

BYLAWS OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The City of Seattle (“City”) Human Rights Commission (“Commission”) established by the Seattle Municipal Code (“SMC”) 3.14.920, has adopted the following as its Bylaws pursuant to the authority granted in SMC 3.14.940. These Bylaws shall be interpreted to ensure the Commission operates in a manner consistent with its functions and responsibilities established by the Seattle Municipal Code.

Article I. General

Section I.01 Duties

The Commission shall act in an advisory capacity to the Mayor, City Council, Office for Civil Rights, and other City departments in respect to matters affecting human rights, and in furtherance thereof shall have the following duties:

1. To consult with and make recommendations to the Director of the Office for Civil Rights and other City departments and officials with regard to the development of programs for the promotion of equality, justice, and understanding among all citizens of the City;
2. To consult with and make recommendations to the Director of the Office for Civil Rights with regard to problems arising in the City which may result in discrimination because of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sex, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, political ideology, age, ancestry, honorably discharged veteran or military status, genetic information, the presence of any disability, alternative source of income, participation in a Section 8 or other subsidy program, right of a mother to breastfeed her child, or the use of a service animal by a disabled person, and to make such investigations and hold such hearings as may be necessary to identify such problems;
3. As appropriate, recommend policies to all departments and offices of the City in matters affecting civil rights and equal opportunity, and recommend legislation for the implementation of such policies;
4. Encourage understanding between all protected classes and the larger Seattle community, through long range projects;
5. Hear appeals and hearings as set forth in Chapters 14.04, 14.06, 14.08, and 14.09 of the Seattle Municipal Code;
6. Report on a semi-annual basis to the Mayor and the City Council. The reports shall include an annual or semi-annual work plan, a briefing of the Commission's public involvement process for soliciting community and citizen input in framing their annual work plans, and updates on the work plans;
7. Meet on a quarterly basis through a designated representative with the Seattle Women's Commission, the Seattle LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Commission, and the Seattle Disability Commission to ensure coordination and joint project development; and
8. Study, advise, and make recommendations on policies, procedures, practices, and legislation which would further the duties listed above.

Article II. Membership

Section II.01 Appointments

The commission will consist of no more than 21 commissioners. Eight appointed by the Mayor, four by City Council, four by the Commission, and one through the Get Engaged program per SMC 3.51.

In accordance with SMC 3.14.920, commissioners shall be representative residents, including representatives of minority communities, other protected classes, and persons with demonstrated concern and background in human rights.

Section II.02 Terms

Commissioners shall be appointed to two-year terms. Commissioners may not serve more than two consecutive full terms. Terms start on the date specified during commission appointments.

Section II.03 Duties

Commissioners are expected at a minimum, to participate in the following:

1. Attend and actively participate in monthly and annual Commission meetings.
2. Serve on at least one standing committee, ad-hoc committee and/or task force for at least 50% of one's term.
3. Attend and participate in community meetings, forums, and other events when able.
4. Respond to commission related communications in a timely manner.
5. Participate in appeal hearings.
6. Support other commission projects as identified.

Section II.04 Code of Ethics

All Commissioners shall adhere to the City's Code of Ethics.

Section II.05 Attendance

Commissioners are expected to attend every monthly Commission meeting and participate in at least one task force or committee. If a Commissioner is unable to attend a meeting, it shall be their responsibility to notify a member of the Executive Committee of their absence as soon as possible.

If a commissioner is absent for two (2) consecutive Commission or task force meetings in a 12-month period, the Commissioner will be expected to notify a member of the Executive team with a general explanation for the absence. If the Commissioner fails to do so, the Chair of the Commission shall reaffirm the attendance policy in writing to the Commissioner. If a Commissioner is absent for four meetings in a 12-month period, that Commissioner shall notify the Executive Committee making a firm commitment to attend all future meetings for the remainder of the 12-month period. Personal or extenuating circumstances may be grounds for a leave of absence determined on a case- by-case basis.

Section II.06 Resignations

Commissioners wishing to resign from the Commission must submit a letter of resignation to the Commission Co-Chairs and staff liaison. The effective date may be no later than fourteen (14) days from the date of submission.

Section II.07 Removals

Commissioners may be recommended for removal based on failure to meet assigned duties, including attendance as noted above. Non-compliance with the City's Code of Ethics may result in a recommendation for immediate removal.

A majority vote is required to remove a Commission-appointed commissioners.

Article III. Meetings and Procedures

Section III.01 Open Public Meetings Act

The Commission shall comply with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) and the Public Records Act.

