BY-LAWS

Rules of Policy and Procedure

Adopted December 6, 2017
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ARTICLE 1: AUTHORITY

These By-Laws: Rules of Policy and Procedure are adopted by the Shreveport Metropolitan Planning Commission of Caddo Parish, hereinafter called the “MPC,” to govern the performance of the “Planning Commission,” its duties and its ability to inform the public of the nature of the Planning Commission’s internal organization, operations and other related matters pursuant to Title 33:140.6 of the Revised Code of the State of Louisiana.

ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE

The general purpose of the Planning Commission shall be to guide and promote the efficient, coordinated development of the City of Shreveport and the surrounding area of Caddo Parish known as the “Planning Limits,” in a manner which will best promote the health, safety, and general welfare of its people; preserve and protect the Planning Limits and its natural resources; and address the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan.

ARTICLE 3: DEFINITIONS

MEMBER(S): The Members shall be the nine (9) voting Planning Commissioners appointed pursuant to Title 33:140.6 of the Revised Code of the State of Louisiana.

ARTICLE 4: DUTIES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

4.1 DUTIES. The Planning Commission shall perform the following duties:

(a) Draft, conduct hearings, and recommend a Unified Development Code (zoning and subdivision ordinances) and subsequent amendments thereto, to the Shreveport City Council and the Caddo Parish Commission.

(b) To make and recommend to the Shreveport City Council and to the Caddo Parish Commission a Master Plan, and any Master Plan updates, for the physical development of the Planning Limits, including any areas outside its boundaries which, in the Planning Commission’s judgment, bear relation to the planning of the MPC. (The Master Plan shall be made for the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the Planning Limits which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, or the general welfare, as well as, efficiency and economy in the process of development.) The Planning Commission may from time-to-time recommend amendments to extend or add to the plan.

(c) Review and recommend appropriate actions to the Shreveport City Council or the Caddo Parish Commission on zoning and planned unit development requests as required by the Unified Development Code.

(d) To approve the location and extent of both public and private improvements as described in Title 33:140.14 of the Revised Code of the State of Louisiana.

(e) Review and take appropriate actions on subdivision plat applications as required by the Unified Development Code prior to the recording of such plats with the Clerk of Court and Recorder.

(f) Prepare special studies and plans, as deemed necessary by the Planning Commission, for which appropriations of funds have been approved by the Planning Commission.

(g) Attend training sessions, conferences, or meetings as needed to properly fulfill the duties of a Member, and for which appropriations of funds have been approved by the annual budgeting process.
(h) Members of the Planning Commission may conduct such site visits as deemed necessary to evaluate any application and its supporting material.

(i) To appoint an Executive Director to manage the Metropolitan Planning Commission staff and to establish the qualifications and compensation for the Executive Director.

(j) To prepare an annual budget of its operating expenses, the total amount of which shall be within the total amounts appropriated by the Shreveport City Council, the Caddo Parish Commission, and other revenue sources.

(k) To contract with consultants for such services as the Planning Commission may require.

(l) To exercise any other authority granted to it by law.

ARTICLE 5: MEMBERSHIP OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

5.1 MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS. The Planning Commission, as created by L.A. R.S. § 33:140.6, will consist of nine members who will be residents and qualified voters of Caddo Parish and are appointed as follows:

(a) Four (4) members appointed by the City Council for the City of Shreveport;

(b) Four (4) members appointed by the Caddo Parish Commission, and;

(c) One (1) member appointed by the joint action of the Shreveport City Council and the Caddo Parish Commission.

5.2 TERMS. After the staggering of original terms, the term of each member will be six years. Any vacancy filled will be for the unexpired term by the appointive authority. All Members will serve without compensation.

5.3 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERS.

5.3.1 Training. Per L.A. R.S. § 33:103.1, all appointed Members shall receive at least four (4) hours of training in the duties, responsibilities, ethics, and substance of the positions held or to be held, either prior to taking office or no later than one (1) year after office is assumed. All training shall be approved by the Planning Commission.

5.3.2 Ethics. All employees of the MPC are required to take one hour of training per calendar year on the Code of Governmental Ethics pursuant to L.A. R.S. § 42:1170A. Each member is personally responsible for meeting this requirement.

5.3.3 Personal Financial Disclosure Form. Pursuant to L.A. R.S. § 42:1124.2.1, all Members are required by State law to submit a Tier 2.1 Form by May 15th annually. Each member is personally responsible for meeting this requirement.

