

Mercer Island Planning Commission Bylaws (Rules of Procedure)

Adopted: _____

ARTICLE I GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1.1 Relationship to Other Regulations. These bylaws are supplementary to chapter 3.46 Mercer Island City Code (“MICC”) and chapter 35A.63 Revised Code of Washington (“RCW”).

Section 1.2 Purpose and Responsibilities of Commission. The Planning Commission's role is to advise the City Council on growth management issues, land use policies, and development regulations. The Planning Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) is also responsible for making recommendations to the City Council on proposed street vacations and rezones. The members of the Commission accept the responsibility of the office and declare their intention to execute the duties defined under state law and city code to the best of their ability and to respect and observe the requirements established by the City Council.

ARTICLE II POWERS OF COMMISSION, MEMBERS, AND OFFICERS

Section 2.1 Powers of Commission. The Commission shall undertake the duties and responsibilities defined in chapters 3.46 and 19.15 MICC, including acting as a research agency, and serving in an advisory capacity to the City Council.

Section 2.2 Members. The Commission shall consist of 7 members appointed by the City Council. Membership on the Commission shall be limited to residents of Mercer Island. The term of each member is 4 years, unless removed earlier by the process set forth in Section 2.5 of these bylaws. No member may serve longer than two consecutive terms. Vacancies occurring other than through the expiration of terms shall be filled by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor confirmed by the City Council for the unexpired term.

Section 2.3 Officers and Duties. The officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chair and a Vice-Chair. Chair / Vice-Chair duties are to:

1. Run / Facilitate Commission meetings in a fair, efficient, productive, and informative manner;
2. Act as a spokesperson to City Council and, when necessary, to the public and/or media; and
3. Work with Community Planning and Development staff on schedule / calendar and meeting agendas.

Section 2.4 Officer Election and Vacancies. Officers shall be elected for a term of 1 calendar year at the first regular meeting on or after June 1 and annually thereafter. To elect a new Chair, Commissioners shall nominate members of the Commission for a given office. Nominations do not require a second. When it appears that no one else wishes to make any further nomination, the current Chair will ask again for further nominations and if there are none, the Chair will declare the nominations closed. A motion to close the nominations is not necessary.

After nominations have been closed, voting for the Chair takes place in the order nominations were made. A tie vote results in a failed nomination, and the Chair will call for a vote on the next nominee. As soon as one of the nominees receives a majority vote of the Commissioners present, the Chair will declare him/her elected. No votes may be taken on any remaining nominees. Upon election, the newly-appointed Chair conducts the election for Vice Chair following the same process.

In the event of an officer vacancy, a replacement Chair and/or Vice-Chair shall be elected following the same process as above to serve the unexpired term of the vacant office(s). In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, members shall elect a Chair *pro tem* following the same process as above to serve only for the meeting at which he/she is elected.

Section 2.5 Removal. Members may be removed by the Mayor, after public hearing and with the approval of City Council, for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office.

ARTICLE III MEETINGS

Section 3.1 Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:00 P.M., or such other day and time as determined by the Commission, in the Mercer Island City Hall or such other place as the Commission may determine. Any regular meeting may be canceled or re-scheduled by the Chair, or in his/her absence, by the Vice Chair. If a regular meeting falls on a legal holiday, the Commission shall have the discretion to hold the meeting on the next business day which is not a holiday.

Section 3.2 Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Commission may be called by any of the following: the Chair, or in his/her absence, by the Vice Chair, the City Manager, Community Planning and Development Director, or the Mayor.

Section 3.3 Quorum. A majority of the Commission membership shall constitute a quorum. For the conduct of business, a majority vote of the members in attendance at a meeting, provided a quorum is present, shall be sufficient to act.

Section 3.4 Open to the Public. All regular and special meetings of the Commission are open to the public. The scheduling and holding of all Commission meetings is to be done in accordance with these bylaws and Washington state law.

Section 3.5 Legislative Public Hearings. The Commission is responsible for conducting public hearings. The Commission recognizes that public hearings are intended to obtain public input on legislative recommendations on matters of policy. Public hearings are required when the city addresses such matters as comprehensive land use plans, street vacations, or development regulations.