Section III.02 Agenda

Commissioners who wish to add an item to a meeting agenda must submit the item to the Commission Co-Chairs at least ten (10) business days prior to the general meeting. Proposed agenda items submitted less than ten (10) business days may not be added to that upcoming meeting's agenda.

Section III.03 Parliamentary Procedure

Robert's Rules of Orders shall be used for formal Commission actions, including but not limited to: adopting official positions, deciding content and manner of official presentations to the Mayor, City Council, other City departments and external agencies, approving the agenda and minutes of Commission meetings, endorsing events, creating Task Forces, and amending Bylaws. Commissioners must disclose any potential conflict of interest prior to voting and must abstain unless the three Co-Chairs unanimously decide to allow the potentially conflicted Commissioner to vote.

Section III.04 Quorum

Every confirmed Commissioner shall be counted for the purpose of determining a quorum. A simple majority of currently appointed Commissioners shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any given meeting. Commissioners who are on approved leave do not count towards quorum. In the event a public meeting is interrupted by the loss of a quorum of commissioners, the presiding Co-Chair shall announce that the commission meeting has been adjourned due to the absence of a quorum before continuing with further informational presentations and discussions.

Section III.05 Voting

It shall be the responsibility of each commissioner to vote on all questions put for action. Commissioners shall recuse themselves when appropriate because of a conflict of interest. Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, any action or motion of the Commission may be adopted by a majority vote of the Commissioners in attendance, as long as a quorum is present. Voting shall be by voice vote. A roll call vote shall be required if requested by any Commissioner.

Section III.06 Public Comment

The Commission encourages public comment. The Commission shall designate time at each monthly Commission meeting for public comment. The Commission may establish time limits for each speaker and an overall time for the receipt of public comment. Public comment may be submitted in any language and provided in either written or verbal format.

Section III.07 Regular Meetings

The Commission shall meet on the first Thursday of every month from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. using a hybrid model. There shall be a minimum of ten (10) regular monthly meetings of the Commission, and one (1) annual retreat. Meeting agendas shall be posted at least 24-hours prior to the meeting.

Section III.08 Special Meetings

Any meeting held at a time or location other than as described for a regular meeting pursuant to these bylaws constitutes a special meeting. Special meetings may be called at any time by Commission Co-Chairs or by a majority of commissioners. The public shall be notified by posting a notice at least 24-

hours prior to the special meeting in a manner prescribed by law. The Commission shall take no final action on matters not included in the special meeting notice.

Section III.09 Subcommittee and Task Force Meetings

Subcommittees and task forces shall meet at minimum once per month at a regular time and agreed upon format unless otherwise stated, determined by that subcommittee or task forces' members.

The Appeals Committee will meet as needed.

The schedule for Committee and Task Force meetings shall be provided to the Commission Secretary for publication on the Commissions' website.

Section III.10 Annual Retreat

The Commission shall hold an annual retreat where a two-year work plan will either be developed or reviewed to drive the commission's strategic direction.

Section III.11 Cancellations

The Executive Committee may cancel a meeting due to lack of agenda items or as deemed necessary. The commission liaison shall issue notice of such cancellations no later than 24-hours in advance of the scheduled convening time pursuant to the same procedures required for notice of special meetings.

Article IV. Officers

Section IV.01 Election

The following officer roles will be filled via elections: Two (2) Co-Chairs; Secretary; Treasurer; Communications; Events; and Appeals. Elections will be held at the last public meeting of the calendar year.

Section IV.02 Terms

Officers shall serve one-year terms or until a successor has been elected. Officers are limited to serving two consecutive terms. Newly elected officers shall begin their term at the first public meeting of the calendar year.

Section IV.03 Vacancies

Except in the case of death, resignation, incapacity, or removal, Officers shall serve until the end of their term. To fill a vacant officer position, the Executive Committee shall appoint a successor until the end of the vacated term. Should the remaining term be one year or more, the Executive Committee shall hold a special election to fill the position.

Section IV.04 Resignations and Removals

Any Officer may resign from their position while remaining a commissioner, by providing written notice to any Co-Chair and the commission liaison. The effective date may be no later than two calendar weeks from the date of submission. Should a commissioner wish to resume an officer position after the effective date of resignation, election procedures outlined in these Bylaws shall apply.

Officers may be removed from their position by a vote of majority commissioners present at any regular or special meeting. A vote shall be taken no sooner than fourteen (14) days and no later than 28 days after written notice of intent to remove the Officer is submitted to the Executive and commission

liaison, including the cause for removal. After receiving such written notice, the Executive Committee shall inform the Officer of the recommendation of removal.