ARTICLE 6: OFFICERS

Officers of the Planning Commission are appointed members and shall consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

6.1 DUTIES. The officers shall have the following duties:

6.1.1 Chair. As the presiding officer of the Planning Commission, the Chair will function with the following authority and/or limitations as set forth by these Rules of Policy and Procedure adopted by the Planning Commission:
(a) Preside at all meetings of the Planning Commission.

   i. The Chair may engage in discussion and will vote in the same manner as any other member of the Planning Commission.

   ii. The Chair may suggest motions, but can neither make nor second motions. The Chair will require a motion and a second to that motion before discussion can take place.

(b) Preside at Executive Committee meetings.

(c) May appoint members and chairs of standing committees, except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws, to serve the Planning Commission as deemed necessary. The Chair may not appoint more than four (4) Members to any one committee. All Members will be appointed to at least one committee and serve an annual term. No Member of any committee can be replaced from said committee until the Member’s annual term ends. The Chair, as deemed necessary, may replace a committee member who resigns from an appointed committee or has three (3) unexcused absences. The Chair may only discontinue any committee during the year if it is determined that the committee’s task is completed or the committee is otherwise determined by the Chair as no longer necessary. Recommended committees shall include, but not be limited, to the following:

   i. Budget Committee

   ii. Personnel Review Committee

   iii. Master Plan Committee

   iv. Rules and Procedures Committee

   v. Nominating Committee

(d) Establish any ad hoc committee(s) the Chair may deem necessary and appoint the members and chair(s).

(e) Call Special Meetings, workshops and public hearings as provided for in ARTICLE 10.0.

(f) Sign all resolutions, and other official documents of the Planning Commission, unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws or Policies of the Planning Commission, hereinafter referred to as the “Policies.”

(g) Will speak for and represent the Planning Commission’s views, as necessary, to the media and to the general public in order to express the position of the Planning Commission. The Chair is encouraged to confer with the Executive Director prior to making a release to the public. (See Article 8.1(q) for the Executive Director’s duties regarding the media.)

   NOTE: Members may represent their individual positions to the media and the general public, but will not speak for, nor represent, the Planning Commission’s views or the MPC’s organizational views (i.e., rules, policies, standards, procedures, personnel, etc.). Refer to the Social Media Policy in the Appendices for provisions pertaining to the Planning Commission.

(h) With the exception of public records requests, requests for extensive research will be directed to the Chair. The Chair shall place any requests for extensive research and/or information on the next MPC agenda and the Board will formally vote and advise the Executive Director on the discharge of such requests.
(i) See that all actions of the Planning Commission are taken in accordance with these By-Laws, Policies, Standards of Conduct, applicable law(s) and/or other Planning Commission policies. Perform such duties as are usually exercised by the Chair of a commission or board, and perform such other duties as may from time to time be assigned by the Planning Commission.

(j) The Chair will decide all points in procedure unless otherwise directed by a majority of the Planning Commission members in session.

(k) While the Planning Commission is officially convened, all communications, either written or spoken, will be directed through the Chair.

6.1.2 Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair shall, during the absence of the Chair or the Chair’s inability to act, have and exercise all of the duties and powers of the Chair, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Chair by the Planning Commission.

6.1.3 Secretary. The Secretary shall, during the absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chair or their inability to act, have and exercise all of the duties and powers of the Chair, and shall perform such other duties as may from time-to-time be assigned by the Chair.

6.2 SELECTION OF OFFICERS. The Planning Commission will elect its Chair from among its members at the last regularly scheduled meeting of the calendar year. The terms of all officers will be one year with eligibility for re-election. At this same meeting, the MPC will also elect one (1) member to serve as Vice-Chair and one (1) member to serve as Secretary.

6.2.1 Nominations. At the regular meeting in October, a Nominating Committee will be appointed and shall consist of four (4) Members appointed by the Chair, subject to approval by the Planning Commission. At this time the Chair shall (i) solicit information from each Member regarding such Member’s desire to hold elected office during the coming year, and the particular office or offices of interest to each Member (a “Statements of Interest”); and (ii) distribute a summary or copies of the “Statements of Interest” to the Planning Commission, showing those interested in holding office. Subsequently, at the regular meeting in November, the information obtained from the Statements of Interest shall constitute the initial list of nominees for each office. At the December meeting, the names of all such nominees shall be listed on the ballot for each office during the vote of the Election of Officers. The ballot shall also contain a blank space for any officer nominations from the floor. Upon receiving further nominations, if any, the Chair shall declare the nominations for each office closed. The Planning Commission shall cast electronic ballots for each office. The Chair shall announce the results for each office. Officers shall serve from January 1 through December 31 of the immediately succeeding year.

6.2.2 Majority Vote Needed. All officers will be elected by a majority vote of the membership present.

6.3 TENURE. All officers shall serve a term of one (1) year, or until their successors are selected and assume office. Officers may be re-elected, with no officer serving for more than two (2) consecutive terms in any office. Any Officer may be removed by a two-thirds majority of the total Members (i.e., by six [6] votes). Any Member who motions for an Officer to be removed must state the reason(s) for the removal. Removing an Officer from office will not affect his/her status as a Member.

