

City of Countryside

Plan Commission / Zoning Board of Appeals

Planning and Zoning Process

Adopted November 4, 2010

Packet Last Revised: November 2026

I. Introduction

The Plan Commission / Zoning Board of Appeals (PC-ZBA) serves as a review board for Variances, Special Uses, Re-Zoning, Planned Unit Developments and Text Amendments to the City's municipal code. The PC-ZBA serves in a fact finding capacity by evaluating the aforementioned requests and providing recommendations to the City Council.

The PC-ZBA is comprised of nine members appointed by the Mayor with the consent of the Aldermen. All of the members are City of Countryside residents from a variety of different backgrounds.

For more information, please contact the Senior Planner at 708.485.4775.

II. Submittal Requirements

NOTICE TO APPLICANTS: Applications will ***not*** be scheduled for a PC-ZBA public hearing until all of the requirements listed below are provided and reviewed by staff through the review process (a **Pre-Submittal Meeting**). Failure to provide a complete submittal may result in the matter being deferred (CONTINUED) to the next available PC-ZBA agenda.

Submittal Package – include 3 complete package sets:

1. Petitioners' Application - 3 original (signed and notarized). (See **Exhibit A)**
2. Standards for Zoning Variance - 3 original (signed and notarized). (See **Exhibit B)**
3. Standards for Special Use Variation - 3 original (signed and notarized). (See **Exhibit C**)
4. Affidavit of Ownership - 3 original (signed and notarized). (See **Exhibit D)**
5. Current Plat of Survey - 3 copies - The plat of survey must contain the legal description of the property. Minimum dimension of the plat of survey must be 11" x 17".
6. Detailed Site Plan - 3 copies - Three copies of detailed and scaled plans of the variation requested, elevation drawings and floor plans showing proposed and existing layout, photos, etc. The site plan will include existing structures, proposed structures, additions, signs, and the setbacks from lot lines to such improvements. The site plan must be drawn to scale.
7. Application Fee - Please consult the fee structure matrix found on Page 19 of the packet.
8. Electronic Set - Please submit all documents associated with the application in electronic format on a flash drive ***or*** emailed to the attention of the Senior Planner at building@countryside-il.org.

III. Public Hearing Documents

(1) The Senior Planner reviews the application packet to ensure that the required number of items and exhibits has been supplied. Please contact the Senior Planner at 708.485.4775 to submit the application and/or to schedule a meeting. Once a packet is accepted, it will be issued a case number.

(2) Once the application is submitted, a more detailed review of the application packet and request is conducted by staff to ensure the information supplied is complete and accurate, and to evaluate the standards for granting the request. If there are any deficiencies, the Petitioner will be notified as to what items are deficient and the date by which they must be received to retain a place on the PC-ZBA agenda. If revisions are not received and accepted by staff within the time frame requested, the matter will be deferred to the next available meeting.

(3) Once the application is accepted, it will be scheduled for the next available PC-ZBA agenda.

(4) Staff will post public notice sign on the property at least fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing.

(5) Staff will publish the legal notice concerning the application in the Desplaines Valley Newspaper and compile a list of property owners that fall within the 300 ***or*** 600 foot radius of the subject property for registered mail notification of the meeting. If the subject property is residentially zoned, all property owners within 300 foot radius of said property will receive registered mail. If the subject property is commercial or industrial zoned, all property owners within 600 foot radius of said property will receive registered certified mail. The registered certified mail will be postmarked at least fifteen (15) days ***prior*** to the hearing.

(6) The City must be reimbursed for the publication and registered mail cost **prior to the meeting date.** The applicant will be sent an invoice with all applicable charges. If the City is not reimbursed before the meeting, the matter will be ***removed*** from the agenda and continued to the next month.

IV. PC-ZBA Meetings

(1) The PC-ZBA holds a Public hearing on the matter in the City Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. on the scheduled date. The PC-ZBA meets the first Tuesday of every month with an application to appear on their docket submitted to the Community Development Department at least one (1) month in advance. The current meetings can be found on Page 19 of the application packet.

(2) The Senior Planner will provide an overview of the request with all facts and figures associated with the project.

(3) The PC-ZBA will allow the Petitioner, or his/her designated representative to provide a brief overview of the request.

(4) Once the PC-ZBA has finished discussing the case, they will vote on the matter to ***recommend*** approval or denial on the request. A minimum of five (5) votes is required to carry a motion.

