



Payne-Phalen
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Frequently Asked Questions about serving on the Board of Directors

The Community Council's mission is to improve the neighborhoods in Payne-Phalen by engaging, educating, and empowering all residents and businesses in our diverse community. Serving on the Board of Directors is an opportunity for you to represent your neighbors and other members of the community by sharing your voice, your talent, your ideas, and your perspective on the part of the city where you live or work.

What should I know about the Board, the organization, and the district council system?

The Payne-Phalen Community Council is one of 17 community councils established by the City of St. Paul in 1975 to engage residents and to collaborate with city government. The purpose of each district council is to create opportunities for residents to learn about what is happening in their neighborhood and to collaborate with one another to maintain and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

The Payne-Phalen Community Council is registered as a Minnesota 501(C)3 non-profit, charitable organization with a voluntary, unpaid board of directors. The Board is composed of members elected by their neighbors and other members of the community for a three-year term. In some cases, community members can be appointed to fill a vacancy on the Board until the time when new elections are held. The Payne-Phalen Community Council has an office and paid staff that serve the Board. The organization receives basic funding based on the size and characteristics of our local population relative to the City of St. Paul. Amongst all 17, Payne-Phalen is the district with the highest levels of poverty and economic challenge in the city. Our district also has the most culturally diverse and vibrant population of St. Paul's 17 districts.

What are the special opportunities for those elected to serve on the Board?

Our district council is involved in work to improve the physical, social, and economic environment in our neighborhoods. As part of that work, we are responsible for the development and creation of a district plan (sometimes referred to as a neighborhood plan). Currently, Payne-Phalen is making a concerted effort to update our district plan for the first time since it was originally adopted way back in the 1970s! Bringing together the vision, aspirations and needs of today's population is especially critical work for Payne-Phalen since the population in this part of the city has changed dramatically in the four decades since the original district plan was created. Board Members who are elected to the coming term will be integrally involved in engaging the community in shaping the policies, principles and vision set out in the updated plan. And because our district plan is eventually adopted by the St. Paul City Council, serving on the Board at this time is a unique opportunity to help shape how local policies, regulations and budgets could and should have a positive influence on Payne-Phalen for years to come.

How will I be able to use my voice and share my talents with the Community:

PPCC's primary responsibility is to engage and represent the people living and working in this part of St. Paul. By serving on the Board of Directors, you are in a position to represent your neighborhood on issues and matters that make a difference in people's everyday lives. The Payne-Phalen Community Council is committed to equity and equitable access for all members of our community as the foundations to successful community engagement going forward. Our organization believes that...

- Our Board should accurately reflect the diverse communities we serve.
- As a district council, we are responsible to pursue systemic work that reflects the needs and priorities of all residents and business owners, especially those who have been historically under-represented.
- As a district council, we are responsible to review and adopt policies and practices that intentionally create space for traditionally under-represented communities.

Along with the work in planning and enhancing equity, Board Members are also involved in:

- Helping to shape organizational goals and objectives
- Reviewing community development proposals
- Advocating for public improvements to streets, parks, and other infrastructure
- Promoting social and environmental action through volunteering and advocacy
- Coordinating community gardens and neighborhood beautification projects
- Organizing block clubs and working with various agencies to improve public well-being

District councils rely on community-building activities and events as the basis for encouraging involvement in their neighborhood. Most Board members participate in several community events each year such as neighborhood forums, festivals, parades, and block parties.

What is the basic commitment and obligation for serving on the Board of Directors?

- Generally, each *Board Term* is 3 years. In some cases, shorter terms are possible.
- *Board Meetings:* The Board meets on the fourth Tuesday evening of each month. When it is allowed, we meet at the Arlington Hills Recreation Center at Payne and Maryland Avenues. When in-person meetings are not possible, we meet online or by phone.
- As an elected Board Member, you are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in all monthly meetings. For each meeting, Board Members are expected to read and review a 5-10-page packet of materials sent to you a few days in advance of the meeting. These materials give background information on what will be presented and discussed at the meeting. At the meeting, you are expected to participate in the discussion, ask clarifying questions, and participate in decision making.
- *Fundraising:* Look for and participate in activities that help to raise funds used to support the mission, programs, and goals of the organization.
- *Help Recruit* community members to attend meetings and events, encourage them to engage and share their insights, and to be a part of the community conversation.

It's OK if you still have questions!

Please e-mail us at director@paynephalen.org or call us at 651) 774-5234. We're always happy to talk more!