

DESIGN COMMISSION

APPLICATION AND PROCEDURES

SIGN VARIATION REQUEST



VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
33 SOUTH ARLINGTON HEIGHTS ROAD
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL 60005**

PHONE: (847) 368-5200

**EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2006
(revised DECEMBER 2023)**

Sign Variation Application and Procedures

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33 S. Arlington Heights Road

Arlington Heights, IL 60005

I. Purpose and Jurisdiction

1. The purpose of the Design Commission is to provide an appointed, advisory body that shall make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on matters related to existing architecture design, aesthetics, landscape and signage. Using the adopted Design Guidelines and the Village's Sign Regulations, this Commission will work with petitioners to develop creative design solutions aimed at improving the aesthetic quality of developments in Arlington Heights. The Commission shall review all relevant Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Building Permit and Sign Permit applications for new construction and those applications for improvements that substantially impact the architectural design or appearance of the building, site or signage. The Design Commission is normally scheduled to meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Arlington Heights Municipal Building located at 33 S. Arlington Heights Road.
2. The following types of projects will require Design Commission review:
 - a. **All proposed signs in the Central Business District that require a variation** or may not be in keeping with the Downtown.
 - b. **All requests for variations from pertinent sections of Chapter 30, Sign Regulations** that will require public notice by the petitioner and Village Board final approval.

II. Application Process

1. A preliminary meeting with the Staff Liaison in the Planning and Community Development Department can be scheduled if the petitioner would like to discuss the project design and Design Commission process.
2. The petitioner shall submit a complete a digital application. See Section IV for a list of materials required for Design Commission review.
3. In order to submit a digital application, all petitioners must register for an Energov account through the Citizens Self Service (CSS) Portal. The link to register and access the CSS is available at www.vah.com/myportal . A tutorial on how to register for an Energov account can be found here: <https://youtu.be/8pGXJxNPbPk> . Once an applicant is registered and logged in to the CSS Portal you will choose **Apply** from the main menu and search **Design Commission Application** on the Application Assistant page.
 - a. Application Submission Recommendations
 - i. Please ensure that you review this application guide in its entirety in order to have all the required submission materials prepared before you begin the application process.
 - ii. Please name each digital file a unique name as the system will not allow files with the same name to be uploaded in the same application.
 - iii. Use an edit, or submission date to differentiate files that are asked to be resubmitted (such as plans and elevations) in order to avoid redundant file names.
 - iv. For additional guidance on navigating the CSS application, refer to the CSS user guide at the end of this document.

4. Once a complete application has been received, and based on agenda availability, Staff will inform the petitioner of a meeting date and notification deadlines through their Dashboard on the CSS Portal.
5. Allow 30 business days for review and scheduling of a formal review.

III. Public Meeting Process:

1. **Design Commission Meeting.** The Design Commission will hold a public meeting to review the proposal. Petitioners or their representatives will make a formal presentation to the Design Commission and answer any questions concerning the proposal. It is required that the petitioner attend the scheduled Design Commission meeting. The Design Commission will work with the petitioner to resolve any outstanding design issues and make a final recommendation to the Village Board.
 - a. **Design Commission Re-Review:** For petitions requiring a subsequent Design Commission re-review, the petitioner will be required to upload revised drawings through the CSS Portal.
2. **Village Board Meeting.** Once a recommendation is received from the Design Commission, final approval from the Village Board is required. The Design Commission's recommendation is forwarded to the Village Board of Trustees for final consideration. The Staff Liaison will be the contact for the Village Board meeting coordination. Staff will schedule on a first-come first-serve basis on the next available agenda. It is required that the petitioner attend the Village Board meeting. The Village Board meeting date is subject to availability.
3. **Ordinance Approval.** If the Village Board recommends approval of the requested sign variation(s), an Ordinance will then be prepared by Village Staff for formal approval at the next available Village Board meeting. The petitioner is not required to attend the Ordinance approval meeting.

