
CITY OF SEATTLE

PLANNING COMMISSION

BYLAWS
Amended
February 1996

Norman B. Rice, Mayor
Jan Drago, President, City Council

Roger Wagoner, Chair, Planning Commission
Marty Curry, Director

**City of Seattle Planning Commission
1996
Roger Wagoner, Chair
Karen E. Daubert, Vice Chair**

**Christi Clark
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Karen Daubert
Maria Gonzalez
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Bruce Hayashi
Kenichi Nakano**

**John Phillips
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CITY OF SEATTLE

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

BYLAWS

ADOPTED February 8, 1996

Signed

Roger Wagoner

These bylaws supersede those adopted and amended between 1957 and January, 1996.

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**City of Seattle
City Planning Commission
Bylaws**

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Introduction

(Commission Resolution 7/8/82)

A. Purpose

Article XIV, Section 1 of the Charter of the City of Seattle provides that: “It shall be the duty of such Commission to make recommendation to the Legislative and other City departments on the City’s broad planning goals and policies, and on such plans for the development of the City as its present and future needs may require. The Commission shall also advise and make recommendations to the Legislative and other City departments in connection with matters relating to the City’s physical development and redevelopment as may be directed by ordinance.”

B. Commission Goals

1. To influence in a positive manner the major planning efforts and projects that will affect the city.
2. To advocate consistency and integration among plans which provide a future image and direction for the city as well as the means for meeting more immediate needs.
3. To insure that effective citizen participation including opportunities for timely public involvement, are part of the City’s planning processes.
4. To represent a whole-city view point when evaluating proposed plans, projects and issues.
5. To make recommendations which recognize the city’s needs and government’s constraints as well as identified citizen viewpoints.

C. Role

Monitor, contribute to, and act on physical development policies, plans, projects and issues.

1. Follow selected planning activities of the City and other public and private sector entities which might affect the future physical development of the City:
 - a) maintain liaison with City planning offices and agencies,
 - b) review selected planning projects throughout their duration as appropriate, and

- c) encourage non-City public and private sector entities to consult with the Commission regarding their related planning activities.
2. Give special attention to process and timely opportunities for public involvement.
3. Analyze problems, issues, and solutions and when appropriate formulate alternatives and recommendations.
4. Identify gaps and inconsistencies among planning efforts and coordinate activities to correct problems.
5. Consider new plans and amendments to adopted plans and make recommendations.
6. Identify issues for future planning efforts.
7. Advocate for appropriate planning initiatives and other recommendations adopted by the Commission.
8. Produce public forums where citizens and Commissioners can gain information concerning planning issues, where differences over planning issues may be identified and where an opportunity may be provided for discussion and problem solving.

D. Work Programs, Priorities and Agendas

1. Work Programs should be established by evaluating:
 - the Mayor's Policy Planning Agenda
 - City Council's Work Program
 - City Department work programs
 - Other agency work programs (METRO, King Co., etc.)
 - City Planning Commission initiatives
2. Work programs should be established on a 12 month basis and should anticipate when the Commission will be taking an action. Work programs will also indicate the amount of staff time allocated to each item. A minimal amount of time will be reserved on the work program to respond to crisis issues.
3. An annual retreat should be held to orient new members, evaluate Commission's performance and adopt the next 12 month work program.
4. Agendas should reflect the Commission's priorities concerning items addressed and the amount of time allocated to each item. Action items will be distinguished from information items. When feasible, agenda items should be related and complement one another.

ARTICLE I

Organization

Membership

Sec. 1. The City Planning Commission shall be composed of fifteen members who shall be residents of the City of Seattle. Although Commissioners should exhibit a variety of interests, professional experience and opinions, they should act as individuals and represent the whole city as opposed to any special interest group (Commission Resolution 7/8/82). The Commission shall include residents from different neighborhoods within the City, at least one engineer or architect and an urban planner, and among others, members of ethnic minorities, and citizens active in neighborhood or community affairs (ordinance 109155).

Length of Appointment

Sec. 2. The Mayor shall appoint members of Commission subject to confirmation by the City Council. The term of office shall be for three years, and the terms of one-third of the members shall expire each year (ordinance 109155). A Commission member whose term has expired shall continue to hold office until a successor has qualified. No member shall serve more than two complete consecutive terms.

Removal

Sec. 3. A Commission member may be removed from office if absent without being excused from three consecutive Commission meetings or six regularly scheduled meetings in a year (ordinance 109155).

