



**STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS
FOR HEARING EXAMINER SERVICES**

To City of Snoqualmie Community Development Director Emily Arteche:

We propose that attorney Peregrin K. Sorter (WSBA #40961) of Laminar Law, PLLC, be selected to serve as the City of Snoqualmie Hearing Examiner to provide land use application hearings, administrative appeal hearings, and other quasi-judicial hearings at the City's request. We believe that Mr. Sorter's expertise in land use law and his demonstrated ability to produce timely decisions that are clear, thorough, and drafted efficiently to provide cost savings to the jurisdictions he serves will benefit the City of Snoqualmie and its residents.

Attached please find background information on Laminar Law, a summary of Mr. Sorter's experience and qualifications, a discussion of Mr. Sorter's approach to the Hearing Examiner process, fee proposal information, Mr. Sorter's resume, and a list of professional references. Examples of recent land use decisions issued by Mr. Sorter are available upon request.

Thank you for considering Laminar Law to provide hearing examiner services for the City of Snoqualmie. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peregrin Sorter", written over a horizontal line.

Peregrin K. Sorter, Managing Attorney of Laminar Law

Laminar Law, PLLC
1919 N. Union Avenue Tacoma, WA 98406
Phone: 206 658-3784 (Cell)
Email: peregrin@laminarlaw.com
UBI Number: 605 164 033
Federal EIN Number: 93-3236461

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Introduction to Laminar Law and Chief Hearing Examiner Peregrin Sorter

Laminar Law, PLLC is a hearing examiner services company committed to providing high-quality land use hearing examiner services to a select number of jurisdictions in Western Washington. We believe that limiting the number of jurisdictions we serve ensures that our hearing examiners and support staff are readily available to schedule requested hearings, knowledgeable about the local planning policies and regulations governing our decisions, and able to efficiently produce decisions that are clear, thorough, and timely issued. Peregrin Sorter, founding member and Chief Hearing Examiner for Laminar Law, would serve the City of Snoqualmie as its Hearing Examiner, with support provided by additional Laminar Law members as needed.

Prior to founding Laminar Law in early 2023, Mr. Sorter served as a managing attorney, chief legal writer, and pro tem hearing examiner for Sound Law Center (SLC). As chief legal writer for SLC, Mr. Sorter was responsible for drafting and reviewing hundreds of decisions produced by SLC. These prior decisions serve as an example of the high-quality land use decisions that the City, applicants, and members of the public can expect from Laminar Law.

Mr. Sorter currently serves as the Hearing Examiner for the Cities of Arlington, Bremerton, Des Moines, Granite Falls, Ocean Shores, Port Angeles, SeaTac, Sedro-Woolley, Sequim, Shoreline, and Woodinville, and for the Town of Steilacoom. He has also served as a pro tem Hearing Examiner in jurisdictions that include Hunts Point and Yarrow Point. In addition, Mr. Sorter has served as the Hearing Examiner addressing ethics complaints in the City of Mercer Island.

Mr. Sorter also has over 10 years of experience as a staff attorney for Division II of the Washington State Court of Appeals, where he assisted judges in deciding appeals and drafting appellate opinions. Through that experience, Mr. Sorter gained valuable insight into what makes a hearing examiner decision withstand judicial scrutiny on appeal and has shaped his practice of producing timely, concise, and legally sound decisions, as well as his demeanor as a judicial officer.

Mr. Sorter graduated in 2008 from Rutgers School of Law, with high honors, where he received the law school's top writing award and was honored to teach Constitutional Law to high school students as a Marshall Brennan Fellow. Mr. Sorter currently volunteers as Board President for Banchemo Disability Partners (BDP), a nonprofit organization providing residential support services for clients with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses.

As BDP President, Mr. Sorter oversaw the organization's adoption of a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement. Laminar Law is similarly committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and Mr. Sorter incorporates these values in his role as a Hearing Examiner, particularly in his interactions with members of the public who participate at hearings. Mr. Sorter understands that applicants and members of the public come to hearings with different backgrounds and levels of knowledge and/or information about the process, and he strives to create an atmosphere that is welcoming and informative for all hearing participants.

Laminar Law is certified as a Minority Business Enterprise from the Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises.

Supporting Attorneys

Neil Savage

Neil Savage serves as Laminar Law's legal editor. Mr. Savage reviews all decisions prior to delivery to ensure consistency and readability. We believe that the services of a legal editor are vital for ensuring that our written decisions reflect the professionalism and neutrality that are embodied in the entire hearing examiner process. Mr. Savage graduated from Lewis and Clark Law School in 1989 and works as a freelance editor and indexer for legal publishers across the country.