How to Avoid Postponement:

Prior to submitting a formal application, petitioners can meet with the Staff Liaison to discuss their project design concepts on an informal basis. This optional step provides petitioners with feedback from the Planning Staff prior to preparing the drawings required for a complete submittal. Failure to comply with the application requirements will cause postponement of your Design Commission meeting. If you have any questions, please contact the Planning and Community Development Department Design Commission Liaison at (847) 368-5213.

Audio/Visual Material Submittal Requirements for Public Meeting Presentations:

The Village of Arlington Heights has projection capabilities in the rooms where public hearings and/or public meetings are held. Therefore, in lieu of presentation boards, the Village requests that presentations are made digitally.

Presentation at the Meeting:

The Staff liaison will be present at the meeting to facilitate projection of the submitted documentation. If the presenter has any specific requirements regarding the presentation or meeting, these must be relayed to the Staff liaison **three days prior** to the hearing or meeting.

All questions regarding the submittal requirements and/or presentation logistics shall be directed to the liaison responsible for the specific project.

Sign Variation Application and Procedures

Village of Arlington Heights

33 S. Arlington Heights Road

Arlington Heights, IL 60005

IV. Design Commission Review Submittal: Electronic (pdf) files for all items must be submitted through the CSS portal at time of application. Public meeting documentation will be submitted as requested by Planning & Community staff through the same portal.

- a. Fully dimensioned, detailed site plans including building locations, driveways, yards, setbacks, proposed signs, and existing signs with dimensions.
- b. Existing and proposed elevations of the building facades. Must be architectural scale, i.e., ¼-inch equals 1-foot or 1/8-inch equals 1-foot. Color renderings are required to indicate proposed signage.
- c. Fully dimensioned drawings of proposed signs with scale. Fully dimensioned and scaled drawing of any existing signage.
- d. Color photographs of subject property and surrounding properties: 3 sites to the left, 3 sites to the right, and 3 sites across the street. Color photos of any existing signage.
- e. List of all sign materials. (See attached Sample on Page 6)
- f. Letter for variation and hardship request, per Chapter 30, Section 30-902. The letter must address each of the variation criteria, point by point (See Page 5).
- g. Electronic sample board with images of all major materials including colors, textures, and finishes being proposed, or a digital photo of an actual material sample board. Please note that if a formal Design Commission meeting is required, then actual samples will be required to be brought to the meeting for review.
- h. Completed digital application through the CSS Portal, including digital signature. A \$300 application fee will be invoiced through the CSS Portal.
- i. Notification of property owners/taxpayers of record within 100-feet, per Chapter 30, Section 30-904a (Page 7), due no less than 7 days prior to the meeting. An affidavit (Page 10), list of property owners and receipts of certified mailings must be submitted to Staff no less than 7 days prior to the scheduled meeting date.
- j. Sign posting requirement, per Chapter 30, Section 30-904b (Pages 7 & 8), due no less than 15 days prior to a meeting. An affidavit (Page 9) and photograph of sign installed at the site must be submitted to Staff no less than 15 days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Drawings should be Design Development level, not construction documents. Incomplete applications will not be accepted or scheduled for review. Applications are required to meet code, and it is recommended that a design is submitted which is compatible to the neighborhood and follows the intent of the Design Guidelines.

V. Resources

Please review the Sign Tool Kit on-line at www.vah.com. The Tool Kit provides code items as well as suggestions and recommendations on the design of signs and creating a brand. A YouTube video is also available at www.discoverarlington.com.

Sign Variation Application and Procedures

Village of Arlington Heights

33 S. Arlington Heights Road

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CHAPTER 30, ARTICLE IX VARIATIONS

Section 30-901 Variations. In cases where there are particular or peculiar hardships in carrying out the literal provisions of the Chapter, the application shall apply to the Design commission for a variation from such provisions. The Design Commission recommendation will be forwarded to the Village Board of Trustees, where a variation may be granted, denied or modified, provided that any variation granted will be in harmony with the general provisions of the Chapter.

