



FERGUSON TOWNSHIP

Authorities, Boards, Commissions

OVERVIEW AND APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION

Consider Becoming More Involved

Many different Authorities, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) have been formed to support Ferguson Township's elected officials and staff. This booklet covers the various ABCs and their functions and includes an application form for anyone interested in serving on one of these bodies. Your completed application will aid Township officials in filling vacancies on the ABCs.

Those individuals who devote their time, energy, and know-how to the ABCs are a vital part of Ferguson Township. We could not function without them.

Please read this booklet. Think about how you can help your local officials make your community even better. For more information, call the Ferguson Township Administrative Office at (814) 238-4651, Dept. 4 or e-mail admin@twp.ferguson.pa.us.

HISTORY AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT

History

Established in 1801, Ferguson Township is named after Thomas Ferguson, an early settler who founded Pine Grove Mills. Situated in the southwestern corner of Centre County, the township is one of six municipalities in Pennsylvania collectively known as the Centre Region. It is the largest municipality in land mass in the region, with approximately 49.2 square miles, and has 81 miles of township maintained roadways.

Our township is the home of one of seven high technology centers in the Commonwealth, and much of Penn State's agricultural research is conducted here. Ours is a diversified community, combining residential life with business, higher education, industry, and agriculture. These attributes create a high quality of life for the people of our Township -- a place where families can enjoy nature at its best, work in a pleasant environment, and take part in the region's recreational, social, and cultural activities.

Form of Government

Ferguson Township is a home rule municipality. In May, 1974, the electorate, by referendum, adopted a home rule charter that instituted a council-manager form of government. The Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors is the governing and policy making body. It consists of five elected officials (two elected at large, three elected by ward) who are responsible for setting tax rates, approving an annual budget, and enacting ordinances to carry out policy. The Board of Supervisors represents the township as members of the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG). Each Board member serves on various committees of the COG which deal with regional issues such as transportation, code enforcement, public services, finance, and personnel. The Board of Supervisors appoints the Township Manager, Township Solicitor and Auditor.

TOWNSHIP AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

I. Ferguson Township Planning Commission

The Ferguson Township Planning Commission is an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors. It consists of seven members, each appointed by the Board for a four (4) year term. The Commission works closely with the Director of Planning and Zoning, Zoning Administrator and Engineer.

The Planning Commission meets twice a month, year round, normally during the evening hours. It considers planning issues such as rezoning requests, transportation, environmental impact, water and sewage issues. This body also reviews all land development and subdivision plans submitted to the township and forwards an advisory opinion to the Board of Supervisors. Reviews are performed to determine compliance with township zoning and subdivision regulations as well with state regulations.

The Commission then makes a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for their ruling on the issue in question.

II. Zoning Hearing Board:

The Ferguson Township Zoning Hearing Board consists of five members and two alternates, each appointed by the Board of Supervisors for a four year term. The Board works closely with the Zoning Administrator. The Board meets once a month, usually in the evening, to review appeals and variance requests.

The zoning hearing board is a quasi-judicial body that works independently of the Board of Supervisors. Each year, a solicitor is appointed to serve this body as legal counsel at hearings and to prepare the legal documents that reflect the decisions of the zoning hearing board.

The Zoning Hearing Board decides upon the following:

1. Requests for variance from various sections of the Zoning Ordinance and Sign Ordinance.
2. Appeals of decisions made by the Zoning Administrator regarding the granting or denial of a permit, issuance of any cease-and-desist order, and determinations made in administration of the ordinances.

III. Ferguson Township Industrial and Commercial Development Authority

The Ferguson Township Industrial and Commercial Development Authority (ICDA) promotes economic development within Ferguson Township and the entire Centre Region by assisting organizations in obtaining low interest bank loans. The ICDA helps to obtain financing for the creation and expansion of physical plant facilities, including land, construction, and equipment as defined by the Internal Revenue Service Code. This authority consists of five members, each appointed to a five year term. The authority meets as needed.

