



MEMORANDUM

TO: Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission

FROM: Michael Reynolds, AICP, Principal Planner

DATE: Thursday, September 24, 2026

ITEM NOS.: Agenda Item # 22 / File # 10-A-26-OA

SUBJECT: Consideration of amendments to the Knoxville City Code, Appendix B, Zoning Code, Article 14.10, to amend the number of members on the Knoxville Board of Zoning Appeals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning recommends approval of amendments to the City of Knoxville Zoning Code, Article 14.10, Board of Zoning Appeals Organization, pertaining to the number of members, proposed by the City of Knoxville.

BACKGROUND:

This proposal increases the number of board members from 5 to 7, as outlined in the attached memo from Bryan Berry, Deputy Director of Plans Review and Inspections, and aligns with the revisions to the City of Knoxville Board of Zoning Appeals Administrative Rules and Procedures adopted on September 15, 2026.

**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: September 22, 2026

TO: Amy Brooks

FROM: Bryan Berry
Deputy Director of Plans Review & Inspections

RE: Amendment to Article 14.10.A – Increase from Five to Seven Members

The proposed amendment to increase the membership of the Board of Zoning Appeals from five to seven members is intended to improve the Board's ability to effectively conduct business and provide timely decisions.

Board member attendance can vary, resulting in meetings where the full Board is not present. Because variances require a specified number of affirmative votes for approval, absenteeism make it more difficult for applicants to obtain the necessary votes.

As a result, applicants can choose to postpone their cases until a meeting with higher attendance, creating delays in project schedules and extending the time required to reach a decision. Expanding the Board to seven members will provide greater flexibility when members are absent, while also improving the Board's ability to maintain a quorum and conduct business efficiently.

Increasing the Board's membership will help reduce delays, improve consistency in the decision-making process, and ensure applicants have a fair opportunity to present their requests without being disadvantaged by attendance fluctuations. Staff believes a seven-member Board will enhance operational effectiveness and provide a more reliable and predictable review process.

Sincerely,

Bryan Berry, AICP
Deputy Director of Plans Review & Inspections

14.10 BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ORGANIZATION

A. Members Generally

A Board of Zoning Appeals consisting of ~~five~~ seven members must be nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

B. Terms and Renewals for Members

The term of each member of the Board of Zoning Appeals is five years except that on the initial board, one member will serve a term of one year, one member a term of two years, one member a term of three years, one member a term of four years, and one member a term of five years so that the term of one member will expire each year, as per Tennessee Code Annotated § 13-7-205. A member may serve consecutive terms upon re-nomination by the Mayor and confirmation by the City Council.

C. Powers and Responsibilities

Powers and responsibilities are as listed in Section 14.3 above.

D. No Compensation

All members serve without compensation.

E. Adoption of Administrative Rules

The Board of Zoning Appeals must adopt administrative rules and submit these rules to the City Council or Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission, as appropriate, for adoption. These rules must outline terms including, but not limited to, election process for the chairperson, meeting schedules, voting procedures, application requirements, and the appeals process.

F. Changes to Rules

The Board of Zoning Appeals has the authority to make changes, revisions, modifications, and additions to its administrative rules as necessary and to submit the same for approval in accordance with item E above.

(Ord. No. O-113-2020, § 1, 7-28-20)

Note(s)—Former § 14.11. See editor's note, § 14.9.