6.4 VACANCY IN OFFICE. A vacant office shall be filled by the Planning Commission at its first regular meeting following the vacancy. The officer so elected shall serve the remainder of their predecessor’s term in office.

NOTE: Any Member filling a vacancy in office will not count towards the consecutive term limits as provided in Article 6.3 TENURE.
ARTICLE 7: COMMITTEES

The Chair of the Planning Commission shall appoint the following standing committees and such additional committees as he/she deems necessary. All Members of the Planning Commission will be appointed to at least one committee and serve the annual term:

7.1 STANDING COMMITTEES.

7.1.1 Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and the immediate past Chair, and shall have the duties designated by these By-Laws, and such other duties as are approved from time-to-time by a majority of the Members of the Planning Commission.

7.1.2 Budget Committee. The Budget Committee—shall be composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and the immediate past Chair, and shall have the duties designated by the By-Laws. This committee shall assist the Executive Director annually or as necessary to develop a budget to be approved by the full Planning Commission and subsequently submitted to the City's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) in August of each calendar year.

7.1.3 Personnel Review Committee. The Personnel Review Committee shall be comprised of the current Officers of the Planning Commission. The previous year's officers (provided they are still active Members of the Planning Commission) shall serve as alternates in the following order: (1) immediate past chair; (2) immediate past vice chair; (3) immediate past secretary. This committee is responsible for hearing employee appeals in which the Executive Director is the subject of the grievance.

7.1.4 Master Plan Committee. The Master Plan Committee shall be comprised of four (4) members of the Planning Commission (appointed by the Chair), two (2) members of the Shreveport City Council, and two (2) members of the Caddo Parish Commission and provides comments and recommendations on tasks and processes related to land use and urban design, long range plans, and updates and implements the Master Plan.

7.1.5 Rules and Procedures Committee. The Rules and Procedures Committee is comprised of four (4) members appointed by the Chair. Their duties include reviewing and making recommendations on the By-Laws: Rules of Policy and Procedure and on the MPC's Personnel Policies for the Planning Commission.

7.1.6 Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is comprised of four (4) members appointed by the Chair, subject to approval by the Planning Commission, and shall be formed annually to select nominees for the Election of Officers at the October meeting.

7.1.7 Ad Hoc Committees. The Chair may appoint ad hoc committees from time-to-time, as needed, which shall consist of at least four (4) Planning Commission members. All ad hoc committees shall have an expiration time identified by the Chair at the time of creation or shall dissolve upon expiration or termination of the Chair's term. Ad hoc committees are intended to facilitate the accomplishment of a specific task identified by the Chair at the time of the appointment.

ARTICLE 8: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Planning Commission shall select an Executive Director who shall serve as the Chief Administration Officer, or “CAO,” of the MPC. At the discretion of the Planning Commission, the Executive Director may be hired under an employment agreement, which shall be approved by the Planning Commission by a majority vote. The Executive Director will lead, supervise and manage the operation of the MPC on a daily basis.
8.1 **POWERS AND DUTIES.** The Executive Director shall have such powers and duties as may be delegated by the Planning Commission. These shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) The Executive Director, or designated representative, shall be present at all regularly scheduled meetings of the Planning Commission, and shall report to the Planning Commission current staff activities, budget impacts of any activities and anticipated involvement in future activities.

(b) Shall employ and compensate additional staff, as necessary, to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Planning Commission.

(c) Shall have general supervision of the operating staff of the Planning Commission and may employ or discharge any employee.

(d) Draft reports, coordinate meetings, and provide Planning Commission recommendations pertaining to a Zoning Ordinance and subsequent amendments thereto, to the Shreveport City Council and the Caddo Parish Commission.

(e) To keep a true and correct record of all proceedings held at meetings, both general and special, of the Planning Commission.

(f) To prepare, coordinate, maintain and update the Master Plan as recommended by the Planning Commission.

(g) To prepare all public notices and advertisements required by law and as requested by the Planning Commission to inform the general public of the activities of the Planning Commission.

(h) To review all development applications submitted for Planning Commission approval to determine completeness and compliance with adopted ordinance regulations.

(i) To act as technical advisor to the Planning Commission, and to make or have charge of any and all technical reports, maps, surveys and inspection reports. To actively work with all governmental agencies regarding the mission of the Planning Commission.

(j) Development of the annual budget in cooperation with the Budget Committee.

(k) To oversee the collection of revenues and expenditure of the appropriated funds in accordance with the approved budget and shall periodically provide reports on staff activities and the fiscal status of the Planning Commission.