Section 30-902 Standards. The Design Commission and the Village Board of Trustees will base their recommendation for a variation on the following facts:

- a. the particular difficulty or peculiar hardship is not self-created by the petitioner; and,
- b. the granting of the variation shall not create a traffic hazard, a depreciation of nearby property values or otherwise be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals and welfare; and,
- c. the variation will serve to relieve the applicant from a difficulty attributable to the location, topography, circumstances on nearby properties or other peculiar hardship; and not merely serve to provide the applicant with a competitive advantage over similar businesses; and,
- d. the variation will not alter the essential character of the locality; and,
- e. the applicant's business cannot reasonably function under the standards of this Chapter.

Sign Variation Application and Procedures

Village of Arlington Heights

33 S. Arlington Heights Road

Arlington Heights, IL 60005

SAMPLE MATERIAL LIST*

1. Petitioner Name:
2. Date:
3. Project:
4. Location:

Retail/Condominium Building:

Storefront: "Hemlock Green" aluminum
Fabric Awnings: Light green, Sunbrella fabric
Signage: Plexi-glass internally illuminated, channel sign

**List of primary colors, textures and materials to be used.*

Sign Variation Application and Procedures

Village of Arlington Heights

33 S. Arlington Heights Road

Arlington Heights, IL 60005

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL CODE

Section 30-904 – Notification Requirements

- a. An applicant for sign variation shall, not less than seven days and not more than 30 days prior to the date set for the meeting of the Design Commission to hear the variation, serve written notice, either in person or by certified mail, on the last known taxpayers and/or property owners of record as reflected in the County records, of all property within 100-feet in each direction of the property lines of the subject property for which a variation is being requested; provided the number of feet occupied by all public roads, alleys, and other public ways shall be excluded in computing the 100-feet. If any part of a condominium property is located within this distance, written notification shall be made to the condominium association. If no such association exists, the applicant must notify each individual taxpayer of record in the condominium property. If, after a bona fide effort to determine such by the applicant, the owner of the property on which the notice is to be served cannot be found, the notice requirements of this section shall be deemed satisfied.

The required notices shall contain the address of the location for which the sign variation is requested, a brief statement of the nature of the request, the name and address of the legal and beneficial owner of the property, and time and date on which the meeting shall be held. The applicant shall furnish, at the time of the meeting (See Page 4, Item i. for specific instructions) a written statement (affidavit) certifying that he or she has complied with the requirements of this subsection. Attached to the written statement shall be a list of all property owners notified in accordance with the above, the receipts of the certified mail or the signatures of the property owners acknowledging the personal visit of the applicant, the returned notices which were undeliverable by the post office, along with a copy of the notice sent to each of the individuals therein specified.

- b. An applicant for a variation shall, not less than 15 days prior to the date of the Design Commission meeting at which the variation is to be discussed, post a readable sign on private property adjacent to the roadway. This sign must be removed no later than 10 days after completion of the final meeting. The required sign shall contain the current action requested, the date, time, and place where the meeting shall be held, a statement that further information can be obtained from the applicant and the Planning Department of the Village of Arlington Heights. The words "NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING" must appear at the top of the sign in letters no smaller than 1.5 inches. All costs associated with the sign are to be borne by the petitioner. See Page 8 for an example of a notice sign.

Sign Variation Application and Procedures

Village of Arlington Heights

33 S. Arlington Heights Road

Arlington Heights, IL 60005

SAMPLE SIGN

Size to be approximately 30" high by 48" wide.

All words and numbers must be no less than 1.5" in height.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

MEETING FOR: SIGN VARIATION REQUEST

MEETING LOCATION: ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS ROAD
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL 60005

DATE: (Fill in meeting date) **TIME: (Fill in meeting time)**

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE & COMMENTS INVITED

FOR DETAILS CALL: Or: Village of Arlington Heights
Department of Planning and
Community Development at
847-368-5200

(Petitioner's Name & Phone #)

1. Sign must state current action requested, date, time, and place of meeting.
2. Sign must be posted on private property facing and clearly visible from adjacent roadway(s), fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting date (i.e., if a corner lot, one sign must be provided facing each adjacent roadway).
3. All signs must be removed no later than ten (10) days after completion of the final meeting.
4. Photo must be taken of sign(s).
5. Sign must be on a flat hard surface that is readable.

