commission shall promptly advise the district councilmember of the need to select a Coordinating RCO under subsection (.b) or (.c), and shall not send notice under this section until it has received the district councilmember's selection. However, if the time for providing notice is about to expire before the Commission receives such selection, the Commission shall select a Coordinating RCO from among the RCOs whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property (or, if subsection (.c) is at issue, shall select the district councilmember as the Coordinating RCO), and shall include in the notice the fact that the Coordinating RCO was designated by the Commission.
- (.3) Contact information for the district councilmember whose district includes the applicant's property; and
- (.4) A list of properties that the applicant will need to notify under subsection (d), as follows:
  - (.a) Every property on the same block as the applicant's property; every property on the blockface across the street from any frontage of the applicant's property; and every property any portion of which is within 200 ft. of the applicant's property.



(c) **Additional Electronic Notice from the Commission.**

(.1) The Commission shall provide an electronic copy of the notice it provides to applicants under subsection (b) to any organization that requests such notice and provides the Commission with an email address to which such notices can be sent.

(d) **Initial Notice from the Applicant to RCOs and Others.**

(.1) Within ten days after receiving the notice provided by the Commission under subsection (b), an applicant must provide written notice of its application to:

(.a) Each RCO whose boundaries include the applicant's property, as set forth in the notice provided by the Commission under subsection (b);

(.b) The district councilmember whose district includes the applicant's property;

(.c) The owner, managing agent or other responsible person at every property on the list provided to the applicant by the Commission under subsection (b). Notice under this subparagraph (.c) shall be sent by regular mail or hand delivery; if there is no evident owner, managing agent or other responsible person on the property, notice may be satisfied by placement at or in the front door;

(.d) The Commission; and

(.e) The Zoning Board or Civic Design Review Committee, as applicable.

(.2) The notice required by this subsection (d) shall contain the following:

- (.a) The name and address of the applicant;
- (.b) The name and contact information of all RCOs and the name of the Coordinating RCO, as listed in the notice provided by the Commission under subsection (b);
- (.c) The location where copies of the application and any related information submitted by the applicant can be obtained;
- (.d) A description of the property involved by general vicinity, street address, size, and nearest cross street, and the zoning district in which the property is located;
- (.e) A description of the nature, scope, and purpose of the application and the type of permit, approval, or variance being sought;
- (.f) The date, time and place of the public meeting to be convened by the Coordinating RCO to discuss the application, but if the Coordinating RCO has not yet set the date, time and place of such public meeting, then the applicant shall instead include the following statement in the notice: "A PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS THIS PROPOSAL WILL BE CONVENED BY THE COORDINATING RCO, BUT THE DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF THAT PUBLIC MEETING HAS NOT YET BEEN SET. PLEASE CONTACT THE COORDINATING RCO OR YOUR DISTRICT COUNCILPERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUBLIC MEETING.";
- (.g) The following statement: "IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS NOTICE AS THE OWNER, MANAGING AGENT, OR OTHER RESPONSIBLE PERSON AT A MULTI-UNIT BUILDING, YOU ARE REQUESTED TO POST THIS NOTICE AT A PROMINENT PLACE IN A COMMON AREA OF YOUR BUILDING."
- (.h) The name and contact information of the district councilperson; and
- (.i) Any additional information required by L&I, the Zoning Board, or the Commission for the proposed application.

(e) **Neighborhood Meeting and Documentation Requirements.**

- (.1) After receiving notice from the applicant under subsection (d), the Coordinating RCO, after consultation with the applicant and all other Registered Community Organizations whose registered geographical boundaries include the applicant's property, shall set the time, date and place of a public meeting to discuss the applicant's proposal, and shall notify the applicant and all other Registered Community Organizations whose registered geographical boundaries include the applicant's property of those details. The meeting shall be scheduled for a date that is within 45 days after the applicant filed the appeal to the Zoning Board for approval of a special exception or variance or within 45 days after the

applicant has been notified by L&I that an application will require review under the Civic Design Review Process, as applicable.