(5) The PC-ZBA decisions are only advisory in nature and do ***not*** constitute a final ruling. After the PC-ZBA has offered a recommendation, the request will be considered by City Council during their regular meeting schedule. The City Council meets the second and fourth Wednesday of every month. City Council has the **FINAL** decision making authority regarding the zoning request.

V. Rules for the PC-ZBA

(1) Application of Rules: These rules shall apply to all hearings required to be held by the Plan Commission-Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of Countryside.

(2) Commencement of Hearing Proceedings: Hearings to which these rules shall apply are commenced by application for relief from existing City of Countryside zoning restrictions or regulations and shall be in such form, and contain such information, as required by the City of Countryside Zoning Code. Such hearing proceedings may also be commenced by referral from the City Council.

(3) Designation of Parties: Any person, firm or corporation that makes such application is hereinafter sometimes referred to as the "Applicant" or "Petitioner". However, in cases where an issue is referred by the City Council, the City Council shall not be referred to as Applicant, but as the "City". All other persons, firms or corporations taking any part in hearings subject to these rules shall hereinafter be referred to occasionally as "Interested Parties".

(4) Open Hearings/Open Meetings Act: All hearings conducted by the PC-ZBA shall be held at a regular or special meeting, shall be open to the public, and shall be subject to the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

(5) Pre-hearing Conference: The Community Development Department may authorize a "pre-hearing" conference to clarify legal and factual issues, exchange documents and information, discuss stipulations and the order of witnesses, and submit a report of such conference to the overall body.

(6) Proof of Notice of Hearing Required: Proof of publication and/or posting and/or mailing of all notices required in order to confer jurisdiction upon the Commission shall be introduced into evidence at the commencement of any hearing.

(7) Record of Proceedings Required: A verbatim record of all hearing proceedings shall be made by electronic transcription, such record may also be made through transcription by a certified court report, if so directed by the Commission.

(8) Amendment of Rules: These rules may be amended from time to time by vote of a majority of Commission members present and voting at a regular or special meeting of the Commission.

VI. Chairman's Powers and Responsibilities

The Commission's Chairman (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the "Chairman") may impose reasonable conditions on the hearing process, including limitations on evidence or testimony presented or offered for presentation. Such limitations include, but are not restricted to, time limits upon testimony and arguments, and the barring of repetitious, irrelevant or immaterial testimony. Time limits, if imposed, shall be fair, reasonable, and equally administered. The Chairman shall rule on all questions related to the admissibility of evidence; however, any such ruling may be overruled by a majority of the Commission. The Commission shall not be bound by strict rules of evidence; however, irrelevant, immaterial, or repetitious evidence may be excluded.

In imposing such conditions and limitations, the Chairman shall give due and careful consideration to, and may act upon, the following factors:

- The complexity of the issue or issues;
- Whether or to what degree the witness possesses special expertise;
- Whether the testimony reflects a matter of taste or personal opinion or concerns regarding a disputed issue of fact;
- The degree to which the witness' testimony relates to the factors to be considered in approving or denying the application or proposal; or
- Such other factors as are appropriate for the hearing.

The Chairman may also take such actions and make such other rulings as are required to maintain an orderly and civil hearing.

VII. Order of Business

The order of business and presentation of evidence at a Commission hearing shall be substantially as follows, but may be reasonably modified as determined appropriate by the Chairman:

- Announcement of Hearing;
- Identification of Petitioner and Interested Parties;
- Submittal of Proof of Notice;
- Testimony and other evidence by Petitioner;
- Report by Staff;
- Commission examination of Petitioner's witnesses and other evidence;
- Cross-examination of Petitioner's witnesses and other evidence by Interested Parties;
- Testimony and other evidence by Interested Parties;
- Commission examination of Interested Parties' witnesses and other evidence;
- Cross-examination of Interested Parties' witnesses and other evidence by Petitioner;
- In some cases re-cross-examination may be allowed;
- Summary/Closing by Petitioner;
- Summary/Closing by Interested Parties;
- Rebuttal/Closing by Petitioner;

- Chairman announces that the evidence and testimony phase of the hearing is concluded and that no further evidence or testimony may be presented to the Commission; and
- The Commission shall then do one or more of the following:
  - Enter upon its deliberations;
  - Announce its decision;
  - Continue the Hearing to a future date and time; or
  - Adjourn the Hearing.