Sign Variation Application and Procedures

Village of Arlington Heights

33 S. Arlington Heights Road

Arlington Heights, IL 60005

SIGN NOTIFICATION AFFIDAVIT
(Due to Staff 15 days prior to meeting)

I, _____ hereby certify that the public meeting sign(s) required by Chapter 30, Section 30-904 of the Arlington Heights Municipal Code were erected on the property commonly known as _____ on _____

(Subject Property Address) (Date of Posting)

Signature

Date

Subscribed and Sworn to before me
this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Notary Public

Sign Variation Application and Procedures

Village of Arlington Heights

33 S. Arlington Heights Road

Arlington Heights, IL 60005

CERTIFIED MAILINGS
NOTIFICATION AFFIDAVIT
(Due to Staff 7 days prior to meeting)

I, _____ hereby certify that the written notices to property owners within 100-feet required by Chapter 30, Section 30-904 of the Arlington Heights Municipal Code were mailed on _____.

(Date of Certified Mailings)

Signature

Date

Subscribed and Sworn to before me
this ____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary Public

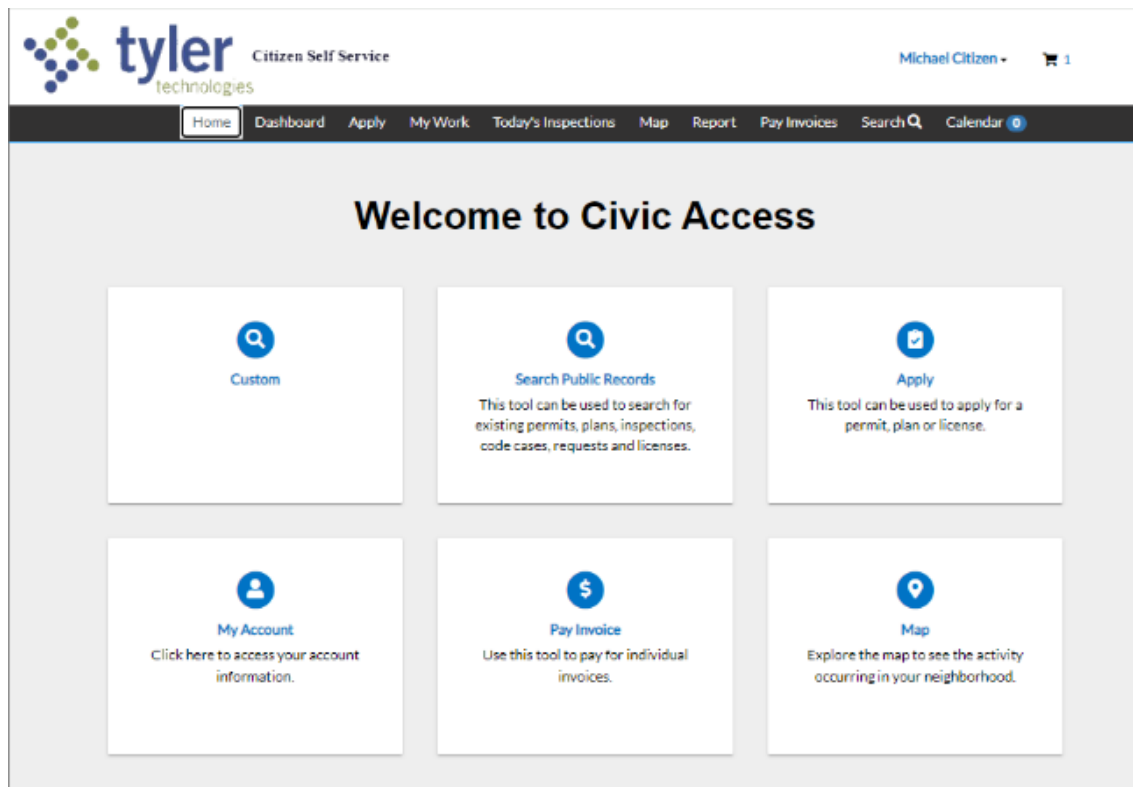
CUSTOMER SELF SERVICE (CSS) USER GUIDE

Registering and Applying in the Customer Self Service (CSS) Portal

All applicants must register for an Energov account through the CSS Portal. The link to register and access the CSS is available at www.vah.com/myportal.