(l) To execute and monitor all contracts with the Planning Commission to ensure proper implementation and completion.

(m) To inform the Planning Commission, with assistance of MPC legal counsel, of any officially filed or ongoing litigation against the MPC.

(n) To coordinate with MPC legal counsel to ensure Planning Commission compliance with Louisiana’s Administrative Procedure Act, Open Meetings Act, Public Information Act, employment law, contract law, ethics, and general government law.

(o) Delegate to any of his/her subordinates certain special duties and powers assigned to him/her.

(p) Perform additional duties from time-to-time as requested by the Planning Commission.
(q) Will speak for and represent the MPC’s views to the media and to the general public and otherwise express the position of the MPC as an organization. No release to the public media shall be made other than by the Executive Director or the Chair. The Executive Director is encouraged to confer with the Chair prior to making a release to the public. (See Article 6.1.1(g) for the Chair's duties regarding speaking with the media.)

8.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH CITY AND PARISH GOVERNMENT. The Executive Director and the Planning Commission staff shall communicate effectively to the Mayor and City Council of the City of Shreveport, and to the Caddo Parish Administrator and Commission the decisions and direction of the Planning Commission. The Executive Director shall be available, to both the City and Parish Governments, for information and advice on day-to-day developments and planning issues, when requested. However, any request for a study, research program or planning project made by the City or the Parish Governments shall be reviewed and adopted by the Executive Committee and incorporated into the work program prior to any staff work on the request.

8.3 HIRING AND TERMINATION. Hiring and termination of the Executive Director shall be in accordance with his/her approved employment agreement and shall be approved by a majority vote of the Members of the Planning Commission.

ARTICLE 9: MPC LEGAL COUNSEL

The Executive Director, at his/her discretion, may utilize MPC Legal Counsel to review and comment on operational policies and procedures, land use and development matters, ordinance revisions, personnel related issues, ethical violations and compliance with state and federal regulations.

9.1 ATTENDANCE OF MPC LEGAL COUNSEL. The MPC Legal Counsel will be required, on an as-needed basis, to attend a MPC or ZBA meeting. Requests for attendance can be initiated by the Chair of each respective board or by the Executive Director, with prior notification to the Executive Director or the Chair of the pertinent board, as applicable.

9.2 MEMBERS. If a Member wishes to contact or meet with the Legal Counsel on a specific matter of concern, that Member will be required to submit their request to the Chair for his/her consideration. It is the responsibility of the Chair to officially respond to the Member’s request within three (3) business days of initial contact. If the Chair deems that the request qualifies for legal review, he/she will notify, via email within three (3) business days, the MPC Legal Counsel of said approval along with a brief explanation of the scope of the matter of concern. The Chair will then inform the Member to schedule an appointment with the Legal Counsel.

9.3 INVOICE(S). With the Executive Director serving as the designated Financial Officer of the Planning Commission, the Chair will be required to inform the Executive Director of any Planning Commission consultations with MPC Legal Counsel for the purposes of invoice verification and to monitor budget expenditures. The Chair can reserve the right of confidentiality pertaining to the topic of concern when notifying the Executive Director of pending legal consultation with a Member.

ARTICLE 10: MEETINGS

All meetings and hearings will be open to the public and will be conducted in accordance with applicable rules of procedure adopted by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission shall keep minutes of its proceedings showing the vote of each Member upon each question, or, if absent or failing to vote, indicating that fact. Records of other official actions will be filed immediately in the office of the MPC and will be maintained as part of the public records.
10.1 SCHEDULE OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS. The agendas of all full Planning Commission meetings shall be publicly posted via the MPC website, and shall be physically posted where required, not less than twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting. Any officially appointed subcommittee meetings of the MPC shall also be subject to the twenty-four (24) hour notification procedures.

10.1.1 Regular Meetings. Regular Meetings of the Planning Commission, which are defined as regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission at which official business may be transacted, shall take place on the first Wednesday of each month and shall be held in the Shreveport Government Plaza Chambers at a time to be determined by the Planning Commission, and may meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month in regular session as needed, in the Shreveport Government Plaza Chambers or at another location as the MPC Chair may designate. If the regular meeting date shall fall on a legal holiday, then the regular meeting may be held on an alternate date as determined by the Executive Director.

10.1.2 Meeting Notices. The Executive Director of the MPC shall be responsible for providing public notice of all Planning Commission meetings according to Louisiana Open Meetings Law, found in L.A. R.S. § 42:11 – 42:28. Public notice for any meeting shall be given at least 24 hours' notice exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays, but the Chair may set the time period for notice up to at least seven days prior to the meeting. In case of an emergency, notice of such meeting shall be given to each Member as far in advance of the meeting as possible and by the most direct means of communication. In addition, public notice for an emergency meeting shall be posted not less than 24 hours before the meeting. Notice for any meeting shall state the date, time and place of the meeting, a brief description of the agenda for the meeting, and at a minimum, shall be posted on the MPC's web site, at its office in Government Plaza, and in accordance with the requirements of Louisiana law.

