



Seattle Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Commission

BYLAWS

Adopted May 2018

WELCOME

Welcome to the City of Seattle's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Commission. You have joined a long-standing important Commission in the City of Seattle. Your participation is vital to the strength of the Commission. Many perspectives and voices need to participate in order to fully represent our LGBTQ communities. The attached bylaws govern the Commission's processes and procedures and answer many of the most frequent questions asked by other Commissioners during their tenure. We hope these bylaws are helpful to you, and we encourage you to review them periodically. ***Thank you*** for your commitment and willingness to serve the Seattle community by serving on the Commission.

LGBTQ COMMISSION OVERVIEW

The City of Seattle welcomes community participation at all levels of City government, from individuals accessing City services to participation in the formulation and implementation of public policy. Currently, the City of Seattle has many boards and commission that carry out a variety of advisory and legal functions. Service on boards and commission is voluntary. While each board or commission has specific functions, all serve as policy advisors to the Mayor, the Seattle City Council, and City Departments.

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) provides staff support to four commissions: the Seattle LGBTQ Commission, the Seattle Human Rights Commission, the Seattle Women's Commission, and the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities.

BYLAWS OF THE SEATTLE LGBTQ COMMISSION

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Seattle LGBTQ Commission for shall be to:

1.1 Connect with the Seattle Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Communities (hereafter referred to as "LGBTQ Communities") and overall Seattle Communities to promote understanding of the needs of members of the LGBTQ communities;

1.2 Provide information to the Mayor, City Council, and other City departments, offices, commissions, and boards concerning issues of importance to the LGBTQ Communities;

1.3 Ensure that City departments address fairly the concerns of LGBTQ persons individually and as a community as a protected class under City ordinance and other applicable laws; and

1.4 As appropriate, recommend policies to all departments and offices of the City in matters affecting LGBTQ people's concerns and recommend legislation for the implementation of such policies.

ARTICLE II: COMMISSIONERS

2.1: Membership

The Commission may consist of both voting commissioners and non-voting members. The number of voting members shall be the number prescribed in the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 3.14.920) and shall reflect a broad range of opinions, experiences, and expertise. Specifically, the Commission shall strive for racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, members from a range of ages, and members of various mental and physical abilities.

2.2: Voting Commissioners

2.2.1 Appointment Process

2.2.1a In accordance with Seattle Municipal Code 3.14.920(B) seven members of the Commission shall be appointed by the Mayor, seven by the City Council, and seven members by the Commission. In accordance with Seattle Municipal Code 3.14.920(C) there will also be one voting 'Get Engaged' Commissioner. All appointments are subject to City Council confirmation.

2.2.1b As needed, the Commission will undertake recruitment efforts by soliciting applications and conducting interviews.

2.2.1c When appropriate the Commission will then make recommendations to the City Council and Mayor's Office for appointments.

2.2.2: Term of Office

2.2.2 The term of office shall be for two years, except when an appointment is made to fill the remaining time of resigning Commissioner's term, or when outlined differently by municipal code. There is a limit of three terms per commissioner. At the end of their term, commissioners need to be invited back and reappointed to the commission to serve a new term.

2.2.3: Vacancies

2.1.3a) A Commissioner who wishes to resign from the Commission shall send a letter to SOCR and the Co-Chairs of the Commission.

2.1.3b) Any Commissioner vacancies shall be filled in accordance with Article II, Section 2.1 of these bylaws. They shall be appointed in the same manner as the Commissioner position was originally appointed and will serve for the remaining time of the two-year term.

2.2.4: Attendance

Attendance. It is the responsibility of each Commissioner to attend all scheduled meetings of the LGBTQ Commission.

2.2.5 Removal for lack of Attendance

Any member who accumulates a total of 4 absences for regular Commission meetings within a calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from the Commission. If a Commissioner is planning to miss a meeting for something such as work or planned travel, this should be communicated to the Co-Chairs as far in advance as possible. If a Commissioner unexpectedly misses a meeting (due to sickness, emergency, etc.), they are expected to communicate with the Co-Chairs as soon as possible to ensure there is an opportunity to catch up on anything missed.

The Co-Chairs will notify the commissioner after two absences to check in about their status. After two more absences, chairs will send a letter to the Commissioner notifying them that they have been removed from the Commission due to accumulating four absences.

If a Commissioner cannot attend a scheduled Commission meeting due to Commission-related business, this will not count towards the total of 4 allowed absences.

If a Commissioner needs to be absent for a significant amount of time they can request a leave of absence for up to 4 months. The request must be made before their 4th absence and must be made in writing to the Co-chair(s).