A tutorial on how to register for an Energov account can be found here: <https://youtu.be/8pGXJxNPbPk>

Once an applicant is registered and logged in to the CSS Portal you will choose Apply from the main menu and search for the application you need on the Application Assistant page as shown below.



Application Submission Recommendations

- Please ensure that you review this application guide in its entirety in order to have all the required submission materials prepared before you begin the application process.
- Please name each digital file a unique name as the system will not allow files with the same name to be uploaded in the same application.
- Use an edit, or submission date to differentiate files that may be asked to be resubmitted (such as plans and plats) in order to avoid redundant file names.
- For additional guidance on navigating the CSS application environment, refer to page ### of this guide.

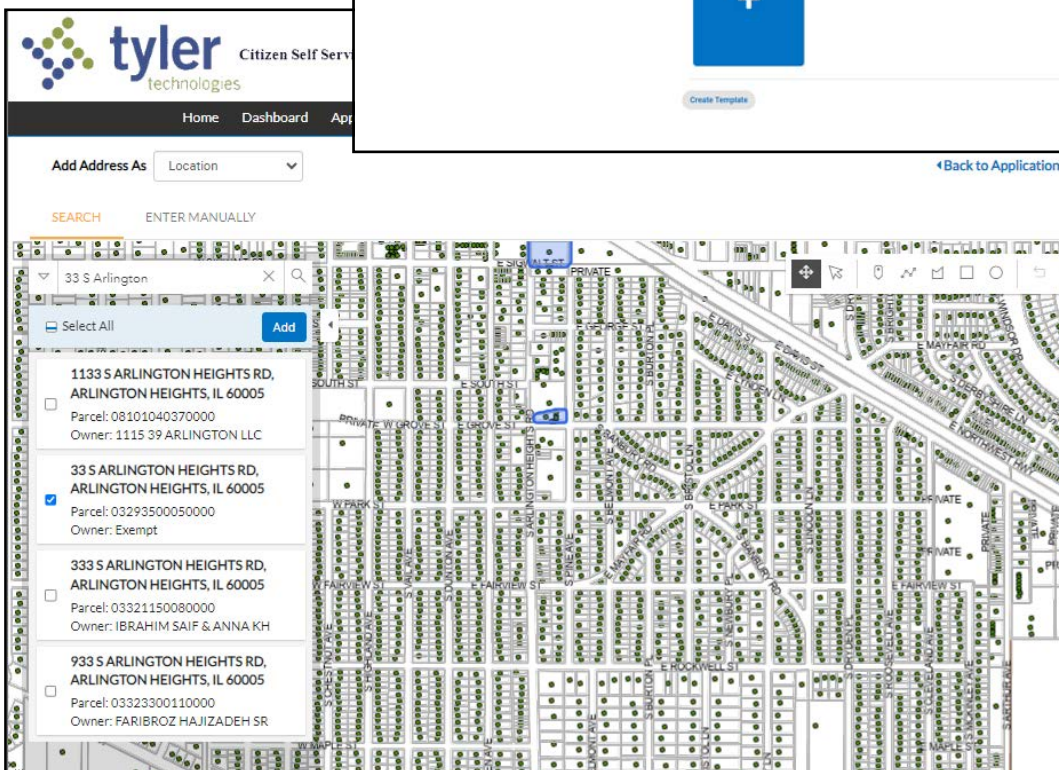
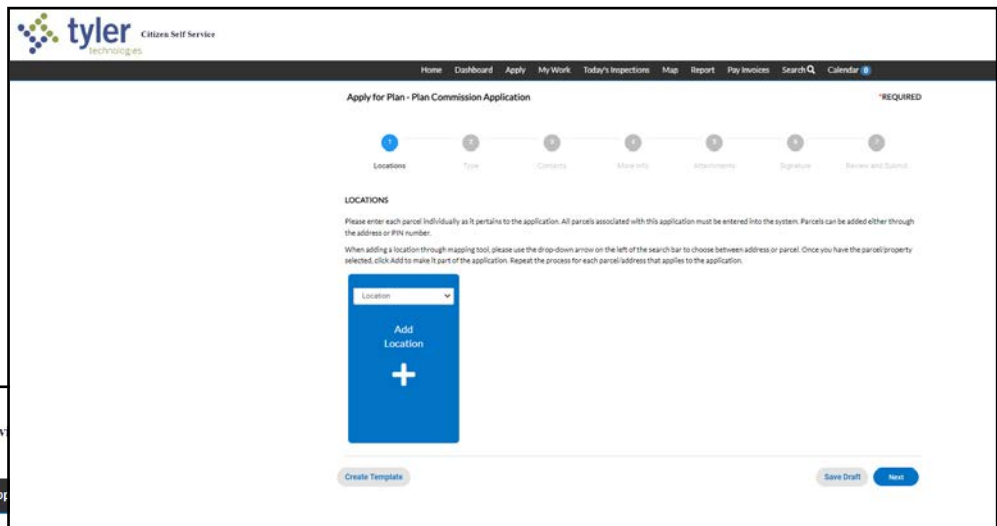
Adding Locations / Addresses to An Application

