



Get Involved!

A Handbook on Opportunities for Citizen Participation
In the Town of Matthews

January 2010

Introduction

The Town of Matthews offers volunteer opportunities to citizens who are interested in serving on one of the Town's various boards and committees.

The Town of Matthews has seven active boards and committees. The board and committees are: the Board of Adjustment, Appearance/Tree Advisory Committee, Economic Development Advisory Committee, Environmental Advisory Committee, Historic Preservation Advisory Committee, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Advisory Committee, Planning Board and the Transportation Advisory Committee.

This handbook provides a brief overview of each, along with their duties and powers, as well as scheduled meeting dates, times and location.

If you are interested in serving on a particular board or committee, please complete the application form at the back of this handbook and return it to the Town Clerk. This form may be mailed, faxed or hand delivered to the Town Clerk's Office, located in Town Hall, 232 Matthews Station Street. Additionally, it may be e-mailed to: jpleimann@matthewsnc.com.

Please feel free to contact the Clerk's Office at (704) 847-4411, extension 231 if you have additional questions about becoming an involved citizen.

Boards and Committees Guidelines

PURPOSE

The Town of Matthews provides for citizen input and advice through a variety of boards and committees. Most of these are advisory in nature, while one has distinct responsibilities that are established by law. The Matthews Town Board of Commissioners encourages citizens to participate in their Town government by volunteering to serve on these boards/committees.

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT

A description of all Town Boards and committees is available in this handbook and on the Town's website at www.matthewsnc.com.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend several meetings of a board/committee prior to applying and/or appointment to a board.

An application, along with a resume if desired, is required for consideration for an appointment to a Town Board. Once an application has been received it is placed in a resource file and remains active for a two-year period. At the end of that period of time, applications are removed.

Once an application has been received by the Town Clerk it is forwarded on to the liaison of the board/committee in which the applicant has expressed interest. The Chair and liaison review the application and make a recommendation to the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners. The exception to this process is the Board of Adjustment and Planning Board. Applicants for these two boards are interviewed by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners. All appointments are made in an open session of the Town Board

QUALIFICATIONS

Appointees to boards and committees shall be residents of the Town of Matthews, unless otherwise specified or provided by law, ordinance, or Town Board action establishing said board or committee.

No citizen shall be eligible to hold concurrently more than two (2) Mayoral or Town Board appointments to standing boards or committees; this limitation shall not apply to ad hoc committees appointed by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners.

TERMS

Board/committee members serve two-year terms without a limit on the number of terms a member may serve, except on those boards/committees for which a longer term of service has been established by the North Carolina General Assembly, or unless otherwise specified in the Town Code of Ordinances.

A member serves until the expiration of his or her term or until such time as a successor is appointed, whichever occurs later.

Reappointment to a second term is not automatic and will be based on recommendation by the board/committee chair and liaison.

ATTENDANCE

In order for the board/committee to carry out its duties and responsibilities, it is necessary for all members to attend the meetings. Any member who shall fail to attend at least 75% of the regular and special meetings of the board/committee during any one-year period may be removed. Absences, due to sickness, death or other emergencies of like nature shall be recognized as approved absences and shall not affect the member's status on the board/committee except that in the event of a long illness or other such cause for prolonged absence, the member may be replaced. The chairperson shall notify the Town Board of any member who shall so fail to attend. The vacancy can be filled, upon recommendation of the committee liaison and chairperson, by the Town Board.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Each board/committee receives its charge from the North Carolina General Statutes, a Town ordinance or action from the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners.

The Matthews Town Board of Commissioners may, from time to time, ask a board/committee to consider specific items not in conflict with existing laws.

The Matthews Town Board of Commissioners may appoint a staff member as liaison to the board/committee. The role of the liaison shall be to serve as a direct communication link between the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners and the board or committee. The liaison notifies the board or committee of long-range issues and projects under consideration by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners which would be of interest to that board or committee.

The chairperson, working with staff liaison, shall send copies of all minutes to the Town Clerk.