(.2) The Coordinating RCO shall convene the public meeting at the scheduled time, date and place. The applicant or a representative of the applicant must attend the meeting. In addition to that public meeting, the district councilmember whose district includes the subject property may convene additional meetings.

(.3) The Coordinating RCO must provide to the Zoning Board or Civic Design Review Committee, as applicable, to the Commission, and to the district councilmember whose district includes the subject property, written documentation of the public meeting; or, if no meeting was held within the required 45-day timeframe, written documentation of the efforts made to schedule the meeting with the applicant.

(.4) After the public meeting has been held, the Coordinating RCO shall prepare a meeting summary form, documenting any and all actions taken at the meeting. The Coordinating RCO shall provide a copy of the form to the Commission and to the district councilmember whose district includes the subject property. The Commission shall make the meeting summary form available to the public, upon request. The Commission shall notify an RCO if it fails to submit such documentation, and after an RCO fails to submit such documentation as required with respect to two public meetings, a third failure to submit such documentation shall result in the RCO losing RCO status for a period of one year.

(.5) Neither the Zoning Board nor the Civic Design Review Committee shall conduct any public meetings on an application until the earlier of: (i) the applicant and the Coordinating RCO have completed all actions required by this subsection (e); or (ii) 45 days have elapsed since the applicant filed the appeal to the Zoning Board or was notified by L&I that the application required review under the Civic Design Review Process, as applicable, except that if an applicant fails to provide the notice required by subsection (d), then such 45 day period shall be measured from the date the required notice is in fact provided.

(f) If an application requires both Civic Design Review and Zoning Board approval, the applicant is required to comply with the requirements of this subsection (12) only once. A second meeting is not required following Civic Design Review and before action by the Zoning Board.

(g) **Regulations.**

The Commission is authorized to promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this subsection (12).

**Handout V:**

## **Planning Commission Regulations (Section 12)**

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Section on Planning Commission regulations pertaining to RCOs



## Planning Commission Regulations (Section 12)

### 12. REGISTERED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS (RCOs)

#### 12.1 Registry

12.1.1 Pursuant to the Zoning Code, the Commission shall maintain a registry of community organizations. This duty shall be delegated to the Executive Director.

12.1.2 The Executive Director shall post the registry on the Commission's website, which shall indicate the geographic boundaries of all RCOs and provide contact information for each RCO.

#### 12.2 Qualifying Criteria

12.2.1 Registered Community Organizations (RCOs). Except for ward political committees or Pennsylvania municipal authorities that serve as either a neighborhood improvement district management association or special services district per § 14-303(11A)(a)(.1) of the Zoning Code, an RCO must meet the minimum criteria established by § 14-303(11A) of the Zoning Code. To qualify as an RCO, each organization shall have:

12.2.1.1 An adopted statement of purpose concerning land use, zoning, development, or preservation, as well as rules or bylaws governing organizational operations;

12.2.1.2 A geographic area of concern encompassing no more than 20,000 parcels, as defined by the Philadelphia Department of Records;

12.2.1.3 Boundaries delimiting this geographic area of concern that are consistent with the organization's governing rules or bylaws;

12.2.1.4 Organizational membership drawn from residents, property owners, business owners or operators, or tenants from the organization's geographic area of concern, as defined in its governing rules or bylaws and without discrimination against any class protected under the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance;

12.2.1.5 Leadership of the organization, or its committee that presides over public RCO meetings, chosen by the body at large comprised of the organization's membership, and chosen consistent with a leadership selection process included in the organization's governing rules or bylaws;

12.2.1.6 Meetings open to the general public and scheduled on a regular basis, but not less than once per calendar quarter. These meetings shall be announced publicly through media such as flyers, newsletters, newspaper notice, electronic or social media by the RCO.

12.2.2 Conflict of Interest. Any RCO submitting a project for zoning approval or employed in a professional capacity in reference to the project shall not serve as an applicable RCO for that project.

