

August 21, 2012

MEMO

TO: Bruce D. Glasscock, City Manager
Frank F. Turner, Deputy City Manager

FROM: Phyllis M. Jarrell, Director of Planning

SUBJECT: Training and Education for the Planning & Zoning Commission

City Council has requested information on the training and education opportunities provided for the Planning & Zoning Commission. Zoning procedures and development regulations are complex topics for any new commissioner, regardless of background, to learn. Staff meets with each newly appointed commissioner and gives them a brief overview of the duties and responsibilities of the Commission and general procedures. New commissioners are provided with a notebook of training topics such as zoning, comprehensive planning, legal considerations and site plan and plat regulation. Additional training has primarily been in the form of special work sessions led by staff from the Planning and Legal Departments, where we are able to provide more in-depth information on individual topics. Commissioners have also attended training provided by other organizations, such as the American Planning Association, the North Central Texas Council of Governments, and the Center for American and International Law. The latter group, unfortunately, discontinued its local government training last year.

Below is a list of training opportunities that could supplement staff-led work sessions:

- Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association – this organization’s annual conference includes two tracks of sessions devoted to commissioner training. The conference rotates among the larger cities in the state, and this year is being held in Fort Worth from October 3-5. Registration for commissioners is \$395 per person (early registration).
- North Central Texas Council of Governments – NCTCOG offers a two-day training course twice a year for planning and zoning commissioners from the region. The next session will be February 11-12; registration is \$260 per person.
- North Central Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association – offers one-day seminars and training on an infrequent basis for planners and commissioners. Cost typically in the \$50-\$60 range.

- Other local educational sessions – groups such as the Greater Dallas Planning Council and the North Texas District Council of the Urban Land Institute sponsor speakers and events that may be of benefit to commissioners. Cost typically \$25-\$150 per person.
- Consultant-led session – the city could hire a facilitator to provide training in a special session for the Commission. Cost TBD.

With three vacancies to be filled in November, we will be scheduling additional training work sessions for the Commission.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.