VIII. Conduct of Hearing

In addition to the Petitioner, any other person, firm or corporation may appear and participate at the hearing as an "Interested Party" as provided herein.

The Petitioner or any Interested Party may appear *pro se,* or may be represented by an attorney. The Petitioner or an Interested Party may also be represented by other agents, such as, but not limited to, a contract purchaser, appraiser, developer, or real estate agent.

The City of Countryside shall be a party in every proceeding, but need not appear.

Persons participating shall identify themselves or those whom they represent for the record, either orally or in writing, and indicate if they are represented.

The examination of a witness shall not be used by the questioner to offer testimony or evidence of the questioner. All persons offering testimony at a hearing shall testify under oath. An attorney shall be sworn in if he or she offers testimony but not if he or she is questioning witnesses, summarizing testimony of witnesses, or addressing the Commission.

At any point in the proceedings, the Commissioners may call upon witnesses who have not previously testified, such as City staff and City consultants. The Commissioners and/or staff may ask questions at any time during the hearing.

IX. Conclusion and Decision

At the conclusion of an evidentiary portion of the public hearing, the Commission may, among other actions, do one or more of the following: move to deliberate its decision on the evidence presented, or continue the hearing to a future date, time and location, or announce its decision.

A written decision shall be prepared which shall include findings of fact and the Commission recommendation or decision based upon the record.

Adopted by the Plan-Commission / Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of Countryside, Illinois, the 4th Day of November 2010.



Robert Schwarz,
Chairman

(EXHIBIT A)

CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE
PC-ZBA

PETITIONER'S APPLICATION

ADDRESS OF SUBJECT PROPERTY: _____

APPLICANT'S NAME: _____

APPLICANT IS: **ATTORNEY** ☐ **AGENT** ☐ **OWNER** ☐ **OTHER** ☐

DAYTIME PHONE: _____

FAX NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

APPLICANT'S ADDRESS: _____

CITY:_____STATE:_____ZIP CODE: _____

OWNER OF PROPERTY: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____

OWNER'S ADDRESS: _____

CITY:_____STATE:_____ZIP CODE: _____

INVOICES WILL BE SENT TO: Applicant ☐ **Property Owner** ☐

LEGAL DESCRIPTION ATTACHED (*Attach as an exhibit)*

Property Identification Number(s) (PINs): _____

ZONING OF THE PROPERTY: _____

PROPOSED ZONING OF THE PROPERTY: _____

AREA OF THE PROPERTY (Acres or sq. ft.): _____

EXHIBIT A (CONTINUED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE)

List improvements on property (buildings, fences, pools, decks, etc.).

Have you or the subject property applied or been a subject for a rezoning, special use, or variance?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what was the application for?

Date you appeared before the PC-ZBA: _____

What was the outcome? _____

Detailed description of requested variance, re-zoning or special use (Provide relevant Section numbers of the Municipal Code – attach additional pages if needed)

_____ _____

APPLICANT SIGNATURE NOTARY PUBLIC

A zoning variance can only be granted if there are specific practical difficulties in carrying out the strict requirements of the ordinance for a particular piece of property. There must be some land-related hardship to grant the variance. Other criteria are NOT sufficient evidence to prove hardship, specifically:

- Self-inflicted hardships are ***not*** eligible for a variance; and
- Greater profit or increased property value is ***not*** sufficient cause to warrant a variance.

The full burden of proof in determining the hardship rests with the Applicant. In making its determination as to whether there is unnecessary hardship, the Plan Commission – Zoning Board of Appeals shall take into consideration the extent to which the following conditions, all favorable to the applicant or appellant, have been established by the evidence. (Ord. 98-15-0, 4-8-1998)

10-12-4-2: Conditions:

A. That the particular physical surroundings, shape or topographical condition of the specific property involved would result in a particular hardship upon the owner as distinguished from a mere inconvenience or loss of revenue if the strict letter of the regulations were carried out;

B. That the conditions upon which the requested variation is based would not be applicable generally to other properties within the same zoning classification;

C. That the alleged difficulty or hardship has not been created by any person presently having an interest in the property;

D. That the granting of the variation will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood in which the property is located;

E. That the proposed variation will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or substantially increase the congestion in the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood; and

F. That the proposed variation complies with the spirit and intent of the restrictions imposed by this Title. (Ord. 80-2-0, 12-1979)

(EXHIBIT B)

STANDARDS FOR ZONING VARIANCES
(Attach additional pages as needed)