### **12.3 Registration**

12.3.1 Organizations shall apply for RCO registration with the Commission as specified in § 14-303(11A) of the Zoning Code.

12.3.2 New Registration Period. The Commission shall accept applications for new RCO registrations requests between June 1st and June 30th of each year. The Executive Director may, at his or her discretion, extend this registration period. The term of an RCO registration is two years.

12.3.3 Registration Renewal Period. The Commission shall accept applications for RCO registration renewal between June 1st and June 30th of each year. The Executive Director may, at his or her discretion, extend this registration period. If an RCO's registration status is due to expire during a given year and it does not submit a renewal application that is approved by the Commission, it will be removed from the registry at the close of that renewal period. An organization that allows its RCO status to lapse may reapply as a new organization during a subsequent registration period.

12.3.4 New registration and registration renewal submissions must include a completed application form. The application form will be provided by the Commission.

12.3.5 New registration and renewal applications for any organization that is not a ward political committee or Pennsylvania municipal authority that serves as either a neighborhood improvement district management association or special services district must also include the following and all supplemental information required in order to be considered complete:

12.3.5.1 The organization's official name and street address;

12.3.5.2 The name of the organization's primary contact person;

12.3.5.3 The organization's adopted statement of purpose;

12.3.5.4 The organization's governing rules or bylaws, including the organization's geographic boundaries and a description of its leadership selection process;

12.3.5.5 A description or illustration of the boundaries of the organization's geographic area of concern;

12.3.5.6 The organization's preferred means of notification via e-mail or regular mail, and the provision of an electronic or postal mail address at which the organization is to be contacted;

12.3.5.7 The location and a schedule of the organization's public meetings for its two-year term of registration. If the organization does not have a location at which it routinely conducts meetings, the organization shall indicate that meetings are not held at a routine location within the boundaries of the organization's geographic area of concern. All meetings must be announced publicly through media such as flyers, newsletters, newspaper notice, electronic or social media by the RCO;

12.3.5.8 An example of a notice used by the organization to publicly announce a meeting;

12.3.5.9 The Executive Director may request additional application materials deemed necessary to properly evaluate an RCO registration request.

12.3.6 As specified by § 14-303(11A)(c) of the Zoning Code, the Executive Director shall make eligibility determinations and notify an organization as to whether its registration request has been granted or denied. If denied, the reason(s) for this action shall be in writing.

12.3.6.1 If an organization's registration request has been denied, it may, within 10 days of written notice, request a review for appeal by the Chair of the Commission. The Chair may either affirm the decision of the Executive Director or refer the appeal for review by the full Commission.

12.3.6.2 If an appeal is so referred by the Chair, it will be scheduled for consideration at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission within 60 days of the original notice to the organization that its application has been denied.

12.3.7 Organizations whose registration requests have been denied may submit revised or amended applications for reevaluation at the discretion of the Executive Director.

12.3.8 An RCO may submit a written request to the Executive Director or to correct or update their registration information at any time.

12.3.9 The Commission may suspend or revoke an organization's RCO registration if it is found that information provided by an RCO during the registration process was deliberately falsified

## **12.4 Meetings with Registered Community Organizations Required by the Zoning Code**

12.4.1 Commission Notification to Zoning Permit Applicants. Within seven (7) days following an applicant's appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a variance or special exception or a finding by the Department of L&I or the Commission that Civic Design Review is required, the

Commission shall notify the applicant, and copy the District Councilmember and each applicable RCO, of the following:

12.4.1.1 The neighborhood notice and meeting requirements of § 14-303(12) of the Zoning Code;

12.4.1.2 Contact information for each RCO whose boundaries include the applicant's property, and the name of the "Coordinating RCO" (see 12.4.2 below concerning the selection of a Coordinating RCO);

12.4.1.3 Contact information for the District Councilmember whose district includes the applicant's property;

12.4.1.4 A list of all property addresses that the applicant must notify per § 14-303(12)(b)(4)(a) of the Zoning Code, namely: every property on the same block as the applicant's property; every property on the blockface across the street from any frontage of the applicant's property; and every property any portion of which is within 200 feet of the applicant's property.