2.2.6: Removal and grievance procedures for reasons other than attendance

There may be times when a commissioner may be removed for reasons other than attendance including but not limited to: not acting in a professional manner, a conflict of interest, not acting in accordance with the duties outlined for commissioners in these by-laws. The following steps should be followed for grievance and remedying issues within the commission:

1. If problems arise they should be brought to the attention of the co-chairs.
2. A meeting will be set by the co-chairs with the commissioner who has identified as having an issue. Co-chairs will use the staff and/or Director of SOCR to mediate the situation as necessary. At minimum SOCR should be made aware of the situation.
3. Co-chairs will create an action plan with the commissioner to remedy the situation.
4. If behavior or circumstances do not change in an amount of time outlined by the co-chairs, the co-chairs would work to resolve the conflict and create a solution. This could include but is not limited to encouraging a commissioner to resign or recommending a commissioner be removed from the LGBTQ Commission. The full commission would vote on removal of a commissioner. A motion to vote would be brought by the co-chairs in a closed (non-public)

session. A 3/4 vote of those present would be necessary to remove a commissioner. All Commissioners will be contacted about this special meeting and vote at least 7 days in advance.

2.3: Compensation

Commission members shall serve without pay, but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of Commission duties if they obtained prior approval before incurring the expense.

2.4: Definition 'Voting Commissioners'

A Commissioner shall become a voting Commissioner, and thereafter entitled to vote, upon the happening of any of the following:

- a) The Commissioner's appointment to the Seattle LGBTQ Commission is confirmed by the City Council; or
- b) Two months have passed since the Commissioner was invited to join the Seattle LGBTQ Commission.

Once a Commissioner has been confirmed by the City Council for the individual's initial term, the Commissioner shall remain a voting Commissioner following the expiration of the initial term of office, provided that (i) the Commissioner has been invited by the commission to continue service as a Commissioner for an additional term, regardless of whether the individual has yet been confirmed for such additional term of office by the City Council, and (ii) the Commissioner has not resigned or been deemed to have resigned from the Commission.

ARTICLE III: COMMISSION OFFICERS AND LEADERSHIP

3.1: Diversity of Co-Chairs

The Commission shall elect up to three Co-Chairs, whose term begins in January of each year. The Commission values diversity in its leadership. Thus, the Commission will seek to elect diverse leaders who identify differently such as by gender, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or race.

3.2: Eligibility Requirement

Only appointed Commission members shall be permitted to hold a Co-Chair position.

3.3: Election Procedures

3.3.1 Nominations for Co-Chairs shall begin at least one week prior to the vote for the co-chairs. It is the responsibility of Commissioners interested in serving as Co-Chair to nominate themselves or to find another Commissioner to nominate them.

3.3.2 Voting Commissioners will cast their ballots for Co-Chairs by the end of the first meeting of the year so newly elected co-chairs can start new positions the day following the election.

3.3.3 Prior to the election, each candidate shall be given the opportunity to make brief remarks. After these remarks all members of the commission, may ask questions of each of the candidates and discuss the merits of each candidate openly.

3.4: Terms and Vacancies of Officer

3.4.1 Resignation from office A Co-Chair who wishes to resign their leadership position shall send a letter to SOCR and the other Commission Co-Chair(s). The letter shall clearly indicate if the Co-Chair is resigning from the Commission entirely or just the Co-Chair leadership position.

3.4.2 Filling vacancies If a Co-Chair position is vacated before the end of a term a new Co-Chair will be elected at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting per election procedures in these bylaws.

3.4.3 Terms of officers The Co-Chairs shall begin their term the day following the election and each serve for the remainder of a term from which someone resigned. No Commissioner shall serve as Co-Chair for more than two consecutive years. A Co-Chair elected to fill an unexpired term of six months or less shall be able to serve up to two full terms as Co-Chair in addition to the unexpired term they filled.

3.5: Duties of Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs shall preside over all Commission meetings. In the event that all Co-Chairs are absent or unable to perform their duties, their duties will be assumed by a member approved by a majority of members present. The Co-Chairs shall act as the official spokespersons for the Commission to the media, Mayor, City Council, or other governmental entities unless another spokesperson is chosen by the Commission or the Co-Chairs. Commission members may speak on behalf of the Commission in other circumstances, however, in all cases, Co-Chairs shall represent the majority position of the Commission. The Co-Chairs shall have the authority to approve expenditures up to \$50 and shall bring request for funds over \$50 to a full Commission vote.

3.6: Co-Chair Voting Rights and Overruling Co-Chair Actions

An action by a Co-Chair may be overruled by a majority vote of the Commission members in attendance. The Co-Chairs may vote at all times.

3.7: Removal of Co-Chairs

Any voting Commission member may make a motion to consider the removal of any Co-Chair from office at a regular monthly meeting of the Commission, provided that at least seven (7) days written notice of such intent is given to all voting Commission members. The motion to consider removal shall be made at the first monthly meeting following the required notice. The motion to remove shall be voted on and requires a three-quarter (3/4) majority vote, by secret ballot, of all voting Commissioners (*not* only 3/4 of Commissioner's present) to pass. The Chair of the Commission Operations sub-committee and someone from the Seattle Office for Civil Rights shall tally the votes.