APPROACH TO HEARING PROCESS

Laminar Law prides itself on conducting hearings that are respectful and efficient while welcoming members of the public to express their concerns. Mr. Sorter facilitates this process by creating an atmosphere that is courteous to witnesses and acknowledges their opinions. Mr. Sorter believes that a good result from the hearing process is that, regardless of the ultimate outcome of his decision, all interested parties feel that their concerns were heard and addressed.

Hearing Preparation

Mr. Sorter begins this process by reviewing the entire record prior to the hearing so that he is familiar with the law governing his decision and any potential issues that may arise at the hearing. He then prepares questions designed to streamline the hearing process by ensuring both that he has a thorough understanding of the proposal and that issues raised by members of the public are heard and addressed. For example, if the record contains several public comments raising concerns about tree removal associated with a project, Mr. Sorter may ask City staff to discuss tree removal and replacement requirements of the municipal code. Similarly, if members of the public raise concerns about a project's traffic impacts, Mr. Sorter's questions may be focused on level-of-service and traffic impact fee requirements. He has found that addressing the laws and regulations governing issues raised by members of the public prior to their opportunity to testify helps to focus public testimony on issues relevant to the decision and thereby facilitates an orderly and efficient hearing process.

Specific Hearing Formats

For application hearings, Mr. Sorter generally adheres to the following format:

1. Mr. Sorter provides introductory remarks that explain the application, applicable laws, and the process for the hearing. Providing this initial explanation helps lay the groundwork for how the hearing will proceed and provides applicants and the public with confidence in the Hearing Examiner.
2. City staff provide an overview of the proposal and any City recommendations.
3. The Applicant and any witnesses for the Applicant are given the opportunity to provide additional information.

4. Members of the public are invited to provide comments on the application.
5. The Applicant and City staff may respond to public comments.
6. Mr. Sorter closes the hearings, thanks all present for attending, and explains that a decision shall be issued within 10 business days of the record closing.

For administrative appeal hearings, Mr. Sorter generally adheres to the following format:

1. Mr. Sorter provides introductory remarks that explain the appeal, applicable laws, and the process for the appeal hearing.
2. Mr. Sorter addresses any motions raised by the Appellant, the City, and/or the Applicant
3. The Appellant presents testimony of witnesses, and the City and Applicant are provided with the opportunity to cross-examine those witnesses.
4. The City presents testimony of witnesses, and the Appellant and Applicant are provided with the opportunity to cross-examine those witnesses.
5. The Applicant presents testimony of witnesses, and the Appellant and City are provided with the opportunity to cross-examine those witnesses.
6. If requested, Mr. Sorter allows closing remarks from each party. Alternatively, he may allow for the submission of written closing remarks from each party.
7. Mr. Sorter closes the hearing, thanks all present for attending, and explains that a decision shall be issued within the time specified under the municipal code.

Decision

Mr. Sorter's greatest asset to the jurisdictions he serves is his ability to consistently produce decisions in an efficient manner to provide significant cost savings, while ensuring that those decisions are easily understood by applicants and members of the public. His decisions also include detailed legal analyses to provide guidance to City staff and potential applicants on future land use matters. Mr. Sorter's decisions are reviewed by Laminar Law's legal editor prior to being issued to confirm that they reflect the professionalism and neutrality that is embodied in the entire hearing process.

TYPICAL TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING TASKS

Mr. Sorter understands the budgetary concerns of local jurisdictions and that a proposed hourly rate provides little guidance when evaluating a proposal absent information about the typical timeline for conducting a hearing and issuing a decision. Accordingly, in addition to offering a flat fee rate for specific decision types (discussed further below), the following provides an estimated number of hours to complete each task involved in the hearing process:

- Preparation for Hearing:
 - Single-family residential or small commercial projects (typically 30 minutes to 1 hour)
 - Large commercial, residential, or mixed-use development projects; multi-permit projects; or projects with extensive technical reports or community opposition (typically 1.5 to 2.5 hours)
- Hearing:
 - Single-family residential or small commercial projects (typically 30 minutes)
 - Large commercial, residential, or mixed-use development projects; multi-permit projects; or projects with extensive technical reports or community opposition (typically 45 minutes to 1.5 hours)
- Decision Drafting:
 - Single-family residential or small commercial projects (typically 4 to 6 hours)
 - Large commercial, residential, or mixed-use development projects; multi-permit projects; or projects with extensive technical reports or community opposition (typically 6 to 12 hours)
- Decision Editing:
 - Single-family residential or small commercial projects (typically 30 minutes to 1 hour)
 - Large commercial, residential, or mixed-use development projects; multi-permit projects; or projects with extensive technical reports or community opposition (typically 1 to 2.5 hours)

