

# CLT ZONING ADMINISTRATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

What to Expect, as of July 30, 2013

*The Michigan Township Association (MTA) states, "Zoning is governmental regulation of the use of land with primary goals to ensure the compatibility of land uses and prevent nuisances, protect natural resources, and protect property values."*

*It goes further to say, "Zoning implements a community's master plan through the zoning ordinance, which divides the community into various districts or zones, and specifies the land uses, such as residential, commercial or industrial, that are authorized by right, permitted with conditions or prohibited within each zone."*

*According to American Planning Association, a zoning administrator is the local government official responsible for "administering and enforcing the zoning code and land development regulations, including the issuance of zoning permits and master permits."*

*The following is our official CLT/ZA Job Description:*

The Zoning Administrator will be the principle assigned to implement, interpret and enforce our zoning code. ZA will render consistent decisions, such as deciding variance applications and interpreting sections of the zoning code, provide leadership and provide consultation services to the Planning Commission, and issue enforcement citations. ZA will also assist a planning commission and enforce the violations of the ZO. Note that decisions by the ZA are subject to appeal to our appointed Zoning Board of Appeals, where ZA will defend decisions in public hearings before this appellate body. Some specifics of ZA job description are incorporated into our Ordinances but in addition it is included that the ZA will

- come to work on time (at present, one morning a week for 3 in-office hours)
- have limited availability by phone and email the rest of the work week
- go on site visits as needed
- do work in a timely fashion (e.g. fast turnaround permit time)
- make decisions that are consistent (that have basis in ZO)
- make decisions that do not endanger or otherwise compromise CLT's people, wildlife or environment in favor of the individual or a narrow business interest
- allow that all work is transparent (fully open to scrutiny and review)
- give everyone full and ready access to well organized and up-to-date public records
- work closely with the Planning Commission (e.g. attend PC meetings, lend both expertise and leadership)
- offer and/or write updates to the CLT Zoning Ordinance
- defend decision(s) should they be contested before the Zoning Board of Appeals
- communicate regularly with the CLT Board and with the wider CLT community
- work with Township officials for both publishing proper and legal zoning notifications, and for conducting proper and legal ZO adoption procedures

- be a model employee and ambassador of the township

*In your submitted paperwork and possible interview we will be looking for your full understanding of the job description and job expectations, as well as your*

### 1) Education

. . .including schooling, certification and licensing. Because zoning administrators work in the general arena of urban planning, a college degree in (urban) planning, engineering, architecture or geography is often looked upon favorably. In large cities it is common to see zoning administrators with Masters degrees in such related fields. In small towns only a high school diploma or GED is required along with coursework in plan drafting and blueprint reading. Though we are small in area and populous, we have big issues and are looking for as much applicable education as possible.

### 2) Experience

. . .in previous jobs. The more you've worked in this field, and the wider your scope of work, the better. We will probably favor someone who has worked as a ZA before, though it is not a prerequisite. Work experience in planning would be a high priority for us. Icing on the cake would be work experience in zoning law and/or land use law.

### 3) Understanding of Zoning & Planning

. . .and for both your ideas behind, and interpretations of, the duly adopted zoning ordinance, including the planning, construction, environmental, recreational and transportation studies that generally precede adoption of a zoning code, the code language, and the legal processes incorporated in the code.

### 4) Skills

. . .that encompass at a wide range of abilities not necessarily linked to this specific job. Concrete skills will not be enough; our ZA must also have a special kind of personality that is harder to quantify. As a zoning administrator you must be a clear writer and public speaker, be extremely organized and communicative, understand architectural plans and construction documents, be facile with word processing and geographic information systems, and understand basic tenants of land use law. You must have a manner which will exude leadership and knowledge while remaining kind but resolute. We need someone who will hold firm in the face of opposition, yet remain pleasant and calm while doing so. We would ask you to hold on to such a demeanor at all times, in public hearings, while you make public presentations, as well as in the office and on the building sites. And when land use issues are foremost in the township's agendas, you must be prepared to work in a tense environment where factions with different ideas of growth are often at odds with each other. To summarize, first and foremost we are looking for someone who will stick to the ordinances without deviating into unprecedented interpretations, someone who will follow the law and be

dedicated to the proper due process at all times and have all the technical capabilities to carry out the job. But we are also looking for our candidate to have personality traits which will give CLT both a respectable and fair voice of authority and simultaneously make the township a genuine pleasure to do business with.

## 5) Understanding of the CLT community

. . .which translates into suggested duties (behind the scenes investigations really) so that you better serve our unique jurisdiction. It will be your “duty” to get to know this township and as much about it as possible in order to serve its people, it’s land and its resources. Finding the answers to the following might help you to do just that: How do people earn a living here? Who pays what taxes? What are the percentages of homesteaders vs. non-homesteaders? Why do people live here and not elsewhere? How and to what extent are our three bodies of water utilized, appreciated, valued? Is water quality, fracking or wind power an issue now or in the future? How does the airport in our midst affect us? Who are our visitors, how many are there, what do they do and when are they here? How many renters live here, how many businesses operate here, how many children under the age of 18 or how many retirees do we host? How many CLT residents need special services, such as those living on welfare or living below the poverty line? Are there any strong township leaders who have a notable vision for the future, and who is following those leaders? Do we have a sense of community or are we just many disparate persons living in a rural setting? What are relations between our seasonal folks and our year ‘rounders? What is our relationship to other communities, such as Frankfort, Lake and Benzonia? Answers to these questions will help illuminate some underlying township issues that will surely come into play as you work here.

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*A Summary of Expectations might seem redundant now but the expectations bear repeating. Our aim is to serve our constituency and give them excellent services. We expect no decision to be made in a vacuum. Instead, we expect you to do your specific tasks with a high level of professionalism, drawing on your education and experience, the law and your understanding of the community, when making decisions. This includes keeping a special eye out for protection of the individual but not at the cost of the community, for business concerns but not at the cost of the environment, all the while carefully walking the difficult line between the letter of the Ordinance and flexibility/accommodation on the other. We hope that you are thoughtful and smart. You should possess some inordinate amount of patience when dealing with people, including fellow board and staff members. We expect you to be nice, even when someone else may not be, and to always keep in mind that we serve “public” bosses: the taxpayers, residents and visitors to Crystal Lake Township. You should agree that our aim is not just to run the township government, but to run it efficiently. We think that also means conveniently, by performing our duties where the people can dependably find us, and where the records are kept.*