Filling Vacancies

Sec. 4. In advance of a vacancy, the Commission shall actively work with the Mayor's Office in finding a replacement

Compensation

Sec. 5. Members shall receive no monetary compensation for service on the Planning Commission.

Elections

Sec. 6. A Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected annually by the Commission in June and Serve from July 1 - June 30. Officers are limited to two consecutive terms in an office.

Nominating Committee

Sec. 7 The Chair in conjunction with the Executive Committee shall choose a nominating committee made up of no less than three Commission members, who will nominate candidates for Chair and Vice-Chair and present these nominations during the May Commission meeting (Commission Resolution 7/8/82).

Duties of Chair

Sec. 8 The Chair shall preside at all meetings, and act as spokesperson for the Commission at meetings with other organizations unless another spokesperson (s) is chosen by the Commission or the Chair. The Chair may delegate performance of duties to a Commission member or staff. An action by the Chair may be overruled by a majority vote of the Commission members unless otherwise specified in these bylaws. The Chair shall vote at all times and shall exercise the right to make a deciding vote in the event of a tie.

Adoption of the Work Program

Sec. 9 The Commission should annually adopt a Work Program which will be submitted to the City Council and Mayor for their review.

Standing Committees (Commission resolution 7/8/82)

- Sec. 10. A. Standing Committees shall be formed based on subject areas as determined by the Work Program.
1. Commission Chair assigns members and issues to each committee and appoints Committee Chairs, subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the Commission.
 2. Members shall serve on at least one committee and more if desired.
 3. Committees should meet regularly once a month and more often if necessary.
 4. Committees should analyze issues, receive briefings and formulate motions for the full Commission to consider. Committees will also make recommendations, take votes and present arguments to the full Commission. Final decisions are made by the full Commission.
 5. Committee evaluations shall consider how a particular plan, issue or project will affect the following: health and human services, energy, employment, housing, neighborhoods, transportation, utilities, open space, social equity, the built environment and other topics as appropriate.
 6. The Commission may assign one or more persons to sit with and participate in the proceedings of any committee of the Commission as deemed appropriate, to provide a specific expertise or viewpoint. The person will not be considered a member of the Commission and will have no authority to vote (Ordinance 109155).

- B. Executive Committee consists of the Commission Chair, Vice Chair and the Standing Committee Chairs.
 - 1. Executive Committee determines work programs, agendas, rules, assignments and recruitment of new members.
 - 2. Executive Committee will monitor each committee's activities

Special Committees

Sec. 11. The Commission may at any time create special committees and shall designate the committee's duties and functions.

Conflict of Interest (Seattle Municipal Code, 2.110.250 Code of Ethics)

Sec. 12 Conflict of Interest

Purpose: To establish criteria for determining when a conflict exists and guidelines for action if a conflict is identified.

A. Conflict

1. A Conflict of Interest is:

- a) engaging in a transaction or activity which is, or would to a reasonable person appear to impair, the Commissioner's independence of judgment or action in the performance of official duties;
- b) where a Commissioner has a financial or other private interest, direct or indirect, personally or through a member of his or her immediate family, in the matter upon which the Commissioner is required to act in the discharge of his or her official duties; 'financial or other private interest' shall include publicly funded professional work with the City of Seattle, such as consultant contracts associated with the City's Neighborhood Planning Project.

B. Disqualification

- 1. Commissioners shall disqualify themselves from Commission business for conflict of interest. Where Commissioners engage in publicly-funded professional work with the City of Seattle, disqualification shall mean not taking part in Planning Commission proceedings in which the Planning Commission makes an advisory recommendation.

Guidelines for Planning Commission and Planning Commissioner Actions

Sec. 13

A. Full Commission Actions

1. Vote on formal Commission positions, statements to go to City and other governmental officials (Mayor, Council, department directors, agency directors)
2. Vote to approve Committee generated letters of comment if requested to come from the full Commission (I recommend that most do come from the full Commission, especially those going to elected officials)
3. Recommendations to staff

C. Committee Actions

1. May comment as a committee on Department or agency generated draft policies and plans (vote of approval by full committee/signed by committee chair and Commission chair where possible)
2. May present proposals or prepare comments for full Commission action
3. Sponsor Commission activities related to Committee's focus; prepare results/findings

D. Individual Commission Members' Actions

1. May represent full Commission or Committee if authorized by them (e.g. testimony; meetings with Council, Mayor, etc.)
2. May speak as an individual Commissioner – reflect and inform about Commission positions and activities and on their own position as long as it is clear whether such position is or is not a Commission position.
3. May speak as an individual, clearly specifying they are speaking as an individual, or as an individual Planning Commissioner articulating their own views and concerns (e.g. I am speaking as an individual, not representing the Planning Commission.)