NOTE: ‘Emergency’ is defined as any occurrence or threat thereof, whether accidental or natural, caused by man, in war or in peace, which necessitates immediate action because it results or may result in substantial injury or harm to the population or the Planning Commission or substantial damage to or loss of property or public funds.

10.1.3 Special Meetings and Workshops. Special meetings and workshops shall be held at the call of the Chair or majority of the Members. Special meetings and workshops shall convene at a time designated by the Chair and shall be held in the MPC Conference Room or at another suitable location designated by the Chair.

NOTE: A ‘special meeting’ is defined as a meeting of the Planning Commission, including emergency meetings, held at a time other than the regularly scheduled meeting time. Official business may be transacted at a special meeting. A ‘workshop’ is defined as a meeting where Members are present to discuss a specific subject; however, no official action shall be taken at a workshop. A workshop may be convened with less than a quorum present.

10.1.4 Public Hearings. Public hearings shall be scheduled at a time designated by the Chair and due notice given in accordance with the Louisiana Revised Statutes. Public hearings conducted by the Planning Commission shall be run in an orderly and timely fashion. If the matters to be heard are not completed by 10:00 P.M., then the public hearing shall be continued until a date and time certain. Upon appropriate motion, the Planning Commission may, at its option, extend the public hearing beyond 10:00 P.M.. Public hearings shall be held in the Shreveport Government Plaza Chambers or at another suitable location designated by the Chair. A public hearing may be convened with less than a quorum present; however, no official action other than adjournment or continuation of the public hearing to another time may be taken unless a quorum is present.
10.1.5 Executive Session. Executive Sessions, when necessary, shall be conducted in accordance with La. R.S. § 42.16, et seq.

10.2 OPEN MEETINGS. All meetings of the Planning Commission shall be open to the public, unless closed pursuant to La. R.S. § 42.16 or 42:17, and held in a place available to the general public. All deliberations and decisions of the Planning Commission shall be made at a meeting open to the public. A person shall be permitted to address a hearing of the Planning Commission under the rules established by the Planning Commission, and to address the Planning Commission concerning non-agenda matters under the public comment portion of the agenda, as established by the Planning Commission to the extent that they are applicable. A person shall not be excluded from a meeting of the Planning Commission except for breach of the peace committed at the meeting.

10.3 PUBLIC RECORD. All meetings, minutes, records, documents, correspondence, and other materials of the Planning Commission shall be open to public inspection in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, except as may otherwise be provided by law.

10.4 MINUTES. A record, or minutes, of the proceedings of all meetings shall be kept by a recording secretary appointed by the Executive Director. The minutes shall contain a brief synopsis of the meeting, complete statement of the conditions or recommendations made on any action, and recording of attendance. All communications, actions, and resolutions shall be attached to the minutes. The official records shall be filed immediately in the office of the MPC, shall be signed by both the Chair and Secretary, and will be maintained as part of the public records.

10.5 QUORUM. In order for the Planning Commission to conduct business or take any official action, a quorum consisting of the majority of the voting members of the Planning Commission must be present. On all matters before the Commission, a majority of members present for the meeting must concur in order for a motion to pass.

10.5.1 No Quorum. When a quorum is not present, no official action shall be taken, except for closing of the meeting. The members of the Planning Commission may discuss matters of interest, but can take no action until the next regular or special meeting. All public hearings without a quorum shall be scheduled for the next regular or special meeting and no additional public notice is required provided the date, time, and place is announced at the meeting.

10.6 CONDUCT OF THE MEETING. Members of the Planning Commission shall take such time as to prepare themselves for hearings and meetings.

10.6.1 Chair Participation. The presiding Chair shall not be deprived of any rights and privileges by reason of being presiding Chair and may suggest motions, but can neither make nor second motions. The Chair will require a motion and a second to that motion before discussion can take place.

10.6.2 Form of Address. Each Member shall address only the presiding Chair for recognition, and shall confine their remarks to the question under debate.
10.6.3 Public Participation. Prior to official action being taken on any proposition coming before the Planning Commission (excluding official actions, such as approval of minutes, proclamations or other exemptions prescribed by law), any member of the public shall be afforded the opportunity to be heard by the Planning Commission at a regular, special or emergency meeting, public hearing, or in a public participation type workshop. Members of the public shall sign in to speak on agenda items, and for each agenda item, when recognized by the Chair, shall state their name, address, the person or entity on whose behalf they are appearing, and the subject of their testimony. In the case of new business or other matters requiring official action, not otherwise scheduled on the meeting agenda, the Chair shall invite public comment prior to the Planning Commission taking official action. Presentations by members of the public shall be limited to ten (10) minutes for the principal spokesperson and three (3) minutes for each additional speaker, unless otherwise authorized by the Chair.