1. Describe how the variance is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance:

2. Describe how the strict enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance would result in practical difficulties and impose exceptional hardships due to special and unusual conditions which are not generally found on other properties in the same zoning district:

3. Describe any unique circumstances associated with the property:

4. Describe how the variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood and will not be a substantial detriment to the adjacent property:

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

NOTARY PUBLIC

10-12-4-6: Special Use Variations:

F. Standards: No special use variation shall be recommended by the Plan Commission-Zoning Board of Appeals unless said PC-ZBA shall find: (Ord. 98-15-0, 4- 8-1998)

1. That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public safety, health, morals, comfort or general welfare;
2. That the use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood;
3. That the establishment of the use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district;
4. That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or other necessary facilities have been or are being provided;
5. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets; (Ord. 80-2-0, 12-1979) and
6. That the use shall in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the City Council, pursuant to the recommendations of the Plan Commission - Zoning Board of Appeals. (Ord. 98-15-0, 4-8-1998)

(EXHIBIT C)

STANDARDS FOR SPECIAL USE VARIATON
(Attach additional pages as needed)

1. That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public safety, health, morals, comfort or general welfare :

2. That the use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood;

3. That the establishment of the use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district;

4. That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or other necessary facilities have been or are being provided;

5. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets;

6. That the use shall in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the city council, pursuant to the recommendations of the plan commission-zoning board.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

NOTARY PUBLIC

(Exhibit D)

AFFIDAVIT OF OWNERSHIP

COUNTY OF COOK)
) SS
STATE OF ILLINOIS)

I / WE_____, UNDER OATH, STATE THAT I AM

☐ THE SOLE)
☐ AN) OWNER OF THE PROPERTY
☐ AN AUTHORIZED OFFICER OF THE)

COMMONLY DESCRIBED AS _____

AND THAT SUCH PROPERTY IS OWNED BY _____
AS OF THIS DATE:_____

SIGNATURE

_____

SIGNATURE

_____

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO
BEFORE ME THIS_____
DAY OF _____

NOTARY PUBLIC

_____

PC-ZBA Withdrawal Refund Policy

Applicants who have applied for a zoning request but have decided not to proceed with the zoning request prior to the date of the PC-ZBA meeting may be eligible for a partial refund of the $500.00 application fee.

All PC-ZBA applicants are required to complete the required documentation and pay a $500.00 application fee at least one (1) month prior to the intended PC-ZBA meeting date in order to allow sufficient time for public notification. If the applicant chooses to no longer request the zoning matter after the application is submitted and at least one (1) business day prior to the PC-ZBA meeting, the applicant may receive a refund of up to $250.00. The applicant is responsible to pay all outstanding fees owed the City ***prior*** to the refund of any monies. The applicant may not receive any refund on money paid to the City for expenses related to a public notification such as certified mailings or newspaper articles.

The applicant must submit to the Community Development Department *in writing* a request to be removed from the PC-ZBA agenda and refund the portion of the application fee at least one (1) business day ***prior*** to the scheduled PC-ZBA meeting. That request will be routed to the Finance Department after all outstanding fees are paid and the proper time has been allotted for any personal checks to clear. The Finance Department will then place the request on the next available City Council Agenda to approve re-payment.

Please review all items on the Petitioner's Checklist, missing items will result in a hearing postponement. If requesting a zoning variance, please review **Title 10**, **Zoning**, of the Countryside City Code. If requesting subdivision approval, please review **Title 9**, **Subdivision**, of the Countryside City Code. The City Code is available online at the City's website (**City of Countryside City Code**) and for purchase at the City Clerk's Office.

Petitioner's Checklist (All items below must be in separate collated packets)

1. ☐ Application Fee: Please consult the fee structure matrix on the following page to determine the appropriate fee. Make check payable to the "City of Countryside". All additional review, publication and legal fees must be paid prior to the meeting date.

2. ☐ Petitioner's Application (Exhibit A): **3 originals signed** of the completed application.

3. ☐ Standards for Zoning Variance (Exhibit B): **3 originals signed** of the complete form describing the standards met.

4. ☐ Standards for Special Use Variation (Exhibit C): **3 originals signed** of the completed form describing the standards met.

5. ☐ Proof of Ownership Information and Affidavit (Exhibit D): **3 original signatures** and the public notarized stamp of the completed form.