This role is delicate – being on the Planning Commission can be somewhat limiting to the extent that people view you in that role even if you provide a disclaimer. All personal statements should be made with the recognition that the Planning Commission does get judged by the actions/opinions of its members.

4. Should provide full disclosure to Commission (Chair and Director) on personal involvement on issues coming before the Commission
5. Should inform Director and/or Chair of individual/personal activities that relate to the Planning Commission

Personnel Administration

Sec. 14

- A. City Personnel Department rules and guidelines shall direct the Commission with respect to all personnel matters.
- B. The Commission shall appoint an Executive Director.
- C. The Executive Director shall be responsible for recommending the appointment of additional staff members, and for supervising such additional staff. The Executive Director shall also recommend suspension, dismissal or other discipline of a staff member when circumstances warrant such action. The Commission shall make the final decision on all appointments, suspensions, dismissals and other disciplinary action.
- D. The Executive Committee shall annually review prior to July 1 the Executive Director's job description and evaluate his or her performance.

ARTICLE II

Meetings And Hearings

Meetings

- Sec. 1. All regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public, provided any Commission meeting may be closed to the public or consider personnel matters or any other matter exempt from the Open Meetings Act.

Parliamentary Procedure

- Sec. 2. Unless governed otherwise by provisions which are part of these bylaws, Roberts Rules of Parliamentary Procedure shall govern the conduct of all Commission meetings and hearings.

Public Testimony

- Sec. 3. The public may speak on issues which come before the Commission. The Chair shall designate the appropriate time for public testimony and establish time limits for each speaker.

Place of Meetings

- Sec. 4. Unless otherwise determined by the Commission, all regular Commission meetings or hearings shall be held in a facility “accessible” to the public.

Meeting Schedule

- Sec. 5. Commission meetings shall be held on a regular basis as recommended by the Executive Committee and adopted by the Commission. The Chair may adjust the regular convening time of meetings.

Special Meetings

- Sec. 6. Special meetings of the Commission may be held whenever and wherever the Chair and/or Executive Committee may determine or upon petition by a majority of the members. Members shall be entitled to 24 hours notice of a special meeting.

Advance Notice of Agenda

Sec. 7. The Chair shall have the discretion to require notice before decisions are made on substantive issues. Notice of full Commission meetings and agendas should be posted and circulated to Commission members before each full Commission meeting.

Voting Quorum

Sec. 8. A quorum of the Commission shall consist of a majority of all members eligible to

Act As An Entity

Sec. 9. The Commission shall act as an entity in making and announcing its decisions. No member other than the Chair shall speak or act for the Commission without prior authorization by the Chair.

Proxies

Sec. 10. Members are not allowed to vote by proxy at Commission meetings.

Reconsidering Past Votes

Sec. 11. A motion to reconsider a motion that has already been voted on can occur under the following circumstances. A motion to reconsider:

- A. can only be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side
- B. cannot be voted on unless the Commission has been notified at least seven days before its scheduled meeting
- C. requires two-thirds vote of the voting quorum for passage and
- D. cannot be reconsidered.

ARTICLE III
RECORDS, PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Decisions in Writing

Sec. 1. All decisions of the Commission shall be evidenced in writing.

Books and Records

Sec. 2. All books and records of the Commission shall be open to public inspection during business hours.

Minutes

Sec. 3. Minutes of full Commission meetings shall be kept and shall be available for public inspection and copying.

Copies For The Public

Sec. 4. Copies of specific Planning Commission documents will be made available to the public upon written request, and upon payment of fees and expenses for copies established by ordinance.

ARTICLE IV
BYLAWS FOR CONDUCT OF COMMISSION BUSINESS

Adoption

Sec. 1. The Commission shall adopt these bylaws for the conduct of its business. Copies of such bylaws shall be made available for public inspection.

Revision and Amendment

Sec. 2. These bylaws, as adopted by the Commission, may be revised or amended by a majority vote of all Commissioners currently in office provided that copies of the proposed revision or amendment shall be made available to each commission member at least seven days prior to the meeting at which the proposed revision or amendment is to be acted upon. Announcement and discussion of the proposed change(s) shall occur at one meeting, and voting shall occur at the next meeting.

These bylaws superseded those adopted and amended between 1957 and February, 1983.