10.6.4 Limitation of Testimony. The Chair may rule testimony out of order if it is redundant, irrelevant, indecorous or untimely.

10.6.5 Motions. The Chair shall restate motions before a vote is taken and shall state the maker of the motion and the name of the second.

10.6.6 Executive Director. The Executive Director shall be the primary spokesperson for the MPC staff during any meeting. All questions from the Chair, involving MPC Staff, shall be addressed to the Executive Director. The Executive Director may request a specific staff member make comments or respond to specific questions raised by the Members during the meeting. To ensure careful and accurate deliberations of cases, the Executive Director shall ensure to the best of their ability that all materials sent by an applicant, public agency, citizen, or any revisions to the Staff Reports shall be included in each Member’s packet prior to each meeting. Applicants, general public, and staff shall provide all necessary information at least two weeks prior to the meeting unless specifically approved by the Executive Director or the Chair.

10.6.7 New Information. Any new information that is to be provided to the Planning Commission for consideration on any item that is to be considered on the agenda shall be approved by the Executive Director or Chair in advance of the meeting. The Executive Director or the Chair shall present said new information to the entire Planning Commission.

10.6.8 Deliberation of Cases. Deliberation of cases are for conversations, discussion, or debate between Members only, with the exception of comments from the Executive Director, regarding Rules of Order or requests for clarifications as it relates to the accurate recording of the MPC Commission’s decisions or actions. When information from staff is desired, the request shall be directed through the Chair.

10.6.9 Objectivity. To the greatest extent possible, staff members shall remain completely objective regarding all pending applications while discharging their duties. While this shall not preclude them from rendering a qualified professional opinion, caution should be exercised to avoid even the appearance of advocacy whenever possible.

10.7 VOTING. All matters to be voted on by the Planning Commission shall be put in the form of a motion, duly seconded. The Chair shall conduct the voting by asking those in favor to signify by voting “Yes”, and those opposed to signify by voting “No”. The Chair shall inform the recording secretary of the number of “Yes” votes and the number of “No” votes. If there is any question about the results of the vote, or upon the request of any member of the Planning Commission, a roll call vote shall be taken. All Members shall vote on every motion placed on the floor unless there is a conflict of interest as established in ARTICLE 11.
10.7.1 **Conflict of Interest.** Any member of the Planning Commission having a conflict of interest regarding a proposal before the Planning Commission shall abstain from any discussion or voting on such proposal, and shall advise the Chair of such conflict prior to the meeting at which the proposal is scheduled to be heard. The MPC Member shall abstain from all discussion and voting on the proposal, and will not be considered present for purposes of establishing a quorum. Any member abstaining from a vote must publicly announce why he or she is abstaining.

10.7.2 **Abstentions.** Any Member’s voting to “Abstain” from a proposal shall be excluded from all discussion and voting on such proposal. Any Member abstaining from a vote must publicly announce why he or she is abstaining.

10.7.3 **Reconsideration.** A motion to reconsider an item on which a vote has been taken may be made only by a Member who voted with the prevailing side. The motion to reconsider must be made prior to the adjournment of the meeting at which the vote passed. To be in order, the motion to reconsider must be made under the consideration of old business. Adoption of a motion to reconsider requires the approval of at least a simple majority of the votes cast. If a motion to reconsider is adopted, the Members shall consider the need for additional notice to interested persons before a vote is taken on the item being reconsidered. In the event the vote subject to the motion for reconsideration was taken at a special meeting or a public hearing for which no subsequently scheduled meeting will provide an opportunity for reconsideration of the item, then the motion may be made at the next regular meeting in the manner provided.

10.8 **AGENDA.** A written agenda for all regular meetings shall be prepared by the Executive Director. The agenda categories for all regular meetings shall be:

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Opening Remarks By Chair
5. Approval of Minutes
6. Consent Agenda Items
7. Scheduled Public Hearings
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. Other Matters to be Reviewed by the Commission
11. Chair / Member’s Comments
12. Adjournment

**NOTE:** Any Member may request that an item be placed on the regular meeting’s agenda (on the day of said meeting) provided such a request is unanimously approved by all present members of the Planning Commission and must be made under the consideration of new business. The Chair shall also honor any request by a Member for an item to be placed on the next regular meeting agenda for discussion provided such request is made not less than four (4) weeks prior to the next regular meeting and provided that such a request is submitted to the Chair in a written format.

