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# Planning and Urban Design

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**To:** Unified Government Board of Commissioners

**From:** Gunnar Hand, Director of Planning & Urban Design

**Date:** June 25, 2020

**Re: City Landmarks Commission Commissioner Roles & Responsibilities**

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The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas' ("UG") City Landmarks Commission ("Landmarks Commission") is an 11 Member Board of Wyandotte County residents, appointed by the UG's Board of Commissioners ("BOC") to oversee the preservation of the City's heritage by recommending the designation of historic sites and districts among other roles and responsibilities.

In accordance with Section 27-113(a) of the UG's Unified Development Code, the members of the Landmarks Commission shall at all times include one (1) architect, one (1) real estate broker or appraiser, one (1) officer of a mortgage lending institution, and one (1) person with training or experience specifically in the fields of history, architectural history, or historic preservation.

It is necessary for the BOC to maintain this composition of its Landmarks Commission with the enumerated professions above or else risk losing their Certified Local Government ("CLG") designation. Without the CLG status, the UG's historic preservation program could not be recognized by the State of Federal governments, and effectively lose eligibility to their tax benefits.

While vacancies on the Landmarks Commission occur occasionally, each Commissioner serves at the leisure of their nominating Commissioner, and therefore, often change after an election cycle. As such, it is important that the BOC be intentional about their nominations to the Landmarks Commission not only to meet the statutory requirements mentioned above, but also to reflect the diversity of the County for which it serves, embody the professionalism necessary to properly execute its duties in an informed way, and ensure there are enough members to obtain a quorum.

The duties of a Landmark Commissioner are as follows:

- 1) Attend scheduled meetings so that a simple-majority quorum may be attained. Meetings include public hearings on proposed recommendations;
  - a. Regularly scheduled Landmarks Commission meetings are held once a month. Meetings are currently held on the first Monday of the month at 6:00 PM in the Commission Chamber.
  - b. Special meetings may be called as needed by the chairperson, or, in their absence, by the vice-chairperson.
  - c. Attend one (1) relevant training session per year.
- 2) Conduct investigations to determine the existence, identity and location of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects within the corporate limits of the Unified Government, which should be preserved for posterity;
- 3) Develop and maintain an inventory of historic resources;
- 4) Recommend to the BOC the designation of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects as historic landmarks and historic districts;
- 5) Explore potential sources of funds with which to accomplish its stated goals and objectives, encourage the formation of foundations, trusts and other organizations for the advancement of the same, and support and coordinate the efforts of any such organizations dedicated to the support and advancement of those purposes;
- 6) Undertake any activities that affect or relate to the preservation of historic landmarks and districts as directed by the BOC;
- 7) Establish and promulgate rules and regulations relating to this article and consistent with its purposes; and,
- 8) Generally, advocate for the preservation of the UG's cultural heritage through the preservation of its historical resources.