Each board/committee shall submit an annual report, either written or verbally at a Matthews Town Board of Commissioners meeting, outlining their activities for the past year.

An orientation session will be conducted for all new appointees by the Town staff liaison. From time to time, additional training sessions for members may be provided through Town staff, the Institute of Government and other training groups and organizations. The Matthews Town Board of Commissioners encourages members to take advantage of these opportunities.

A board or committee member who is not present at a meeting shall not be allowed to vote by proxy.

The Mayor may request that the staff liaison evaluate the ongoing need for the board/committee and recommend to the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners elimination of any for which there is no longer a need.

The requirements of the Open Meetings Law shall apply to all boards and committees.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST/CODE OF ETHICS

In order to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, members of a board/committee shall refrain from voting on issues that have a direct and narrow fiduciary effect on an organization by whom they are employed or for whom they serve as director. Members of the board/committee shall be prohibited from applying for or receiving grants from the Town as individuals. Board/Committee members shall adhere to the Code of Ethics laws as outlined in the North Carolina General Statutes.

RESIGNATIONS AND REPLACEMENTS

Any member of a board or committee who desires to resign shall do so in writing to the board/committee chairman. The staff liaison shall notify the Town Clerk of any resignation(s).

When the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners determines that a board or committee member should be removed due to a conflict of interest, failure to attend meetings, or for any other good cause, and when removal is not otherwise prohibited by law, the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners may take this action before the

expiration of his or her term and appoint a replacement.

REAPPOINTMENT

A member of any Town board or committee shall be eligible for reappointment at the discretion of the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners one (1) year after non-appointment due to expiration of a term limit.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

The North Carolina General Statutes, at 160A-381, authorizes municipalities to adopt zoning regulations and to appoint a Board of Adjustment to provide an appeal process for individual landowners when those zoning provisions create unique land use hardships, are ambiguous, or where there are questions on how those zoning regulations may be applied.

Responsibilities: The Board of Adjustment has specific duties as outlined by state statute, which include:

1. Hear and decide applications for variances from the Town of Matthews Zoning Ordinance.
2. Hear and decide appeals from and review any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative official charged with the enforcement of the Town of Matthews Zoning Ordinance.
3. Hear questions about and interpret the meaning of parts of the Town of Matthews Zoning Ordinance that are unclear and interpret.

Special note: Unlike other citizen volunteer boards/committees appointed by the Matthews Board of Commissioners, the Board of Adjustment holds public hearings, takes sworn testimony, acts in a quasi-judicial manner, and makes final decisions that are appealable only to Superior Court. This Board does not generally report back to, or make recommendations to the Matthews Board of Commissioners. Due the legal nature of the Board's work, the Town provides an attorney to assist the group during their meetings.

Composition: The Board of Adjustment consists of five regular or voting, members and three alternate members. Votes on all cases before the Board of Adjustment require a 4/5's majority.

The Board of Adjustment elects a Chair and a Vice-Chair from the regular members at their first meeting of each calendar year.

Meetings: The Board of Adjustment holds public hearings on the first Thursday of the month, when they have a case. Meetings are held in the Hood Room at Matthews Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. Special meetings may be scheduled as necessary. All meetings are open to the public.

Appointment term: All regular and alternate members are appointed by the Matthews Board of Commissioners for three-year terms. They may be reappointed for a second

three-year term. Any vacant position is filled for the remainder of the unexpired term. Alternate members are generally moved into a regular member position as they become available.

Attendance: The Board's Rules of Procedure state all regular and alternate members should attend all meetings.

APPEARANCE/TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Responsibilities: The Matthews Appearance/Tree Advisory Committee makes a study of the visual characteristics and needs of the Town and promotes those activities and programs that enhance the Town character, preserving and beautifying the landscape, in order to make Matthews a cleaner, greener, and more aesthetically pleasing community.

Composition: The Appearance/Tree Committee is composed of seven members appointed by the Matthews Board of Commissioners. A staff member acts as liaison to the Committee. Where possible, appointments are made in such a manner as to maintain on the Committee at all times a majority of members who have had special training or experience in a design field, such as architecture, landscape architecture, horticulture, city planning or a closely-related field. It is also desirable to have members with special training or experience in forestry.