Article V. Committees and Task Forces

Section V.01 Standing Committees

There shall be three standing committees: Executive, Communications, and Events.

(a) Executive

The Executive Committee shall consist of the following officers: Two Co-Chairs; Secretary; Treasurer; Communications.

The Executive Committee is empowered to conduct the overall affairs of the Commission as outlined in these Bylaws and any other relevant municipal code, policy, and procedure.

Should the need arise that the Commission be represented or required to make decisions on behalf of the Commission in arenas without the ability to first inform, give notice to, and/or consult with the Commission as prescribed in these Bylaws, members of the Executive Committee shall 1) reach by consensus agreement on the validity of the factor of urgency and, 2) at minimum, share with the requestor the limitations of the Commission's urgent participation. Should the situation demand urgent action requiring a vote of the Commission, a special meeting may be called. Otherwise, the matter may be added to the next monthly agenda as prescribed in these Bylaws.

(b) Communications

The Communications Committee, led by the elected Communications Officer shall publish statements and other media as needed on behalf of the Commission's Committees and Task Forces including but not limited to website updates, social media posts, messages of support and advocacy, status updates on monthly meetings, human rights scorecards, annual reports, and work plans. Communications will not be in support of or in opposition to any campaign for elected office or ballot measure.

The Communications Committee shall also be responsible for maintaining and updating the Commission's Community Network Directory or similar directory of community organizations, resources, and individuals relevant to human rights.

(c) Events

The Events Committee, led by the elected Events Officer, shall organize and coordinate events hosted by the Seattle Human Rights Commission, including an annual Human Rights Day event; provide logistical support to Task Forces to host events; and create and maintain documentation of event logistics.

Section V.02 Task Forces

Task Forces are standing work groups and are established based on the most persistent, relevant, and intersectional issues.

Task Forces shall consist of Commissioners (including a Chair, Secretary, Task Force Communications Officer, Events Officer, in that order as able) and members of the public most aligned with the substance of the Task Force. All Commissioners are expected to participate in a minimum of one Task Force and all are encouraged to invite members of the public to all Task Force meetings and events.

Task Forces shall:

1. Conduct research on the topic of the Task Force.
2. Engage the community and the public at large in decision making.
3. Host a minimum of two (2) events per year to present and/or gather information surrounding the topic.
4. Work actively in conjunction with other Task Forces on issues of intersectionality.
5. Submit for review and publication any recommended changes to legislation, policy, practice that affects the topic of the Task Force.
6. If consistent with the Commission's duties, support the Community Network Directory, or similar directory of community organizations, resources, and individuals relevant to human rights.
7. Task Forces not currently established may be established upon first the recommendation of any Commissioner to the Executive Committee via the most relevant Task Force Branch Chair. Should the Executive Committee by majority vote approve the presentation of the proposed Task Force, appropriate steps shall be taken to bring the proposal to the Commission for approval by two-thirds vote of commissioners present. If approved, the new Task Force shall belong to the Task Force Branch represented by the Chair who proposed the Task Force to the Executive Committee.
8. The Seattle Human Rights Commission's Executive Committee shall form a permanent Task Force responsible for recruitment, onboarding, and retention of new Commissioners.

Section V.03 Ad-Hoc Subcommittees

When issues arise which do not readily fall under the existing Task Forces, an Ad Hoc Task Force may be established. If after one year an Ad Hoc Task Force exists, the Commission shall review and determine whether the Ad Hoc Task Force shall continue and in what capacity.

Section V.04 Executive Officer Duties

(a) Co-Chairs

The three (3) Co-Chairs shall have general supervision and guidance of the affairs of the Commission and shall preside at all monthly meetings of the Commission as Chairpersons thereof, and act as the spokespeople for, or representative of, the Commission. Co-Chairs shall split the following tasks, but are not limited to:

1. Present a report on a semi-annual basis to the Mayor and the City Council. The reports shall include an annual or semi-annual work plan, a briefing of the Commission's public involvement process for soliciting community and citizen input in framing their annual work plans, and updates on the work plans (SMC 3.14.931).
2. Drafting and providing the Seattle Office of Civil Rights with all other official Commission records in a timely manner, including but not limited to meeting minutes and agendas.
3. Coordinating an annual retreat.
4. Perform the duties required by their specific Co-Chair position as outlined below as well as other duties as the Commission may require or determined by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.
5. Serve as the main liaison to the Seattle Office of Civil Rights in matters of Commission administration.
6. Ensure the day-to-day operation of the Seattle Human Rights Commission.
7. Provide administrative support to the Commission's Committees and Task Forces.