All applications must add at least one address or parcel location in order to start the application process. The first page of the application provides a brief description of how to do so with more detail provided below. To begin adding a location click on the "+" sign which will bring you to a live map that will give you the option to add a single address or parcel or multiple addresses and parcel locations.

Adding Single Locations

- Click the add location button with the "+" sign.
- You can type a portion or whole address you are looking for and the system will return suggestions. Select the location you wish to apply for and click add. You can also select from the points on the map.
- To select a specific parcel, use the down arrow symbol in the top left corner and select parcel. You can either type in the parcel number or select from the map.

Examples of Add Location menu and mapping tool.



Adding Multiple Locations

- Adding multiple addresses or parcels can be accomplished by using the map tools on the upper right-hand portion of the map. The first two tools allow you to pan and select point on the map. The remaining tools are used to select multiple parcels using different shapes such as a line, polygon, square and circle. Draw with the appropriate shape and the resulting parcels/addresses will be listed. Select the ones you would like to add to the application and click add.

Example of the multiple address/parcel selection tool

The screenshot displays the Tyler Citizen Self Service web application interface. At the top, the Tyler Technologies logo and "Citizen Self Service" are visible, along with a user profile for "Michael Citizen" and a shopping cart icon. A navigation bar includes links for Home, Dashboard, Apply, My Work, Today's Inspections, Map, Report, Pay Invoices, Search, and Calendar. Below the navigation bar, there is a search section with "Add Address As" set to "Location" and a "Back to Application" link. The main area features a map with a search bar containing "example: 001-073-001". A search results panel on the left lists three addresses, each with a checked "Select All" box and an "Add" button. The map shows a grid of streets with a blue polygon selection tool drawn over several parcels. A toolbar on the right side of the map contains various selection tools, including a point tool, a line tool, a polygon tool, a square tool, a circle tool, and a pan tool. A "1 Feature" tooltip is visible over the polygon tool.

Search Results:

- Select All [Add](#)
- 1527 N HICKORY AVE, ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL 60004
Parcel: 03202160010000
Owner: VALDA A GEBHART AS TRU
- 1530 N BEVERLY LN, ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL 60004
Parcel: 03202160040000
Owner: JOAN M HARLICK & APRIL
- 1537 N HICKORY AVE, ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL 60004
Parcel: 03202160050000
Owner: STEPHEN T STARK

Project Contacts

- Petitioners will be automatically listed as the applicant as they are logged into the Energov CSS system. To add additional contacts, click "+" sign.
- Contacts can be added from users already registered in the Energov system by using the Search tool by using their name, email or company name.
- Users may also be added manually using the Enter Manually button. Please provide as much information as possible if you are adding this information.

Examples of the contact submission window and the Manual Contact window.