Total time:

- Single-family residential or small commercial projects (typically 5.5 to 8 hours)
- Large commercial, residential, or mixed-use development projects; multi-permit projects; or projects with extensive technical reports or community opposition (typically 9.25 to 18.5 hours)

FEE PROPOSAL

Our typical contract rate for all legal work associated with hearing examiner services is **\$225/hour**. Laminar Law does not charge for travel time or materials. As an alternative, the City may consider implementing a flat-fee billing structure based on application types to provide cost consistency and predictability. Should the City of Snoqualmie elect to implement a flat-fee billing approach, we propose the following structure for typical land use applications and are willing to further discuss fees for other specific application types to meet the City’s needs.

\$1,750	\$3,000	\$3,850
Single-Family Residential Variances and Conditional Use Permits	Multifamily Residential Variances and Conditional Use Permits	Consolidated hearings on multi-permit applications, not including any appeals
	Commercial, Industrial, and Public Agency Variances and Conditional Use Permits	Planned Residential Developments
	Shoreline Substantial Development Permits	Shoreline Variances and Conditional Use Permits
		Preliminary Plats

Due to the variety of issues that may be raised in administrative and code enforcement appeals, Laminar Law typically charges an hourly rate for these matters but is willing to discuss implementing a flat-rate approach if that is the City’s preference.

PEREGRIN SORTER

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Experience and qualifications

Washington State Bar Association member in good standing (admitted 2008).

WSBA number: 40961

Laminar Law, PLLC

Tacoma, WA

Founder, Managing Attorney, Hearing Examiner

March 2023–Present

Founded Laminar Law, PLLC, to provide land use hearing examiner services to local governments in Washington State. Responsibilities include presiding over, and issuing decisions for, land use application hearings and administrative appeals.

Sound Law Center, LLC

Seattle and Tacoma, WA

Managing Attorney, Chief Legal Writer

January 2020–February 2023

Served as managing attorney and Chief Legal Writer for Sound Law Center.

Responsibilities included overseeing all business matters related to the operation of Sound Law Center, drafting and editing decisions issued by hearing examiners, and supervising contract legal writers and pro tem hearing examiners.

Washington State Court of Appeals, Division II

Tacoma, WA

Staff Attorney

August 2012–December 2020

Assisted the Court in resolving direct appeals and personal restraint petitions by reviewing record, researching applicable law, and drafting prehearing memoranda and opinions. Screen notices of appeal for compliance with appellate rules, consolidation with other pending cases, and disposition track. Made recommendations for disposition of all types of motions and draft orders and rulings for panels.

Law Clerk for the Honorable Marywave Van Deren

August 2011–July 2012

Law Clerk for the Honorable Christine Quinn-Brintnall

August 2008–July 2010

Reviewed appellate briefs and trial court records, researched applicable law, and drafted bench memoranda. Assisted judges in drafting and editing an average of three court opinions per month. Performed technical source citation checks on opinions in accordance with Washington Court standards.

Banchero Disability Partners

Seattle and Shoreline, WA

Board Member, President

November 2008–Present

On a volunteer basis, responsible for the functions of an agency that provides 24-hour case management services to clients with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses, including policy administration, public and community relations, finance, personnel and program planning and evaluation.

Independent Living Advocate

September 1999–August 2005

Provided direct support and services to adults with developmental disabilities in their homes and community.

Nielson, Broman & Koch PLLC.

Seattle, WA

Indigent Criminal and Parental Dependency Appeals Attorney

August 2010–July 2011

Contracted with law firm to represent clients appealing from criminal convictions and parental dependency/termination orders. Reviewed trial record, drafted briefs, and presented oral argument in all three divisions of the Court of Appeals.

Disability Rights New Jersey

Trenton, NJ

Legal Intern

Summer 2007

Worked with the Director of Litigation on two high-impact systemic litigation cases. Conducted fact investigations at all New Jersey Psychiatric Hospitals.

Disability Rights Washington

Seattle, WA

Legal Intern

Summer 2006

Screened potential clients and provided self-help information and referral services. Handled all prisoner correspondence, requests for information, and referrals.

Education

Rutgers University School of Law – Camden, NJ

J.D. magna cum laude, May 2008

Blaine E. Caphart Award for Excellence in Legal Writing, 2008

Pro Bono Publico Award, 2008

Marshall-Brennan Fellow, Fall 2007–Spring 2008

Research Assistant for Professor Sarah Ricks, Fall 2007–Spring 2008

University of Washington – Seattle, WA

B.S. in Psychology, June 2004

Professional References:

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Hon. Judge Lisa Worswick (Ret.)
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