12.4.2 Selection of a Coordinating RCO. If the applicant's property is located within the geographic boundaries of more than one RCO, the Executive Director shall request the District Councilmember to select a "Coordinating RCO" prior to Commission notification of the Zoning Permit Applicant as specified in 12.4.1 above.

12.4.2.1 If a Coordinating RCO is not selected by the District Councilmember within six (6) days of this request, the Executive Director shall select the Coordinating RCO.

12.4.2.2 If there is no RCO whose geographic boundaries include the applicant's property, then the District Councilmember, or an organization designated by the District Councilmember, shall serve as the Coordinating RCO.

12.4.2.3 Conflict of Interest. Any RCO submitting a project for zoning approval or employed in a professional capacity in reference to the project should not serve as a Coordinating RCO for that project.

12.4.2.4 In such case that an individual in a leadership position of an RCO has a financial interest in the outcome of an application being reviewed by that RCO, the Commission recommends that the RCO require the disclosure of this interest during the public meeting, and include this in the text of its letter to the ZBA or CDR Committee. The Commission also recommends that said individual be excluded from participation in the review of that application.

12.4.3 Zoning Permit Applicant Notification to RCOs and Others. Within ten (10) days following the Commission's notice to an applicant as detailed in 12.4.1 above, the applicant shall notify each applicable RCO the District Councilmember, the Executive Director, the Zoning Board of

Adjustment or Civic Design Review Committee (as applicable), and each property address provided by the Commission to the applicant as specified in 12.4.1.4 above. The content of this notice shall comply with § 14-303(12)(d)(.2) of the Zoning Code.

12.4.4 RCO Meeting Requirements. As required by §14-303(12)(e) of the Zoning Code, RCO meetings with applicants must be open to the general public. In consultation with the applicant and other RCOs whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property, the Coordinating RCO shall set the date, time, and place of the public meeting to review the applicant's proposal. The Coordinating RCO shall provide notification to community members, other RCOs whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property, and other stakeholders of the date, time, and place of this RCO meeting.

12.4.4.1 The RCO meeting shall be scheduled within 45 days following an applicant's appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment or the Department of L&I's finding that Civic Design Review is required.

12.4.4.1.1 This meeting shall only take place after the applicant has completed the notification requirements described in 12.4.3.

12.4.4.1.2 If the applicant has not completed the notification requirements described in 12.4.3. prior to the scheduled meeting date, the meeting will be postponed or reconvened at a later date within 45 days of the applicant having completed said notification requirements. In such case, the Coordinating RCO will not be found to be in violation of section 12.5.

12.4.4.1.3 Notwithstanding any failure by the applicant to provide required notification, the RCO meeting may take place after this 45-day period only if the applicant is provided the opportunity to meet within the 45-day period, but voluntarily agrees to a later date.

12.4.4.2 If no RCO meeting is held within the 45-day timeframe, the Coordinating RCO shall submit to the Zoning Board of Adjustment or Civic Design Review Committee (as applicable), the Commission, and the District Councilmember, written documentation of efforts made to schedule the required meeting with the applicant and an explanation as to why the RCO and the applicant did not convene the meeting.

12.4.5 Documentation Requirements Following the RCO Meeting. At least 2 days prior to the hearing by the Zoning Board of Adjustment or meeting of the Civic Design Review Committee, the Coordinating RCO shall complete the Meeting Summary Form, provided by the Commission, accompanied by a written statement documenting any and all actions taken at the meeting. Other participating RCOs may also submit a meeting summary form, written statement, or both a summary form and a written statement. The form and written statement shall be submitted to the applicant, the Commission, the Zoning Board of Adjustment or Civic Design Review Committee (as applicable), and the District Councilmember.

