

**CITY OF CORTLAND, NEW YORK**  
**LOCAL LAW NO. 6 OF THE YEAR 2023**  
**ADOPTED FEBRUARY 7, 2023**

**§300-51. Establishment of Historic Commission.**

- A. Establishment. The Historic Commission is hereby established as the primary administrators of this article. The Historic Commission shall consist of seven (7) members, who shall be appointed by the Mayor, subject to the approval of the Common Council. The Commission shall, at the beginning of each year, elect one of its members as chairperson. The Commissioners shall serve without compensation, except the Council may authorize compensation for expenses.
- B. Terms.
- (1) The term of office of each Commissioner shall be three (3) years. Terms of office shall be staggered over a three (3) year period in a manner that not less than two (2) nor more than three (3) members' terms expire in the same year. Terms shall begin the first day of January and shall end the last day of December.
  - (2) When a vacancy occurs during an unexpired term of office, the Mayor shall appoint a replacement member who shall serve until the completion of the unexpired term.
  - (3) The Common Council may by resolution reestablish the terms of an existing board such that the appointment of members shall be for terms so fixed that three (3) members shall be appointed for three(3) year terms, two (2) members for two (2) year terms, and two (2) members for one (1) year terms. At the expiration of each member's reestablished term, the subsequent member shall be appointed for a full three (3) year term.
- C. Membership.
- (1) The membership of the Historic Commission must fulfill the following qualifications, to the extent practicable:
    - a. One professional in the related fields of architecture, historical preservation, or urban design;
    - b. One resident and/or owner of property within the City that is either a designated historic landmark or located within a designated Historic District on the National or State Historic Registers; and
    - c. One resident with a known interest in the preservation of historical sites within the City.
  - (2) Each member of the Commission shall participate annually in a continuing education course to be approved by the Mayor upon the recommendation of the Commission.
  - (3) The Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission shall be elected each year by and from the members of the Commission.
- D. Meetings.
- (1) The Commission shall schedule regular review meetings on a monthly basis and notice all public hearings in accordance with New York State General City Law and the Codified Ordinances of the City of Cortland.
  - (2) The City Clerk or designee shall be the secretary to the Commission and shall take the minutes. The Historic Commission may hold additional meetings at the call of the Chairperson. The Chairperson may cancel any meeting.

- E. Powers and Duties. It shall be the duty of the Historic Commission to exercise aesthetic judgment and maintain the desirable character of landmarks and historic districts, prevent construction, reconstruction, alteration or demolition out of harmony with existing buildings insofar as style, materials, line and detail are concerned. The intent of such duty is to prevent degradation of property, safeguard public health, prevent fire, promote safety, and preserve local architectural character. In addition to the aforementioned powers, the Historic Commission shall have the power to:
- (1) Employ professional consultants, secretaries, clerks or other such personnel as may be necessary to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties, provided that such expenses are authorized by the Common Council with the approval of the Mayor or designee;
  - (2) Adopt rules and regulations as necessary to carry out the duties of the Commission;
  - (3) Designate identified structures or resources as landmarks and historic districts;
  - (4) Adopt criteria for the identification of significant historic, architectural, and cultural landmarks and for the delineation of historic districts, subject to approval of City Council;
  - (5) Conduct surveys of significant historic, architectural, and cultural landmarks and historic districts within the City;
  - (6) Formulate recommendations for consideration of the Common Council concerning the preparation of maps, brochures and historical markers for selected historic and/or architectural sites and buildings;
  - (7) Increase public awareness of the value of historic, cultural and architectural preservation by developing and participating in public education programs;
  - (8) Advise owners of historic buildings on methods of preservation and restoration;
  - (9) Cooperate with and advise the Common Council and other municipal boards and agencies in matters involving historic and/or architectural sites and buildings; and
  - (10) Approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove of applications for certificates of appropriateness pursuant to this article.