ARTICLE IV CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

Section 4.1 Conduct. All meetings of the Commission shall be conducted in accordance with these bylaws and Washington state law. Where these bylaws fail to provide otherwise, the meetings shall be conducted in accordance with parliamentary rules and procedures in the most current edition of the Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 4.2 Chair. The Chair shall preside at all Commission meetings and has the powers generally assigned such office in conducting the meetings. It shall be the Chair's duty to see that the transaction of Commission business is in accord with these bylaws and Washington state law. The Chair of the meeting shall be a full voting member but shall not initiate or second a motion.

Section 4.3 Agenda Setting. An agenda for every regular meeting shall be prepared and distributed by the Community Planning and Development department to each member not less than 5 calendar days prior to the date of the meeting at which such agenda is to be considered. The agenda shall be accompanied with a complete copy of the unapproved minutes of the previous meeting, staff reports, and other materials as may pertain to the agenda.

Section 4.4 Agenda Modification. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the agenda. To the extent it does not violate public notice requirements, the printed agenda of a regular meeting may be modified, supplemented, or revised at the beginning of the meeting by the affirmative vote of the majority of Commission members present.

Section 4.5 Minutes. A staff liaison shall be provided by the Community Planning and Development department to prepare minutes of meetings and keep such record, attend to correspondence of the Commission, and perform such other duties as

may be deemed necessary. Minutes of all regular meetings shall be kept and made part of a permanent public record. All actions of the Commission shall be considered conclusive as to general import as of the date of such action. Details of phraseology, conditions, etc., shall be subject to correction at the time of consideration and approval of the meeting minutes.

ARTICLE V PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Section 5.1. Purpose. High quality public input is desired by the Commission and is needed to help inform the Commission's analysis, recommendations, and decisions. The Commission goals for public involvement are to:

1. Undertake a fair, meaningful, and effective outreach to affected parties for each work item, with opportunities for all interested parties to participate in a comfortable setting.
2. Use a consistent and adaptable process that allocates limited time efficiently and encourages input that is relevant, clear, and specific.

Section 5.2. Time Limits. Time limits on public input should be established to allow for the efficient use of the Commission's time. Generally, the Commission will establish time limits as follows:

1. For public comment related to legislative matters such as the adoption of amendments to development regulations or the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan, each speaker is limited to 3 minutes speaking time.
2. The Commission shall have the discretion to increase speaking times if necessary.

Section 5.3. Conduct. The public may address the Commission only after being recognized by the Chair of the meeting. All speakers must give their names and address. If audience dialogue becomes disruptive, the Chair may recess the meeting or request that the meeting be adjourned.

Section 5.4. Alternative Communication. To communicate with the Commission on a matter not scheduled for public hearing, the public may communicate with the Commission in writing and/or speak during an optional portion of each meeting entitled "Appearances" near the beginning of the agenda. The Commission shall have the discretion to omit "Appearances" from the agenda. The Chair of the meeting shall endeavor to minimize the amount of cumulative redundant testimony by the public.

ARTICLE VI CONFLICT OF INTEREST, EX-PARTE CONTACT, AND APPEARANCE OF FAIRNESS DOCTRINE

Section 6.1 Conflict of Interest. Chapter 42.23 RCW prohibits commissioners from using their positions to secure special privileges or special exemptions for themselves or others. If an actual or perceived conflict of interest exists that affects the work of the Commission, it is each commissioner’s responsibility to refrain from any prior discussion of such matter with other members of the Commission, to openly describe the issue, and then recuse him/herself from the meeting during the period of discussion and action thereon.

ARTICLE VII DECISION-MAKING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 7.1 Recommendations on Legislative Matters. The Commission’s goal is to provide a consensus recommendation to the City Council on legislative matters; in all cases, however, a majority vote is taken. To document the recommendations of the Commission, the Community Planning and Development department staff shall prepare a written statement or memorandum, including the facts and rationale for the final recommendations. This statement is then approved by the Chair whose responsibility it is to present the recommendations to the City Council on behalf of the Commission when requested by either the City Council or City staff.

ARTICLE VIII ATTENDANCE

Section 8.1 Regular and Special Meetings. Attendance at regular and special meetings is expected of all Commission members.

Section 8.2 Absence. Any member anticipating absence from a meeting should notify the Chair and staff liaison from the Community Planning and Development department.

Section 8.3 Chronic Absences. Chronic absences of any member may be referred by the Commission to the Mayor for a public hearing pursuant to Section 2.5 of these bylaws. “Chronic,” for the purposes of this section, means 6 or more absences in a 12-month period.

ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote (4 votes) of the entire membership of the Commission.

Date Approved: June ____, 2022

Planning Commission Chair: _____