## **12.5. RCO Standards of Conduct.**

### 12.5.1. Requirements other than those Enumerated

12.5.1.1 RCOs and applicants shall fulfill the obligations enumerated in these regulations and the Zoning Code. The fulfillment of such obligations, shall not be made contingent on any requirements other than those enumerated in these regulations or the Zoning Code.

12.5.1.2 Any RCO that attempts to place upon applicants any requirements not enumerated in these regulations or the Zoning Code, including but not limited to the solicitation of payment or services, either financial or in-kind, from an applicant or other party, as condition of fulfilling its obligations outlined in these regulations and the Zoning Code may, at the discretion of the Executive Director and in consultation with the office of the Inspector General, have its RCO registration suspended or revoked. The authority of the Executive Director to suspend the registration of an RCO pursuant to this subsection is subject to the Philadelphia Code and any additional grant of authority created through an ordinance enacted by the Philadelphia City Council.

12.5.1.3 An RCO that conditions its support of a variance or special exception on the applicant's participation in an agreement designed to bestow a benefit to the geographic area that the RCO represents shall not be found to be in violation of 12.5.1.1, provided that the RCO's fulfillment of the obligations enumerated in these regulations and the Zoning Code are not made contingent on the applicant's participation in said agreement. Upon request of the Commission, the terms of any community benefits agreement shall be disclosed to the Office of the Inspector General.

### 12.5.2 Procedural Requirements

12.5.2.1 An RCO shall fulfill the procedural requirements of these regulations and the Zoning Code.

12.5.2.2 If an RCO acts in violation of the procedures in the Commission's regulations or the Zoning Code, it may be subject to penalty, including the suspension or revocation of the organization's RCO registration. These violations include, but are not limited to:

12.5.2.2.1 Non-responsiveness to applicants;

12.5.2.2.2 Failure to coordinate meetings with other RCOs whose registered boundaries include the applicant's property;

12.5.2.2.3 Failure to publicize meetings;

12.5.2.2.4 Failure to hold meetings within 45 days of an appeal, notwithstanding the conditions described in 12.4.4.1;

12.5.2.2.5 Failure to submit the Meeting Summary Form and a written statement in a timely manner to all required parties

12.5.2.3 Following any incident of an RCO's failure to follow the procedural requirements of this section, the Commission shall notify the RCO in writing of such failure. If an RCO fails to follow procedural requirements of this subsection three (3) or more times during its two-year registration period, that RCO may be subject to a one (1) year suspension of the RCO's registration. Any such suspension shall be at the discretion of the Executive Director. The authority of the Executive Director to suspend the registration of an RCO pursuant to this subsection is subject to the Philadelphia Code and any additional grant of authority created through an ordinance enacted by the Philadelphia City Council.

12.5.3 Non-Discrimination

12.5.3.1 RCOs shall perform the activities described in these regulations or the Zoning Code without discrimination against any applicant or other participant or participating member of the public because of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other class protected under the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance or federal Fair Housing Act.

12.5.3.2 Any RCO that discriminates against any applicant or other participant or participating member of the public because of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other class protected under the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance or federal Fair Housing Act in the performance of activities described in these regulations or the Zoning Code may, at the discretion of the Executive Director, have its RCO registration suspended or revoked. The authority of the Executive Director to suspend the registration of an RCO pursuant to this subsection is subject to the Philadelphia Code and any additional grant of authority created through an ordinance enacted by the Philadelphia City Council.

12.5.4 Appeals. Any decision made by the Executive Director to suspend or revoke an RCO's registration status may be appealed for review at a meeting of the Commission.