ARTICLE IV: COMMITTEES

4.1: Commission Committees The Commission may create or disband committees, either standing or special. At the time of creating any committee, the committee's duties and functions shall be defined in writing and approved by the Commission. Only voting Commissioners may chair a committee. Each Commissioner must serve on one (1) committee. To the extent possible, membership on committees shall be based on the preferences expressed by individual Commission members. The Co-Chairs shall reserve the right to appoint members of Commission committees. Non-commissioners can also serve on committees at request of the committee co-chair.

Commission members will select a chair for the committee by a simple majority vote. If a chair cannot be selected for the committee for any reason the Co-Chairs shall appoint a chair subject to approval of the Commission.

4.1.1: Executive Committee

a) The Executive Committee shall consist of the Co-Chairs of the Commission and the chairs of each Commission sub-committees. The Commission staff person and/or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights shall be ex-officio members, without vote, of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will meet as they deem necessary and determine their own meeting schedule.

b) The Executive Committee may take action on behalf of the Commission when immediate action is needed and it is not possible to convene the Commission prior to the action date. Action may be taken by the Executive Committee subsequent to phone consultation between Executive Committee members.

c) The Executive Committee monitors work programs, agendas, rules, assignments, and the activities of each committee. The Executive Committee shall express the membership needs of the Commission and shall act as liaison between the appointing bodies and the Commission with regard to the appointment of Commissioners.

d) Actions of the Executive Committee shall be subject to review by the full Commission.

4.1.2: Other Committees

Other Committees will be created by the commission based on the needs of commission and may include Internal Affairs, Outreach etc. Citizens from the community may be invited to sit on sub-committees but will not be voting commissioners or be able to represent themselves in the community as commissioners.

4.2: Staff

The Seattle Office for Civil Right shall provide staff and meeting facilities for the Commission. While administratively responsible to the Office for Civil Rights, staff shall act in accordance with directions and positions of the Commission when staff is representing the positions or policies of the Commission.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

5.1: Meetings

All regularly scheduled meetings of the full Commission shall be open to the public, provided any Commission meeting may be closed to the public to consider personnel matters or any other matters exempt from the Open Meetings Act. (RCW 42.30.)

5.2: Parliamentary Procedure

Robert's Rules of Orders shall be used for formal Commission actions and will be used when taking official positions to present to the Mayor or City Council, when approving the agenda and minutes of Commission meetings, when endorsing events, when creating task forces, when amending the Bylaws, and when approving the expenditure of funds over \$50. In all other instances informal or formal procedures may be used.

5.3: Public Testimony

The public may speak on issues which come before the Commission. The Co-Chairs shall designate time at each monthly Commission meeting for public testimony and shall establish time limits for each speaker.

5.4: Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics

The Commission shall be governed by SMC 3.110.250. Code of Ethics.

5.5: Place of Meetings

Unless otherwise determined by the Commission, all regular Commission meetings shall be in a facility accessible to the public, with special heed paid to access for all physical abilities.

5.6: Meeting Schedule

Commission meetings shall be held on a monthly basis as recommended by the Executive Committee and adopted by the Commission. The commission may choose to eliminate or change dates of its meetings annually if necessary and voted on by the commissioners. As of 2018, the commission meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

5.7: Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Commission may be held whenever and wherever the Co-Chairs 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.

5.8: Advance Notice of Agenda

Advance notice of any proposed policies or procedures must be provided to all members.

Notice of full Commission meetings and agendas shall be sent to Commission members at least 3 days before each full Commission meeting.

5.9: Decisions taken by Vote and Voting Quorum

Decisions by the Commission shall be made by a simple majority vote of present voting Commissioners at a meeting fulfilling quorum requirements unless otherwise stated in these bylaws.

A quorum is a majority of voting Commissioners, and a quorum shall be required before a vote can be taken.

5.10: Proxies and voting in abstention

Members are not allowed to vote in advance or by proxy, except on a case-by-case basis, for issues raised at Commission meetings. Voting by email is not allowed.

5.11: Reconsidering Past Votes

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 majority side before the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission;
- b.) Requires a two-thirds vote of voting Commissioners at a meeting fulfilling quorum requirements.

ARTICLE VI: RECORDS, MINUTES, REPORTS, WORKPLANS, AND BUDGETS

6.1: Records

Records of the Commission shall be maintained by the Office for Civil Rights. All Commission records subject to the Public Disclosure Act, or other ordinance defining what are public records, shall be open to public inspection.

6.2: Minutes

Minutes of all Commission meetings shall be recorded promptly and shall be subject to approval by the Commission. Minutes in the proposed form shall be provided to each Commission member prior to the subsequent meeting. All minutes shall be available for public inspection.

6.3: Annual Work Plan

The Commission shall develop an annual work plan during the first quarter of every calendar year.

6.4: Budget

The Commission shall develop an annual budget informed by the development of its annual work plan. Subject to ongoing review.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS

7.1 Amendments

Amendments to the bylaws of the Commission shall be made by written resolution adopted by a vote of not less than two thirds (2/3) of the membership of the Commission, which resolution shall be presented at the meeting prior to any vote taken on amending the by-laws.