

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2 OF THE CITY CODE TO INCREASE OVERSIGHT OF NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING COUNCILS**

**#0473**

**Sponsor:**

**Council  
Member  
Darby**

**WHEREAS**, neighborhood planning councils (NPCs) work collaboratively with the Land Use and Planning Department to identify community needs and participate in the development of plans for the “growth, improvement, and development” of their councilmanic district; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 2-327 of the Wilmington City Code designates NPCs as a primary partner in the fulfillment of the Land Use and Planning Department’s functions as a community liaison. Its members play a significant role in preserving the character and aesthetic quality of local communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wilmington City Council 2022-2025 Strategic Plan envisions a “Transparent and Well-Represented Wilmington,” that provides residents with meaningful channels to participate in City government, the training and resources they need to succeed, and consistent procedures to ensure transparency and accountability.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON  
HEREBY ORDAINS:**

**SECTION 1.** Section 2-327 of the City Code is hereby amended with the addition of the underlined language and the deletion of the struck-through language to read as follows:

**Sec. 2-327. – Functions generally.**

The planning department shall have the power and its duties shall be to perform the following functions:

- (1) *Community liaison.* The planning department shall act as the principal contact between the city administration and the community and neighborhood organizations in the city. It shall be responsible for assisting the neighborhood

planning councils (“NPCs”) NPCs in the identification of community needs, determination of governmental priorities and design of governmental programs.

a. NPC Overview. The citizens of the respective neighborhoods within each councilmanic district may join together to establish a ~~neighborhood planning council (“NPC”)~~ an NPC for that district, the boundaries of which shall be identical to that of the councilmanic district. The neighborhood planning councils shall be permitted to cooperate and plan across neighborhood planning council boundaries. The NPCs shall provide advisory information to various departments in the city, the mayor and city council in the areas of housing, licenses and inspections, public works, public safety, social and community development, cultural and economic development, zoning, land use planning, and other areas. The NPCs shall not take the place of local neighborhood associations and tenant councils. Instead, they shall act as planning and coordination organizations.

b. NPC Membership Requirements. The designated NPCs shall ensure that their organization has no less than 11 members to 25 members, or more if deemed necessary. All members of each NPC shall be residents, property owners, or business owners within the city council district in which that NPC is located. Each NPC must have one Board member representing:

- i. At least one Civic Association in that district;
- ii. At least one Tenant Council in that district; and

iii. At least one Organization that is not a Civic Association or a Tenant Council in that district.

c. Comprehensive Plans. The planning department shall assist the designated NPCs in preparing comprehensive and special purpose plans and strategies for the growth, improvement and development of their respective neighborhoods that have been endorsed by the general membership of the district NPC and adopted by resolution of the NPC board.

d. Capital Funding. When feasible, the city may provide funding through its capital improvements program for the implementation of projects that are designed to implement these comprehensive and special purpose plans, and to that end, the neighborhood planning council capital budget program grant guidelines and application process has been established to carry out that program.

e. Funding Requests. Planning staff shall work actively with each NPC to assure timely review and funding for projects that have been approved by resolution of the district NPC membership as a whole and signed by the president thereof, and which also meet the established criteria for such funding as outlined in the grant guidelines. Projects which do not meet the criteria, or for which inadequate or incomplete information has been provided, will not be considered or funded in that budget cycle. All NPC funding requests for property must provide a detailed affidavit explaining how the property will

benefit the community. Planning staff shall provide training to NPCs at least once per fiscal year.

f. Planning staff shall act as the liaison between and among the city administration, the city council and the NPCs, working to strengthen the lines of communication and dialogue between city government and the community. Funding for training and technical assistance, when available, shall be provided to the NPCs, and staff will also assist in helping the NPCs carry out other responsibilities that may occur from time to time. The planning department shall develop a complaint form (paper and electronic) for community members to submit concerns about their NPCs. The community liaisons shall investigate and provide guidance to the community member(s) regarding solving issues.

g. NPC Officer Elections; By-Laws. Each NPC shall hold at least biannual elections of its own officers; adopt by-laws and make them available for reasonable public inspection and provide copies to the Planning Department and City Council; and maintain a record of its activities and transactions, including meeting minutes, which shall be made available for reasonable public inspection. They shall work cooperatively with the neighborhood associations and the district councilmember in their respective areas to adopt effective neighborhood plans.

h. Annual Report. The planning department shall also work with

the NPCs to prepare an annual report to the mayor, the city council and the general public, particularly residents in their neighborhood.

- i. Operating Budget. When funds are available, the planning department shall also work with the NPCs in establishing an annual operating budget to be funded by the city and which shall be submitted to the city council's finance committee for its review and to the city council for its approval.
- j. Any funding provided under this section is contingent upon: (i) NPC boards providing proof of board governance to the planning department and city council every three (3) years; (ii) submitting by-laws in compliance with this section; and (iii) submitting agendas and minutes that comply with this section and 29 Del. C. § 10001, et seq.

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**SECTION 2.** This Ordinance shall be effective upon its passage by City Council and approval by the Mayor.

First Reading ..... September 5, 2024  
Second Reading ..... September 5, 2024  
Third Reading .....

Passed by City Council,

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of City Council

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

Approved this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

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Mayor

**SYNOPSIS:** This Ordinance amends Chapter 2 of the City Code to require the planning department to draft a complaint form for community members to fill out regarding NPCs. Further, this Ordinance requires NPC boards to provide proof of board governance.

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:** This legislation's estimated fiscal impact is \$30,000.00 to hire a consultant to provide NPC training.