



DATE: June 28, 2023

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Deborah Estrada, Deputy City Clerk

SUBJECT: Planning Commission Bylaws Update

In 2016, the Planning Commission adopted Bylaws in accordance with Mercer Island City Code [3.46.040](#), which reads, in part: “The planning commission shall determine the time and place of its meetings and other rules and regulations.” The bylaws were amended each year thereafter. The most recently adopted version of the Bylaws were adopted in [November 2022](#) – please note, this is a more recent version than the one that was shared with the Planning Commission last week and includes an amendment to Section 6.1 related to conflicts of interest.

Since the onset and sunset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, several internal procedures have been modified to meet current needs and address outdated or new practices.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 will be reviewed and amended to address these changes and to ensure consistency. Significant changes include:

1. City Council Rules of Procedure, City Code, and State Law

The Legislature recently amended the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), which requires a physical meeting location even if all meeting participants are remote. Additionally, appearances are now a requirement of all public meetings. The Bylaws were amended to address the changes in the OPMA and align with City Council Rules of Procedure, City Code, and state law.

2. Training and Elections

Training requirements were added to address Code of Ethics and the Open Government Trainings Act. The election process for the Chair and Vice Chair was also revised to align with the City Council election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

3. Meetings and Agenda Preparation

Consistent with Council Rules of Procedure, sections on remote attendance, the “order of meeting agendas,” and printed agenda materials were added.

4. Planning Commission Protocols

Like City Council, a section on Planning Commission Protocols was added to address appearances, discussion, decisions, no surprise rule, prohibited conduct, and appearance of fairness.

5. Appendices

Consistent with the Council Rules of Procedure, appendices were added to address the following:

- Parliamentary Rules and Motions
- Planning Commission Code of Conduct
- Planning Commission-Staff Communication Guidelines
- How does the City use Nextdoor.com?

6. Housekeeping

The Planning Commission Bylaws is on its eighth amendment since it was adopted in July 2016. Staff reviewed the Bylaws at length and language was updated throughout the document to correct scrivener errors, formatting, and reflect changes to staff titles, clarify references, and align with City Council Rules of Procedure as appropriate.

NEXT STEPS

Once the City Attorney's office completes its review of the proposed amendments, the draft will be shared with the Planning Commission to begin its review. The goal is to adopt the revised Bylaws by September or October 2023.