8. Serve as the main liaison to the Seattle Office of Civil Rights in matters relating to issues affecting multiple commissions including attending the quarterly Seattle Office of Civil Rights Five-Commissions meeting.
9. Ensure the Commission is adhering to the SMC 3.14.931 (G) to work with the other Commissions in coordination and joint project development.

(b) **Communications**

The Communications Officer shall:

1. Serve as a member of the Executive Committee.
2. Serve as the main liaison to the Seattle Office for Civil Rights in matters of external communication needs.
3. Ensure the Commission's social media accounts are used in a manner that complies with the Code of Ethics as described in these bylaws.
4. Ensure that social media login information is held as part of the Commission's official records (with the Office for Civil Rights staff liaison) to ensure continuity in the Commission's account access during Commission membership transitions and staff liaison changes.
5. To ensure the day-to-day operation of the Commission's communications, including but not limited to transmitting press releases, promotion of events, and engagement with community.
6. Provide communication related support to the Commission's Committees and Task Forces.
7. Develop a communications plan with Task Forces and for the Commission overall in collaboration with other Commissioners.
8. Report at monthly meetings on progress of the communications plan.

(c) **Secretary/Treasurer**

The Secretary/Treasurer shall:

1. Take meeting notes at commission meetings.
2. Keep and make available for publication the minutes of all Executive Committee meetings.
3. Ensure all official records of all Committees and Task Forces are provided to the Office for Civil Rights.
4. Maintain an electronic library for housing Commission documents.
5. Such other duties as the Commission may require, as determined by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.
6. The Secretary may also serve as the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall perform all the usual duties of their office including but not limited to:
 - Obtaining and sharing the annual budget for the Seattle Human Rights Commission.
 - Track expenses and accounts payable.
 - Monitor expenses in relation to allocation/budget.
7. Other duties as the Commission may require, as determined by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.

Section V.05 Task Force Chairs

All Task Forces belong to either the Human and Civil Rights Branch or the Economic Justice Branch based on their purpose. The Task Forces within each branch shall select a Task Force Chair to also serve as the Task Force Branch Chair. The Task Force Branch Chair of each branch shall:

1. Report regularly on the progress of their Task Forces to the monthly Commission meeting and
2. Establish an annual work plan which includes metrics for success and a communications strategy.
3. Such other duties as the Commission may require, as determined by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.
4. Task Force Chairs shall call Task Force meetings to order, reserve space in person or virtually, and prepare meeting agendas based upon contributions from fellow Task Force members. Other specific tasks include:
5. Ensuring the full participation of all Task Force members in completing work plan activities.
6. Ensuring that minutes are taken at the meetings.

Section V.06 Appeals Chair

The Seattle Human Rights Commission is to hear appeals and hearings as set forth in Chapters 14.04, 14.06, 14.08, and 14.09 of the Seattle Municipal Code. The Appeals Chair shall:

1. Act as the liaison between the Commission and the Office for Civil Rights with respect to hearing appeals of determinations in accordance with SMC Chapter 14.
2. Ensure each appeal or hearing is adequately staffed by Commissioners.
3. Regularly schedule training for Commissioners to ensure adequate staffing at future appeals and hearings.
4. Ensure the Commission and Appeals Committee adhere to the provisions of Seattle Human Rights Rules Chapter 46 – Seattle Human Rights Commission Appeals Rules.
5. Be responsible for recommending modifications to Seattle Human Rights Rules Chapter 46 as needed.

Section V.07 Events Chair

The Events Committee Chair shall:

1. Serve as manager for internal and external events hosted by, or participation of, the Human Rights Commission. Internal event management may include Committee social events and the annual retreat. External events include those hosted by other organizations (e.g. tabling at other city events) as well as public forums on Commission issues. The most substantial external event is the annual Human Rights Day event.
2. Oversee volunteers, vendors, scheduling, space management, and other related obligations to ensure successful events.
3. Create and routinely update a calendar of events related to the Commission.
4. Provide monthly updates to the commission about upcoming events and planning progress.
5. Liaise with Task Force chairs to ensure the events calendar is reflective of Task Force activities.

Article VI. Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any annual, regular, or special meeting of the Commission by a two-thirds vote of the Commissioners in office at the time of such meeting, provided the proposed amendment was submitted to the Commission at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting at which the amendment is voted upon, given such amendment had been reduced to writing and sent to all Commissioners with a notice that it will be considered.