10.9 **RULES OF ORDER.** All meetings of the Planning Commission shall be conducted in accordance with generally accepted parliamentary procedure as governed by Robert’s Rules of Order.

10.10 **NOTICE OF DECISION.** A written notice containing the decision of the Planning Commission will be sent to petitioners and originators of a request, as well as posted on the MPC’s website.
ARTICLE 11: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

11.1 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT. Pursuant to La. R.S. § 42:1112, Members shall declare a conflict of interest when any one (1) or more of the following occur:

(1) When a Member participates in a transaction in which he / she has a personal substantial economic interest of which he / she may be reasonably expected to know involving the governmental entity.

(2) When a Member participates in a transaction involving the governmental entity in which, to his / her actual knowledge, any of the following persons has a substantial economic interest:
   (a) Any member of his / her immediate family.
   (b) Any person in which he / she has a substantial economic interest of which he / she may reasonably be expected to know.
   (c) Any person of which is an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee.
   (d) Any person with whom he / she is negotiating or has an arrangement concerning prospective employment.
   (e) Any person who is a party to an existing contract with such public servant, or with any legal entity in which the public servant exercises control or owns an interest in excess of twenty-five percent, or who owes anything of economic value to such public servant, or to any legal entity in which the public servant exercises control or owns an interest in excess of twenty-five percent, and who by reason thereof is in a position to affect directly the economic interests of such public servant.
   (f) When a Member participates or be interested in any transaction involving the agency when a violation of this Part would result.

11.2 REQUIREMENTS. When declaring a conflict of interest, the Member shall do ALL of the following:

(1) Advise the Chair of such conflict prior to the meeting at which the proposal is scheduled to be heard.
(2) Announce a conflict of interest and state its general nature.
(3) Recuse himself / herself from voting pursuant to this Section and shall be prohibited from participating in discussion and debate concerning the matter.

ARTICLE 12: ABSENCES, REMOVALS, AND RESIGNATIONS

12.1 ABSENCES. In order to be excused from a meeting, members of the Planning Commission shall notify the Chair when they intend to be absent from the meeting. Failure to make this notification at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting shall result in an unexcused absence. More than four (4) consecutive unexcused absences or absences at twenty-five (25%) percent of all meetings in any one (1) calendar year shall be considered nonperformance of duty and may be cause for removal from the Planning Commission.

12.2 REMOVAL. Members of the Planning Commission may be removed by the Shreveport City Council or the Caddo Parish Commission for cause, including nonperformance of duty, misconduct in office, or upon failure to declare a conflict of interest upon vote by the majority after written charges have been prepared and a hearing conducted by the appointing governing body pursuant to La. R.S. § 33:140.6.

12.3 RESIGNATION. A member may resign from the MPC Planning Commission by sending a letter of resignation to the Shreveport City Council or the Caddo Parish Commission and the Planning Commission Chair.
ARTICLE 13: AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended, repealed or suspended by the affirmative vote of not less than a majority of the entire membership of the Planning Committee (not less than five [5] votes except where such amendment would be contrary to requirements or limitations set by Louisiana State Law). Any amendment(s) shall be proposed at a regular meeting and voted upon at the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission.

13.1 REPEALING CLAUSE. All previously adopted By-Laws, Rules of Procedure and By-Laws, Rules of Policy and Procedure and any other governing documents of the Shreveport Metropolitan Planning Commission of Caddo Parish, whether original or amended, are hereby amended and supplemented as provided herein. To the extent that any such document is inconsistent from this document, the present document shall control.
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

THE SHREVEPORT-CADDIO METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION RECOGNIZING THAT PERSONS HOLDING A POSITION OF PUBLIC TRUST ARE UNDER CONSTANT OBSERVATION, AND RECOGNIZING THAT MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY AND DIGNITY OF THE PUBLIC OFFICE IS ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING HIGH LEVELS OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN OUR INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT AND IN THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION, EVERY MEMBER PLEDGES TO ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS OF CONDUCT. ALL QUESTIONS OF CONDUCT RELATING TO LOUISIANA'S CODE OF GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS, SHALL BE GOVERNED BY TITLE 42, CHAPTER 15, LOUISIANA REVISED STATUTES.