The left screenshot shows the 'Apply for Plan - Plan Commission Application' window. It features a progress bar with steps: Locations (checked), Type (checked), Contacts (active), More info, Attachments, Signature, and Review and Submit. Below the progress bar, there is a 'CONTACTS' section with instructions: 'The Petitioner will be the primary contact for this application. If the petitioner is not the record owner, they must have a letter of authority from the owner or owners and provide as part of the documentation in Attachments in order to sign the application. If there is more than one owner, all parties must sign a letter of authority to appear on their behalf and provide in the attachments.' Below this, there are three columns for 'Applicant', 'Owner', and 'Petitioner', each with an 'Add Contact' button and a 'REQUIRED' label. A 'Select Type' dropdown menu is also present. At the bottom, there are 'Back', 'Create Template', 'Save Draft', and 'Next' buttons.

The right screenshot shows the 'Add Contact' window. It has a 'Back to Application' link and 'Add Contact' title. Below, it says 'Add Contact As: Owner'. There is a search bar with 'Enter Manually' and 'My Favorites' buttons. The 'Enter Manually' section includes a 'Certificates' link and a form with fields for: * First Name, * Last Name, Company Name, Email, * Home Phone, * Mobile Phone, and * Business Phone. A 'Submit' button is at the bottom.

More Info

Each application will have unique questions and required information that will need to be filled out in the **More Info** window. Please provide as much information as possible and refer to the documents listed in this application guide. All required fields will be marked with a red star. If a field is not required but it does not apply to your application, please type N/A so the reviewer knows you have acknowledged the question.

Attachments

Each application will have unique set of files that are required in order to be deemed complete. Required documents will be marked with a gray bar on the bottom or the blue box. A petitioner can obtain more information on what is required for each document by clicking on the “i” icon in the top right-hand corner of the blue box. Additional documents that may be required of your specific petition can be accessed through the “Select Type” dropdown menu on the last blue box. A list of permitted document submission will be provided to select from. To upload a document simply click on “+” symbol and navigate to a document on your computer.

Attachment recommendations:

- Please name each digital file a unique name as the system will not allow files with the same name to be uploaded in the same application.
- Use an edit, or submission date to differentiate files that may asked to be resubmitted (such as plans and plats) in order to avoid redundant file names
- Only the required documents are initially listed on the page. To upload a new document type, please click on the Select Type on the last blue box and select the type of document you are trying to provide. Once you have found the appropriate type click on the “+” sign to navigate to your document.

Example of the Attachment Upload Window

The screenshot displays a web interface titled "Attachments". At the top, there is a paragraph of instructions: "The following documents are required of all applications. Specific requirements for the particular application being applied for will be outlined in the Plan Commission Guide available on the Village of Arlington Heights, Permits and Licenses webpage. For each additional type of document that is required, please use the Select Type dropdown menu to select the type of document and press the Plus Sign to upload. Please be sure to have a unique file name for each document as redundant file names will prevent the file from being uploaded. Applications that do not include all necessary attachments will not be accepted."

Below the text are four blue rectangular buttons, each representing a required document type. Each button contains the document name, "Add Attachment", a large white plus sign, and the supported file formats. A small "i" icon is in the top right corner of each button. A gray bar at the bottom of each button indicates it is "REQUIRED".

- PC - Affidavit of Ownership (Supported: .pdf)
- PC - Project Description (Supported: .pdf)
- PC - Site Visit Authorization (Supported: .pdf)
- PC - Legal Description (Supported: .pdf, .doc, .docx)

Below these buttons is a "Select Type" dropdown menu. Below the dropdown is another blue button with "Add Attachment", a plus sign, and a list of supported file formats: ".pdf, .jpg, .png, .jpeg, .gif, .tiff, .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .text, .dwg, .zip, .csv, .rtf, .dxf...".

At the bottom of the window are navigation buttons: "Back", "Create Template", "Save Draft", and "Next".

Resubmitting Documents

After a petitioner submits an application, Planning & Community Development staff will conduct a Completeness Review and/or begin department review of the documents submitted as part of the application. As part of this review staff may request some documents be resubmitted, additional documents be uploaded, and acknowledgment of comments that need to be addressed.

The Customer Service Portal Dashboard provides real-time access to the status of an application as well as notifications on any documents or acknowledgements needed regarding an application.

