



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

Item (2)
January 16, 2025
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Open Space Conservancy Trust Bylaws Update	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Adopt the Open Space Conservancy Trust Bylaws as presented in Exhibit 1.	

STAFF:	Andrea Larson, City Clerk
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Jake Jacobson
EXHIBITS:	1. Draft Open Space Conservancy Trust Bylaws

SUMMARY

At the City Manager’s direction, the City Clerk’s office was tasked with updating the advisory board and commission bylaws to meet current needs and address outdated or new practices, while also ensuring consistency with the City Council Rules of Procedure.

BACKGROUND

Over the past two years, revised bylaws have been reviewed and adopted by the Arts Council, Parks & Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, and Utility Board. The bylaws being presented to the Open Space Conservancy Trust are consistent with what was adopted by the other advisory boards and commissions.

Since the onset and sunset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, several internal procedures were modified to meet current needs and address outdated or new practices. At the request of the City Clerk’s office, all board and commission bylaws were reviewed and amended to address these changes and to ensure consistency across the City’s boards and commissions as well as the City Council Rules of Procedure. The most recently adopted Open Space Conservancy Trust (Trust) bylaws were adopted in November of 2020.

DISCUSSION

The proposed bylaws attached as Exhibit 1 were revised by staff and reviewed by the City Attorney’s office. The Trust reviewed the bylaws at the [July 18, 2024](#) and the [October 17, 2024](#) Open Space Conservancy Trust Meetings. At the October 17 Meeting, the Trust made several revisions to the bylaws, which are incorporated in Exhibit 1.

The Trust also requested clarification from the City Manager on the Trust’s ability to appoint liaisons to other City advisory boards or commissions under Section 3.2 Duties of Officers, Section A. Chair. The decision to appoint a Trust liaison to another City advisory board or commission on a one time or ongoing basis rests with the City Council. However, if an ad hoc committee of another City advisory board or commission is formed or

a topic of mutual concern is being discussed, then a liaison may be requested of the Trust by the City Council, City Manager, or other advisory board or commission. In that case the Chair, in consultation with the Vice Chair, would then appoint a liaison to that ad hoc committee. As with the creation of the Open Space Zone by the Parks & Recreation Commission, staff will work with the relevant City advisory board or commission to request a liaison when it is appropriate.

Staff are also recommending an additional amendment to the bylaws section 2.5 Training, Section A. Code of Ethics. At the December 3, 2024 City Council meeting (see [AB 6588](#)) City Council repealed Mercer Island City Code Chapter 2.60 Code of Ethics to rely upon state law to govern the conduct and ethics of officials, which includes all members of the City Council, City board and commissions, and other council-appointed task groups or committees of the City of Mercer Island. City Council will be revisiting in the future a presentation on ethics for board and commissions and at that time staff will propose an amendment to the bylaws to incorporate this training.

The City Clerk, City Attorney's Office, and staff liaisons to each of the City's boards and commissions worked diligently over the last year to develop updated, effective, and consistent bylaws across all City appointed bodies. Staff recommend minimizing further revisions. The staff recommendation is to adopt the revised Bylaws at the January 16, 2025 meeting.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt the Open Space Conservancy Trust Bylaws as presented in Exhibit 1.