MPC Member's shall:

1. Prepare for and regularly attend all meetings of the Planning Commission relevant to the office.
2. Maintain the integrity and dignity of their office by extending courtesy and consideration toward colleagues, citizens and staff during all discussions and deliberations, and by avoiding any appearance of impropriety.
3. Allow citizens, colleagues and staff sufficient opportunity to present their views within the prescribed rules for conduct of meetings of the Planning Commission.
4. Refrain from abusive comments or intimidating language directed at colleagues, citizens or staff, including gestures, body language or distracting activity that conveys a message of disrespect and/or lack of interest.
5. Publicly acknowledge the adopted position when asked about a decision of the Planning Commission.
6. Not engage in harassing behavior or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature towards other Members, employees, clients or citizens.
7. Not convey the impression they may be in a position to influence the outcome of a decision of the Planning Commission, nor attempt to use their office to influence or sway the professional staff recommendation.
8. Discharge their duties and responsibilities without favor or prejudice toward any person or group, and shall not allow personal or business relationships to impact upon their conduct or decisions in connection with Planning Commission business, nor lend their influence towards the advancement of personal interests or towards the advancement of the interests of family, friends or business associates. (This provision is not intended to prevent any Member from joining or having an affiliation with any business, professional, or special interest organization.)
9. Avoid any appearance of impropriety and refrain from engaging in private discussions with the applicant or their representatives or any member of the public or other interested party about specific upcoming Planning Commission agenda items. If a MPC Member receives a private written, facsimile or electronic communication about an agenda item, the Member shall promptly forward the information to the Chair and Executive Director so it may be shared with all Members.
10. Not accept or solicit a gift, loan, payment, favor, service, promise of employment or business contract, meal, transportation or anything of value in violation of Title 42, Louisiana Revised Statutes, or any other thing or consideration given with the understanding or possibility that it may influence the official action of the Member during Planning Commission proceedings. Members shall timely report all gifts required by Title 42, Louisiana Revised Statutes.
11. Not solicit funds from any other Member or the Planning Commission staff in support of any person's campaign for election to local, state or federal public office.
12. Refrain from participating in any proceeding in which their impartiality may reasonably be questioned. Members shall seek advice and counsel from the MPC attorney whenever a conflict of interest shall arise from a personal, employment or business relationship with a person or entity affected by any business item coming before the Planning Commission for review or recommendation. Louisiana’s Code of Governmental Ethics and Title 42, Louisiana Revised Statutes, shall govern conflict of interest determinations.
13. Place all cell phones & pagers to vibrate before any meeting begins and try to only use them on a limited basis. In the event it becomes necessary for a Member to use his/her cell phone or engage in text messaging during a public meeting or an executive session, the Member is encouraged to excuse himself/herself from the meeting and return only when the call or messaging has been completed.
DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The Digital and Social Media Policy guidelines apply to all Members who create or contribute to websites, blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of social media including MPC-hosted social media or in any non-MPC-sponsored social media site in which the Member’s affiliation is known, identified or presumed, and any said site is being represented as MPC sponsored.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to restrict a Member’s rights under any federal, state or local law.

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Members may wish to participate in social media communities. The purpose of this Policy is to provide Members with basic requirements for participation in online digital and social media sites. Social media is defined as:

A freely accessible online tool used to produce, post and interact using text, images, video and/or audio to communicate, share, collaborate or network with others. Social media includes, but is not limited to, personal websites, blogs, wikis, online forums, message boards, email groups, social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.) and any other similar online tools. The absence or lack of explicit reference to specific social media does not limit the extent of the application of this Policy.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Members are expected to follow these provisions when using social media as a Member of the Planning Commission:

1. Only the Executive Director may authorize the use of social media for the Planning Commission purposes, including the choice of media, content, and duration of use, unless authorized by resolution by a majority vote of the Planning Commission.
2. Members are expected to use common sense, caution and good judgment when participating in social media.
3. Members shall not use blogs or social networking sites to harass, threaten, discriminate or disparage against other Members of the Planning Commission or anyone associated with and employed by the MPC, applicants, clients, elected officials and/or Boards.
4. If a Member identifies himself or herself as a Member of the Planning Commission on a personal social media site, the Member must include a disclaimer stating that the content they are providing does not express the views of the Planning Commission and the Member is expressing only their own personal views.
5. Members are not authorized to speak on behalf of the Planning Commission in response to requests for sharing another Member’s personal information on networking and blogging sites unless approved by the other Member in question.
6. Members cannot post on personal blogs or other sites the name, trademark or logo of the MPC unless authorized to do so by the Executive Director. Members cannot post MPC-privileged information, including copyrighted information or MPC-issued documents, to personal social media sites.
7. Members cannot post on MPC-hosted digital and social media sites any advertisements or photographs of their company products, nor sell any type of company, products and/or services.
8. If contacted by the media or press about their post that relates to the Planning Commission, Members are required to immediately direct such inquiries to the Executive Director or Chair. (See Article 8.1(q) for the Executive Director’s duties and Article 6.1.1(g) for the Chair’s duties regarding the media as outlined in the By-Laws: Rules of Policy and Procedure)

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Overall management of this Policy is delegated to the Executive Director.
2. This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Rules and Procedures Committee and will be amended or updated to ensure that it is current and relevant.