6. ☐ Current Plat of Survey: 3 copies - The plat of survey must contain the legal description of the property. Minimum dimension of the plat of survey must be 11" x 17".

7. ☐ Detailed Site Plans: 3 copies of detailed and scaled plans of the variation requested, elevation drawings and floor plans showing proposed and existing layout, photos, etc.

8. ☐ Annexation Plat and Petition: (if applicable: 3 copies).

9. ☐ Preliminary Subdivision Plans (if applicable): 3 copies not to exceed 36" x 48"sheet size.

   A. Detailed Site Plan indicating all site improvements such as sign locations, screened trash container areas, loading docks, fire lanes, area lighting, parking handicap parking, all dimensions, project date, building and land area, FAR, coverage and parking calculations

   B. Preliminary Engineering Site Plans. Please contact our Staff Engineer, Mr. John Fitzgerald, at 708.485.2437 for details.

   C. Floor plans, not working, drawings (drawn to 1/4" scale).

   D. Landscape plan prepared on a separate sheet indicating species, plant location, quantity, size and spacing.

   E. Sign elevations.

F. Traffic study (when applicable) signed and sealed by a licensed P.E.

10. ☐ Electronic Plans: One (1) flash drive must be accompanied with the packet containing all electronic versions of the documents submitted ***or*** you may email the files to the attention of the Senior Planner.

11. ☐ Drainage Plan: 3 copies - Prior to any project that involves the disturbance of soil on any parcel of property in the City, the following process shall be utilized.

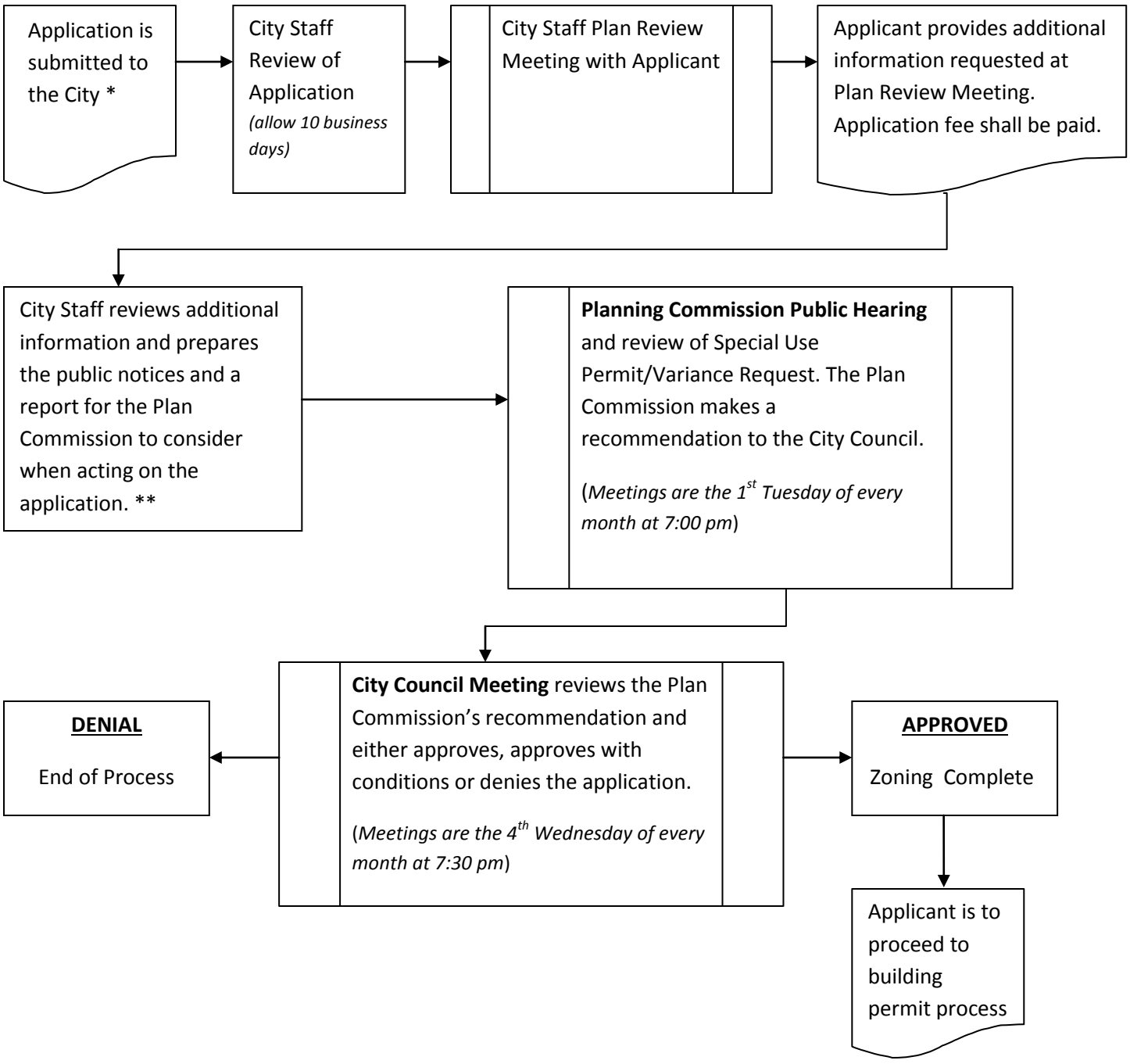
A. The applicant must submit a drainage plan for the project.