IV. Ferguson Township Tax Review Board

The Ferguson Township Tax Review Board consists of six members who meet when the issue of a tax increase arises within the township. These members are appointed to a four year term and meet only when the Board of Supervisors is considering a new source of tax revenue or revising an existing source of tax revenue. The tax review board then makes a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors concerning tax increases.

CENTRE REGION AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

I. Centre Region Council of Governments:

The Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) is an association of agencies that assists the individual municipalities in the operation of their local government. COG deals with regional issues that go beyond the day-to-day operation of the government units.

In 1960 the Centre Regional Planning Commission was formed, and by 1965, all six municipalities that now make up the Centre Region were members. The regional planning commission is the forerunner of regional cooperation, addressing itself to issues of regional physical development. In 1965, the State College Area Parks and Recreation Board was formed and, in 1966, elected officials began meeting informally as a Council of Governments. A number of regional services and programs also began. In 1969, all municipalities formally adopted Articles of Agreement, which stipulated regulations for the membership, organization, and financing of COG. Since its inception, COG has developed a high quality of service in existing programs and has expanded regional services and programs to meet regional needs.

II. Centre Regional Planning Commission Representative

Annually, Ferguson Township appoints one member of its own Planning Commission to serve as representative to the Centre Regional Planning Commission. This body considers planning issues and problems that extend into two or more municipalities and makes recommendations for action to the Centre Region Council of Governments. The Centre Regional Planning Commission meets once a month.

III. Centre Regional Parks and Recreation Representative

Ferguson Township appoints one individual to represent the Township as liaison with the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Board. This individual is appointed to a five year term. This board receives requests for equipment and repairs to Centre Region parks and makes recommendations on the requests received. The Centre Region Parks and Recreation Board meets once a month.

IV. Schlow Memorial Library Representative

Two representatives are appointed to the Schlow Memorial Library Board for a three year term. This board sets policies for the library and oversees library operation. Members may also serve on the library's finance or building committee. The average board member attends twelve to fifteen meetings per year, including both board and committee meetings.

V. Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)

The Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) provides public transportation to Ferguson Township residents via Center Line and The Loop. The township appoints one member to serve as the Township's liaison on the CATA Board for a five year term. The CATA Board is responsible for determining transit policy, preparing operating budgets, approving routes, scheduling, setting, and adopting fees, and supervising staff operations. The CATA Board holds meetings once a month.

VI. State College Borough Water Authority

Ferguson Township appoints one member to serve as the contact person for the State College Borough Water Authority Board. The member is appointed to a five year term. The appointee has no voting power on this board but is there to receive and transmit information and to convey the township's position on various matters. This authority meets once a month.

VII. University Area Joint Authority (UAJA)

The Township appoints two members to the University Area Joint Authority Board. The UAJA Board consists of two members from Ferguson Township and State College Borough and one member each from Patton, Harris, and College Townships, each serving a five year term. The UAJA owns and operates an advanced wastewater treatment facility for the Centre Region. UAJA operates independently of the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors. This board meets every other month.

Note: Four times a year, the Board of Supervisors requests each Centre Region ABC representative to provide an update to the Board at a regular meeting. This gives the Board an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

If you have any questions regarding the authorities, boards, and commissions described in this booklet, call the Ferguson Township Administrative Office at (814) 238-4651, Dept. 4, visit the township building, 3147 Research Drive, State College, PA 1680, or e-mail the Township Manager at admin@twp.ferguson.pa.us.



FERGUSON TOWNSHIP APPLICATION FOR ABC MEMBERSHIP

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (w) _____ (h) _____ (e-mail) _____

Occupation: _____

Are you a resident of Ferguson Township?

_____ yes _____ No

If yes, for how many years? _____ Voting Ward: 1 2 3
(Circle One)

Experience as an elected or appointed official:

Type of Position:

Duties Involved:

ABC(s) that you are interested in being appointed to:

Special Skills you have which relate to the ABCs applied for:

Other information that may be relevant in requesting appointment to the ABC(s): (please attach any additional relevant information)

Signature of Applicant

Return your completed applications to: Ferguson Township Manager
3147 Research Drive
State College, PA 16801