

## CAMBRIDGE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Mr. Patrick Comiskey  
City Manager  
City of Cambridge  
410 Academy St.  
Cambridge, MD 21613

October 12, 2018

Re: Planning Commission Stipends

Dear Mr. Comiskey:

On behalf of the Cambridge Planning and Zoning Commission, we are requesting that you provide for an increase in P & Z Commission stipends beginning in FY 2020. As the budget process will begin shortly for the next FY, we are writing early so that any increase you might propose can be placed in your recommended budget for consideration by the City Council.

As you may know, Planning Commissioners currently receive a \$50 per meeting stipend. We are not certain exactly when this was implemented, but suffice it to say it has not changed in many, many years, and no member of this Board has ever received any increase. While none of us certainly do this for the money, we do believe basic fairness should dictate a modest increase. We recommend you consider a flat \$250 per member quarterly stipend for members without regard to the number of meetings. The Commission also requests an additional \$50 quarterly stipend for the Chair in recognition of the extra work the Chair incurs in his or her role.

We are attaching a short survey we conducted of various Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland jurisdictions as to stipends paid their respective Planning Commissions. Payments vary widely. However, we think our role is representative of and sometimes exceeds that of the smaller counties on the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland. This is based on several factors and observations:

- 1) The opinion of our members who also serve or who have served on the Dorchester County Planning Commission that we are generally busier than that body.
- 2) We pulled two agendas at random from two of the other counties on the Eastern Shore and their agendas were very similar to ours in substance and length.
- 3) We have a very small planning and zoning staff in the City, which more often than not results in more work in reviews and editing and sharing of expertise and institutional memories outside of regular scheduled meetings.
- 4) We have frequent 2 to 3 member ad-hoc committee meetings to review new development proposals, engage in design reviews and conduct certain negotiations. These occur outside of the normal monthly meetings.
- 5) Some jurisdictions utilize separate architectural review committees or commissions in the development approval process, whereas we essentially perform that function ourselves in Cambridge.
- 6) In Cambridge, the Planning Commission first hears all special exception requests and makes recommendations thereon to the BZA. While this is a worthwhile code provision, it is somewhat unique among Planning Commissions as far as we can tell. These are

substantive hearings and discussions and the recommendations that emanate therefrom provide not only a valuable resource for the BZA but also better prepares the applicant for his or her appearance

- 7) To accommodate applicants and move forward some matters expeditiously to meet either BZA or Council meeting calendars, we periodically hold additional full Commission special meetings.
- 8) We engage in frequent email exchanges between members and the between members and the Planning Office on topical issues and to share information we have researched and uncovered elsewhere on matters under consideration.

In summary, we think a flat quarterly payment of \$250 (+\$50 for the chair) is reasonable and not a budget buster. It recognizes the constant preparation for scheduled meetings and other work and assignments that occur outside of regularly scheduled meetings. The stipend mimics that provided to Kent County Planning Commissioners.

Thank you for your consideration. Let us know if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Burroughs

*Eugene T. Lauer*

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Jerry Burroughs  
Chairman

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Eugene T. Lauer  
Vice-Chairman

Attachment

PLANNING COMMISSION STIPENDS

JURISDICTION	PAID	AMOUNT
Dorchester Co	Y	\$50 per month
Kent Co	Y	\$250 quarterly; Chair +\$50
Queen Anne's Co	Y	\$625 quarterly; Chair + \$75
Somerset Co	Y	\$75 per mtg; Chair + \$50
Talbot Co	Y	\$2500 annually after taxes
Calvert Co	Y	\$500 per mtg; Chair +\$100
St Mary's Co	Y	\$100 per mo
Caroline Co	N	
Ocean City	Y	\$45 per mtg
Easton	N	monthly lunch; turkey at
XMAS		
Berlin	N	
LaPlata	Y	\$600 annually
Salisbury	N	
Cambridge	Y	\$50 per mtg