B. The drainage plan must satisfactorily address storm water management and must be reviewed and approved by the City Engineer.

C. All invoices for any review fees must be paid by the applicant prior to project presentation to the Plan Commission.

PLANNING & ZONING FLOW CHART

For Rezoning, Variance and Special Use Applications



NOTES:

*Application deadlines are scheduled for the calendar year. Contact City staff at 708-485-4775 for more information.

**Approximately a minimum of 2-3 months to go through the Planning & Zoning Process.

Applicants will be invoiced for the public hearing notification costs. All fees must be paid ***prior to the hearing date or the case will be CONTINUED to the next month's meeting.

FEE STRUCTURE FOR ZONING AND PLANNING	
CATEGORY	**FEE**
Zoning Variance- any	**$500.00**
Special Use Application- any	**$500.00**
Planned Unit Development- any	**$3,000.00**
Zoning Amendment Application	**$500.00**
Zoning Interpretation/Appeal	**$500.00**
Application for Resubdivision/Consolidation of lots	**$500.00**
Construction necessitated variations requested after the commencement of construction (See note 1)	**$2,500.00**

NOTES:	
1	**Fees for construction necessitated variations requested after the commencement of construction shall be cumulative, one fee charged for each variance requested.**
2	**All other fees shall allow for an *unlimited* number of items on an application- within that category- for the listed fee.**
3	**Applications with items in multiple categories shall be assessed the listed fee once for each category.**
4	**Fees are not transferrable, and shall apply to only one application.**
5	**All costs, fees, and charges incurred by the City in association with an application, including, but not limited to: *engineering review fees*, *legal review fees*, *publication fees*, *postage*, *copy charges*, and *recording fees* are in addition to the fees listed herein, and shall be payable by the applicant.**

Plan Commission / Zoning Board of Appeals

Hearing Dates January 2027 - January 2028

Meeting Date	Deadline for Filing by 4:00 p.m.	City Council Date
Tuesday, January 5, 2027	Monday, November 30, 2026	Wednesday, January 27, 2027
Tuesday, February 2, 2027	Monday, January 4, 2027	Wednesday, February 24, 2027
Tuesday, March 2, 2027	Monday, February 1, 2027	Wednesday, March 24, 2027
Tuesday, April 13, 2027*	Monday, March 1, 2027	Wednesday, April 28, 2027
Tuesday, May 4, 2027	Monday, April 5, 2027	Wednesday, May 26, 2027
Tuesday, June 1, 2027	Monday, May 3, 2027	Wednesday, June 9, 2027**
Tuesday, July 6, 2027	Monday, May 31, 2027	Wednesday, July 14, 2027**
Tuesday, August 3, 2027	Monday, July 5, 2027	Wednesday, August 11, 2027**
Tuesday, September 7, 2027	Monday, August 2, 2027	Wednesday, September 29, 2027
Tuesday, October 5, 2027	Monday, September 6, 2027	Wednesday, October 27, 2027
Tuesday, November 2, 2027*	Monday, October 4, 2027	Wednesday, November 16, 2027**
Tuesday, December 7, 2027	Monday, November 1, 2027	Wednesday, December 8, 2027**
Tuesday, January 4, 2028	Monday, December 6, 2027	Wednesday, January 26, 2028

**** = Denotes a potential meeting date change to the Second Tuesday of the month.***

***** = Denotes the only Council Meeting for the month.***