Meetings: Meetings of the Appearance/Tree Advisory Committee are held on the third Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Matthews Community Center. All meetings are open to the public and conform to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Appointment Term: Members of the Appearance/Tree Advisory Committee serve two-year terms without a limit on the number of terms a member may serve.

Attendance: Any member, who shall fail to attend at least 75% of the regular and special meetings during any one-year period, may be removed. The Chairperson shall notify the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners of any member who shall so fail to attend. The vacancy can be filled, upon recommendation of the Committee liaison and Chairperson, by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Responsibilities: The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) markets the Town to facilitate the economic development process. Major emphasis is placed on the retention and expansion of existing business and industry, the attraction of new business opportunities, and the continued revitalization of the Town's economic base.

Composition: The EDAC is composed of eleven members appointed by the Matthews Board of Commissioners, one of which is a Town Board member and the other one is the current Matthews Chamber of Commerce President. A staff member acts as liaison to the Committee. Members must be residents of the Town of Matthews or their regular place of employment must be located within the Town of Matthews.

Meetings: The EDAC holds bi-monthly meetings on the third Thursday at 7:00 a.m. at the Matthews Town Hall. All meetings are open to the public and conform to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Appointment Term: Members of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) serve two-year terms, on a staggered basis, without a limit on the number of terms a member may serve.

Attendance: Any member, who shall fail to attend at least 75% of the regular and special meetings of the EDAC during any one-year period, shall be subject to removal. The Chairperson shall notify the Matthews Board of Commissioners of any member who shall so fail to attend. The vacancy can be filled, upon recommendation of the Committee liaison and Chairperson, by the Matthews Board of Commissioners.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Responsibilities: The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) provides advice and assistance to the Matthews Board of Commissioners on all areas of potential environmental impacts to the Town including air pollution, water pollution and floodway control problems. The EAC also provides support in selecting solid, household hazardous waste, recycling, and yard waste contractors and providing oversight into the appropriate management of these materials.

Composition: The Environmental Advisory Committee is composed of nine members appointed by the Matthews Board of Commissioners. A staff member acts as liaison to the Committee. Where possible, appointments are made in such a manner as to maintain on the Committee at all times a majority of members who have had special training or experience in environmental engineering and pollution control fields.

Meetings: Meetings of the Environmental Advisory Committee are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Matthews Public Works Facility, 1600 Tank Town Road in Town Hall Council Chambers. All meetings are open to the public and conform to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Appointment Term: Members of the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) serve

two-year terms, without a limit on the number of terms a member may serve.

Attendance: Any member, who shall fail to attend at least 75% of the regular and special meetings during any one-year period, may be removed. The Chairperson shall notify the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners of any member who shall so fail to attend. The vacancy can be filled, upon recommendation of the Committee liaison and Chairperson, by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Responsibilities: The Matthews Historic Preservation Advisory Committee focuses on the preservation of properties and artifacts, education of the community, and partnerships with municipal and civic organizations, including the Matthews Historical Foundation and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, to advance the cause of historic preservation.

Composition: The Committee is composed of twelve members appointed by the Matthews Board of Commissioners, three of whom are board members of the Matthews Historical Foundation. A member does not necessarily have to be a resident of the Town of Matthews. A staff member acts as liaison to the Committee.

Meetings: Meetings of the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall. All meetings are open to the public and conform to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Appointment Term: Members of the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee serve two-year terms, without a limit on the number of terms a member may serve.

Attendance: Any member, who shall fail to attend at least 75% of the regular and special meetings during any one-year period, may be removed. The Chairperson shall notify the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners of any member who shall so fail to attend. The vacancy can be filled, upon recommendation of the Committee liaison and Chairperson, by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners.