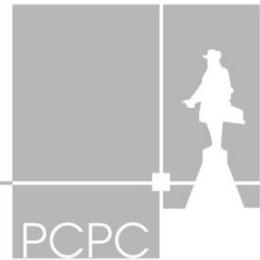


**Handout VI:  
RCO Application Form, including RCO and  
Applicant Rights and Responsibilities**

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2016 Form





## REGISTERED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION APPLICATION: 2016

**Directions:** All information requested on this form is required in order to process your application. If you are in need of assistance in completing the application please contact [RCO@phila.gov](mailto:RCO@phila.gov) or 215-683-4685 or visit <http://www.phila.gov/CityPlanning/projectreviews/Pages/RegisteredCommunityOrganizations.aspx>. Please be aware that all information submitted becomes public information. Please e-mail completed applications to [RCO@phila.gov](mailto:RCO@phila.gov) or mail to: RCO Coordinator, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19102

**ALL FIELDS BELOW ARE MANDATORY**

| General Information                                |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Application Type:</b>                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal <input type="checkbox"/> New Application  |
| <b>Application Date:</b>                           | <input type="text"/>   |
| <b>Organization Name:</b>                          | <input type="text"/>   |
| <b>Organization Address:</b>                       | <input type="text"/>   |
| <b>Meeting Location Address:</b>                   | <input type="text"/>   |
| <b>Organization Type (check one):</b>              | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Organization/Civic Assoc/PA Nonprofit/Unincorporated Association/Other<br><input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Improvement District (NID)/Special Services District (SSD)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ward Committee |
| <b>Preferred Method of Contact (check one):</b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Email*  |
| *E-mail will guarantee more expedient notification |  |

| Contact Persons         |                        |                          |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
|                         | Primary Contact Person | Alternate Contact Person |
| <b>Name:</b>            | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>     |
| <b>Mailing Address:</b> | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>     |
| <b>Email Address:</b>   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>     |
| <b>Phone:</b>           | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>     |



City Planning Commission regulations here can be found here:

<http://www.phila.gov/CITYPLANNING/PROJECTREVIEWS/Pages/RegisteredCommunityOrganizations.aspx>

**Qualifications: Fill Out One of the Following Subsections, as Applicable**

**Volunteer Organizations, Civic Associations, PA Nonprofits, Unincorporated Associations and Other Orgs**

Attach each of the following

- Statement of purpose (MUST concern land use, zoning, development, or preservation)
- Copy of the governing rules/bylaws (MUST include description of the geographic boundaries of the Organization AND a definition of the group's membership AND a description of the leadership selection process)
- Schedule of the organization's regular public meetings
- Copy of a recent announcement of a public meeting
- Names and positions of the organization's leadership

**Neighborhood Improvement District (NID)/Special Services District (SSD)**

Attach each of the following:

- Copy of the City Council Ordinance establishing the NID or SSD
- Description or map of the geographic boundaries of your NID or SSD

**Ward Committees**

Indicate your Ward Number (Must cover entire ward):

- Republican or  Democrat

I certify that I have read the City Planning Commission [regulations](#) regarding RCOs and that the statements and information in this application form are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I certify that the organization or its leadership will make a good faith effort to operate in accordance with procedures and best practices articulated in the "RCO Rights and Responsibilities," provided by the City Planning Commission

I certify that I have read the "Zoning Applicant Rights and Responsibilities," provided by the City Planning Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Registered Community Organizations (RCO) Rights and Responsibilities

### Rights

- *Every RCO has the right* to be notified by the applicant of any zoning variance or special exception or any project undergoing Civic Design Review (CDR) within its boundaries.
- *Every RCO has the right* to attend a public meeting for any zoning variance or special exception within its boundaries where the applicant or his/her representative presents the proposal and accepts questions and comments from the public. The same is true for any project undergoing Civic Design Review (CDR) within its boundaries.
- *Coordinating RCOs, in consultation with any other affected RCOs, have a right* to schedule the public meeting for any date within the allotted 45-days from the filing of the appeal or CDR determination. If the applicant does not contact the RCOs **and** distribute notice to required addresses within 10 days of notice by the City Planning Commission, that 45-day period begins from the date that such notice is provided.
- *RCOs have a right* to the assurance that the ZBA and CDR Committee will not issue a decision on a case until after **either** 1) an RCO meeting has been held **or** 2) the applicant has **both** made a good faith effort to meet with the RCO **and** the 45-day period has expired.
- Where there are multiple overlapping RCOs for a given project, *any affected RCO not-assigned the role of Coordinating RCO has a right* to be consulted on the scheduling of the public meeting **and** to participate in that meeting.
- *Any RCO or individual member of the public has a right* to send a letter or give testimony at a ZBA or CDR hearing, regardless of whether it is assigned the role of Coordinating RCO.



