

**Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission**  
**Operating Guidelines**  
**October 16, 2012**

**Purpose/Mission**

The purpose of the Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission is *to encourage the preservation and care of trees on public property in the City of Columbia consistent with the economic and healthful enjoyment of property. The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:*

1. *To review and recommend policies and ordinances affecting the planting, removal and preservation of trees on public and private property.*
2. *To provide advice on the allocation of resources and policies for the planting, care and removal of trees in the City of Columbia.*
3. *To serve as an advisory body to the City Forestry and Beautification Superintendent in the administration of this article.*
4. *To review and make recommendations related to the City Forestry and Beautification Division's annual work plan and any comprehensive urban forestry or reforestation plans.*
5. *To provide public education and advocacy on tree value, preservation and care.*
6. *To make recommendations to Council on disbursements of the Columbia Landscape and Tree Fund.*
7. *To oversee the development and implementation of a master plan for the beautification of the City of Columbia.*
8. *To advise the City and its boards and commissions regarding landscaping, tree planting, protection and removal.*

**Membership**

*The Commission shall consist of eleven voting members (a majority of which shall be residents of the city), all to be appointed by City Council as follows:*

1. *One member shall be an arborist, horticulturalist, or landscape architect;*
2. *One member shall be a developer or realtor;*
3. *One member shall be an architect or engineer;*
4. *One member shall be a member of Columbia Green (designated by that organization); and*
5. *Seven members shall be appointed at large.*

Efforts will be taken to ensure representation from all City Council districts.

*Advisory members shall include the Forestry and Beautification Superintendent for the City and the City Planning Director and/or his/her designee.*

**Terms**

*Appointments shall be for a term of three years. Individuals shall not be appointed for more than two consecutive terms, excepting the possibility that Columbia Green may designate a member whose second term is expiring.*

**Removal**

*City Council may remove or replace a member of the Commission for nonperformance of duty. If a Commission member misses three consecutive meetings (unless there are medical or other extenuating circumstances approved by the Vice-Chairman), the Commission shall make a recommendation to City Council that the Commission member be removed for nonperformance of duty. It is the member's responsibility to advise the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of his/her excused absence.*

**Vacancies**

Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled, as soon as practical after the vacancy has occurred.

**Appointment of New Members**

The Commission shall solicit applications as vacancies occur. Interested individuals shall submit the required application to City of Columbia staff. The Commission shall review all applications received and may conduct interviews with candidates. District of residence will be considered in reviewing applicants. Commission members shall vote by ranking the applicants. The applicants with the highest cumulative rankings shall be recommended to City Council. In the event that there are fewer suitable applicants than vacancies, the Commission may reopen the nominating period and accept applicants until all vacancies are filled. In the event of a tie vote, the Chair will open the issue for further discussion and conduct another round of voting. If a tie still exists, the applicant to submit to Council shall be selected by a coin flip or other randomized selection method. An unsuccessful applicant may be considered for future vacancies occurring within one year of his or her original application without reapplying.

## **Meetings**

The Commission shall meet monthly. In advance of each meeting, the Chairman shall notify members as a reminder and include a meeting agenda of pertinent issues to be discussed at that meeting. The Vice-Chairman shall produce meeting minutes, which shall be distributed to commission members and posted on the Commission website before the next regularly-scheduled meeting.

## **Quorum and Voting**

At all meetings of the Commission, a majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Any meeting of the Commission at which a quorum is present, the vote of a majority of Commission members present at the time of the vote shall be the act of the entire Commission. Advisory members are not voting members and are not included in fulfilling a quorum for voting purposes.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Commission members are expected to recuse themselves from voting on issues in which they or their immediate family members have a financial interest. Also, members are expected to recuse themselves from voting on applicants to the Commission who are family members or close colleagues. Members who may have potential conflicts of interest are expected to inform the Commission during discussion of the pertinent topic.

## **Officers**

*The commission shall organize itself, electing one of its members as Chairman and one as Vice-Chairman.* Officers shall be elected annually in November. Terms of office shall be for one year, commencing January 1. Election for a second year is acceptable if a year or more remains on the member's term.

**Chairman.** The Chairman shall be the chief officer of the Commission, shall generally supervise the affairs of the Commission, and shall preside at all meetings of the Commission. The Chairman shall perform all such duties as necessary to further the purpose of the organization, including appointment of committees.

**Vice-Chairman.** The Vice-Chairman shall act in the absence of the Chairman, track attendance at meetings, take meeting minutes, and ensure that meeting minutes are posted to the commission website as noted above.

The Chairman shall solicit nominations for Chairman and Vice-Chairman from all Commission members in October. Nominations shall remain open until the November meeting is called to order. Officers shall be selected based on a majority of voting members present at the November meeting. An election shall be held as soon as possible to serve the remainder of the term of an officer needing to resign.

## **Committees**

Committees shall be determined at the discretion of the Chairman.

Note: Text in *italics* is pulled directly from the City Ordinance establishing the Commission.