The image below is an example of what will appear if an application requires a resubmission as part of a staff review. The Attachments tab is also shown in red as there is an action needed for one of the attachments.

The screenshot displays a web application interface for a Customer Service Portal. At the top, a navigation bar includes links for Home, Dashboard, Apply, My Work, Today's Inspections, Map, Report, Pay Invoices, Search, and Calendar. The main content area is titled "Plan Number: DC-000016-2023" and includes an "Add to Cart" button. Below this, there are tabs for Plan Details, Tab Elements, and Main Menu. The application details are presented in a light blue box with the following information:

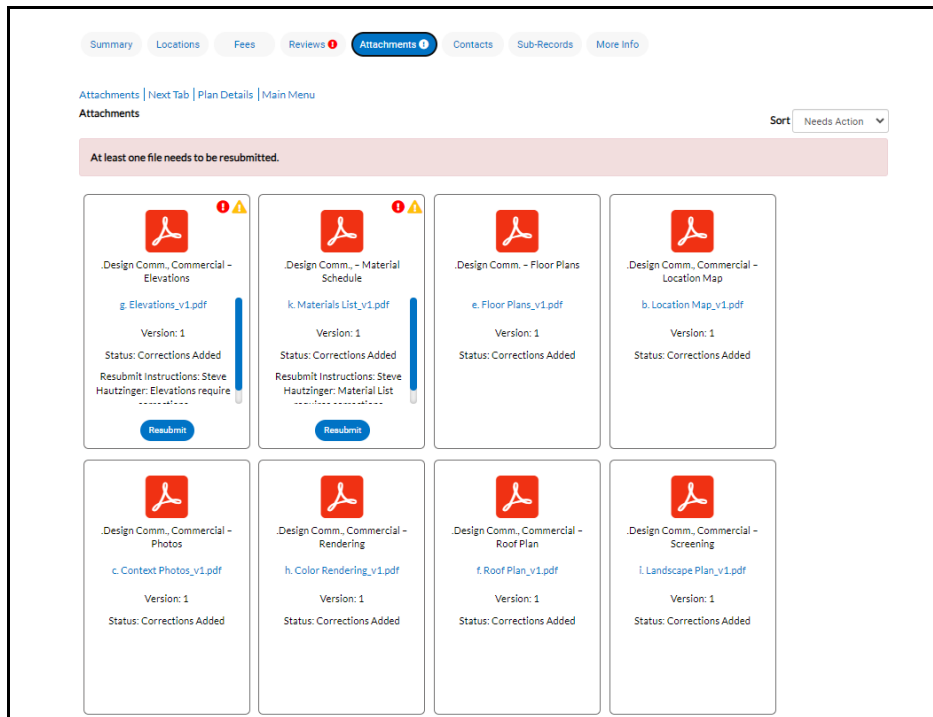
Type:	Design Commission (Non Single-Family Projects)	Status:	Fees Due	Project Name:	
IVR Number:	100049	Applied Date:	12/06/2023	Expiration Date:	12/05/2024
District:	Village of Arlington Heights	Assigned To:	Hautzinger, Steve	Completion Date:	
Description:	Full Circle - Supportive Low Income Project				

Below the details are several tabs: Summary, Locations, Fees, Reviews (highlighted in blue), Attachments (highlighted in red), Contacts, Sub-Records, and More Info. The "Reviews" tab is active, showing a "Planning Design Review" section with a table of submittal status:

Submittal Status	Received Date	Due Date	Completed Date
Requires Re-submit	12/06/2023	12/06/2023	12/06/2023

Below the table, a red notification banner reads: "Planning Design Review • Requires Re-submit • Hautzinger Steve • Completed : 12/06/2023". Underneath, there is a "Comment" section with a text area containing "First Round Comments".

The screen shot below shows an example of the Attachments tab in the CSS Dashboard that will appear when a new or additional document is needed as part of the review process. A petitioner will be provided a message on what is needed and can resubmit the document by clicking the blue Resubmit button.



A petitioner will also be asked to acknowledge comments or required changes as part of the resubmission process as shown below.