## Responsibilities

- *Coordinating RCOs have the responsibility* to make a good faith effort to work with the applicant to either hold a public meeting or work to ensure a public meeting is held within the required 45-day period.
- *Coordinating RCOs have the responsibility* to ensure that **all** affected RCOs are consulted during the scheduling of the public meeting.
- *Coordinating RCOs have the responsibility* to publicize meetings and ensure that members of the public are invited to attend and participate.
- *Coordinating RCOs have the responsibility* to make a good faith effort to ensure meetings are conducted respectfully and that all voices are heard, including both the applicant and members of the public.
- *Coordinating RCOs have the responsibility* for ensuring that a written summary of the meeting is sent to the City Planning Commission (RCO.Notification@phila.gov), the relevant City Council District office, and the ZBA (RCOZBA@phila.gov) and/or Civic Design Review Committee (CDR@phila.gov), as applicable.
- If no meeting is held, *Coordinating RCOs have the responsibility* to send an explanation as to why not, along with written documentation of the efforts made to schedule the meeting.
- *All RCOs have the responsibility* for fulfilling all RCO-related functions without engaging in discriminatory practices (as defined by the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations).
- *All RCOs have the responsibility* for fulfilling all RCO-related functions, regardless of an applicant's willingness to provide payments/donations to the RCO (monetary or in-kind), attend additional meetings, enter into a Community Benefits Agreement, or agree to any other request not-identified in the Zoning Code.
- *Coordinating RCOs have the responsibility* to impartially document what occurred during the public meeting, including whether a vote was taken and, if so, to state and describe the vote count and the organization's final position on the application.



## Zoning Applicant Rights and Responsibilities

### Rights

- *Every applicant for a zoning variance or special exception or with a project undergoing Civic Design Review (CDR) has the right* to present the details of the intended project/use at a neighborhood-based, open public meeting where an opportunity is afforded to respond to questions and comments from members of the public.
- *Every such applicant has the right* to have this open public meeting be scheduled and coordinated by the affected RCOs without demand for donations (whether monetary or in-kind) or any requirement that applicant locate an appropriate venue
- Provided that all notification requirements are met, *every such applicant has the right* to have this public meeting held within 45-days of the date of the application for zoning variance or special exception or the date of CDR determination.
- If no meeting is held within 45-days of the date of the application for zoning variance or special exception or the date of CDR determination, **and** provided that all notification requirements are met **and** the applicant can document having made a good faith effort to work with affected RCOs to schedule such a meeting, *every such applicant has the right* to a hearing by the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) or CDR Committee.
- *Every such applicant has the right* to decline invitations by RCOs to attend meetings either prior to or following the single required neighborhood-based, open public meeting
- *Every such applicant has the right* to receive a copy of the meeting summary document sent by the Coordinating RCO at least two days in advance of the hearing by the ZBA or CDR Committee.



## Responsibilities

- *Every applicant for a zoning variance or special exception or with a project undergoing Civic Design Review (CDR) has the responsibility to contact all affected RCOs and to notify all affected addresses within 10-days of notification by the Planning Commission.*
- *Every such applicant has a responsibility to make a good faith effort to set a date, time, and location of the public meeting **prior** to distributing notice to affected addresses.*
- *Every such applicant has a responsibility to distribute notice to affected addresses **prior** the date of the public meeting.*
- *Every such applicant has a responsibility to make reasonable accommodations to ensure meetings can be held within the required 45-day period.*
- *Every such applicant has a responsibility to attend the required public meeting, to present the proposed project/use fully, respond to questions and comments from organizers and other meeting attendees, and to behave respectfully.*