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Responsibilities: The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resource Advisory Committee serves as an advisory body in matters affecting recreation and special events including

planning, promotion and marketing of same. The Committee provides input for the long-range planning of resources towards park projects, acquisition of land and other indoor/outdoor recreational activities. Additionally, the Committee ensures that Matthews has a current cultural plan which include arts, science and history programs both at the Matthews Community Center and in the community at large.

Composition: The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resource Advisory Committee is composed of eleven members appointed by the Matthews Board of Commissioners. A staff member acts as liaison to the Committee.

Meetings: Meetings of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resource Advisory Committee are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center. All meetings are open to the public and conform to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Appointment Term: Members of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Committee serve two-year terms, without a limit on the number of terms a member may serve.

Attendance: Any member, who shall fail to attend at least 75% of the regular and special meetings during any one-year period, may be removed. The Chairperson shall notify the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners of any member who shall so fail to attend. The vacancy can be filled, upon recommendation of the Committee liaison and Chairperson, by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners.

PLANNING BOARD

The North Carolina General Statutes authorizes municipalities to develop comprehensive future growth and development plans, and land development regulations to implement those plans. The statutes also call for municipalities to create a planning board to make recommendations on these land development plans and regulations. The Matthews Planning Board has been created to advise the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners on land development issues from a citizen standpoint.

Responsibilities: The Planning Board has the following specific duties:

1. To make studies of the Town and its environs;
2. To determine objectives to be sought in the development of the area under study;
3. To prepare and recommend plans for achieving these objectives;

4. To develop and recommend policies, ordinances, administrative procedures, and other means for carrying out plans in a coordinated and efficient manner;
5. To keep the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners, advised on these matters;
6. To review and make recommendations on requests for changes in zoning classification for property within Matthews and its zoning jurisdiction;
7. To review subdivision sketch plans for comments and recommendations;
8. To review and make recommendations on requests for subdivision variances;
9. To review and make recommendations to the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners regarding proposed changes to the Matthews Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Land Use Plan, and other planning documents;
10. To appoint committees as may be determined to be needed to investigate any matters before the Planning Board.
11. To adopt a set of Rules of Procedures not inconsistent with any North Carolina General Statute or any Town ordinance;
12. To elect officers from its membership;
13. To perform any other related duties contained in the zoning and Subdivision Ordinances or as directed by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners.

Composition: The Planning Board consists of seven regular or voting, members and two alternate members. The alternates attend the meetings of the Planning Board and participate in its deliberations. Alternates may not vote, however, unless and except one of the seven designated members, or more, are absent from that meeting.

Meetings: The Planning Board holds meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Meetings are held in the Hood Room at Matthews Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. Special meetings may be scheduled as necessary. All meetings are open to the public and conform to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Appointment Term: All regular and alternate members are appointed by the Matthews

Town Board of Commissioners for two-year terms. They may be reappointed for a second two-year term. Any vacant position is filled for the remainder of the unexpired term. Alternate members are generally moved into a regular member position as they become available.

Attendance: Regular and alternate members are expected to attend all Planning Board meetings as well as joint public hearings for zoning and planning issues.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Responsibilities: The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) assists in the development of a master transportation system plan to include, but not be limited to, current and future roads and location of same; mass transit corridors and infrastructure types; car-van-bus pools/park & ride solutions; pedestrian greenways; and bike paths. The TAC also makes recommendations to the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners on issues such as speed hump placement, traffic calming, etc., and provide review input on major projects that may affect transportation such as major area rezonings.

Composition: The TAC is composed of six members appointed by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners. The Town's appointee to the Charlotte Transit Advisory Group (CTAG) shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee, without vote. A staff member acts as liaison to the Committee.

Meetings: Meetings of the TAC are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Public Works facility, 1600 Tank Town Road. All meetings are open to the public and conform to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Appointment Term: Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) members serve two-year terms, without a limit on the number of terms a member may serve.

Attendance: Any member, who shall fail to attend at least 75% of the regular and special meetings during any one-year period, may be removed. The Chairperson shall notify the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners of any member who shall so fail to attend. The vacancy can be filled, upon recommendation of the Committee liaison and Chairperson, by the Matthews Town Board of Commissioners.