



CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner
RE: Planning Commission Applicants / Interviews
DATE: January 2025

This memo and its attachments are intended to aid Planning Commissioners' efforts for considering and interviewing new candidates.

The list of candidates to interview is on the meeting agenda. Generally, those on the interview list have been reviewed, at least cursorily, for eligibility with applications received before the pool of applicants was determined to be adequate by the Council liaison. If a prospective candidate is ineligible, such as having an occupation that two other Commissioners have, they are not included on the list. Still, we want to consider eligibility in case we missed something with the initial review. **This memo provides details on eligibility and other matters.**

There are several sources of requirements for Planning Commission vacancy appointments:

- **City of St. Helens Resolution 1648 (attached to this memo)**
This addresses rules about filling vacancies, term limits, and similar details and applies to all City of St. Helens boards, commissions and committees.
- **Chapter 2.08 St. Helens Municipal Code (see excerpts below)**
This Chapter applies specifically to St. Helens Planning Commission. Some sections apply to filling vacancies such as SHMC 2.08.020 - 2.08.040.
- **Oregon Revised Statute 227.120 and 227.030 (see excerpts below)**
The ORS allows a city to create a Planning Commission and provides some guidance.

In addition, as of November 2014 (via Ord. No. 3176) the Planning Commission (PC) may serve as the **Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC)** when thus appointed. The PC and HLC have been combined since c. 2015, thus, any new Planning Commissioner is required to have:

a demonstrated positive interest, knowledge, or competence in historic preservation

St. Helens Municipal Code

2.08.020 Membership.

The commission may consist of up to seven members. The councilmember in charge of planning shall be entitled to sit with the commission and take part in its discussions, but shall not have the right to vote. The following regulations shall also apply to the planning commission:

- (1) Planning commission members may be compensated only by resolution from the city council.
- (2) No more than two voting members shall be engaged principally in the buying, selling, or developing of real estate for profit as individuals, or by members of any partnership, or officers or employees of any corporation that is engaged principally in the buying, selling, or developing of real estate for profit. No more than two voting members shall be engaged in the same kind of occupation,

business, trade or profession.

(3) A member of the planning commission shall not participate in any commission proceeding or action in which any of the following has direct or substantial financial interest: the member or his spouse, brother, sister, child, parent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, any business in which he is then serving or has served within the previous two years, or any business with which he is negotiating for or has an arrangement or understanding concerning prospective partnership or employment. Any actual or potential interest shall be disclosed at the meeting of the commission where the action is being taken.

2.08.030 Term of office.

Members of the planning commission shall be appointed by the city council for a term of four years from the first calendar day of the year in which their existing appointment to the position expires. The members of the present planning commission are hereby reappointed for the unexpired term of the office they presently hold.

2.08.040 Vacancies and removal.

Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term. A member may be removed by the city council after a hearing for misconduct or nonperformance of duty. A member who is absent from three consecutive meetings without an excuse as approved by the planning commission is rebuttably presumed to be in nonperformance of duty, and the city council shall declare the position vacant unless finding otherwise following the hearing.

Oregon Revised Statutes

227.020 Authority to create planning commission.

(1) A city may create a planning commission for the city and provide for its organization and operations.

(2) This section shall be liberally construed and shall include the authority to create a joint planning commission and to utilize an intergovernmental agency for planning as authorized by ORS 190.003 to 190.130. [Amended by 1973 c.739 §1; 1975 c.767 §2]

227.030 Membership.

(1) Not more than two members of a city planning commission may be city officers, who shall serve as ex officio nonvoting members.

(2) A member of such a commission may be removed by the appointing authority, after hearing, for misconduct or nonperformance of duty.

(3) Any vacancy in such a commission shall be filled by the appointing authority for the unexpired term of the predecessor in the office.

(4) No more than two voting members of the commission may engage principally in the buying, selling or developing of real estate for profit as individuals, or be members of any partnership, or officers or employees of any corporation, that engages principally in the buying, selling or developing of real estate for profit. No more than two members shall be engaged in the same kind of occupation, business, trade or profession. [Amended by 1969 c.430 §1; 1973 c.739 §2; 1975 c.767 §3]

Sample Interview Questions

Use these as you see fit and try to make every effort to ask all candidates the same questions. For example, if a question not listed below is asked, ask it of all candidates.

1. Why are you a prime candidate for the Planning Commission?
2. The Planning Commission is like a sports team with a variety of folks, whose combined knowledge and experience make the team stronger. What will you bring to the Planning Commission to strengthen it?
3. What do you know about the Planning Commission?
4. What do you know about St. Helens?
5. What is your availability for meeting attendance and preparation for meetings?
6. What is your experience dealing with conflict of interest and bias?
7. How can you be a voice for the city?
8. Describe your civic participation and/or involvement in city government.
9. The Commission has determined to be proactive. What does this mean to you?
10. After your time on the Planning Commission, what do you want your legacy to be when you leave?
11. What is your experience with Oregon land use planning?
12. Do you have any questions for us?

City of St. Helens
RESOLUTION NO. 1648

**A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR THE APPOINTMENT
OF ST. HELENS BOARD, COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION MEMBERS,
SUPERSEDING RESOLUTION NO. 1521**

WHEREAS, the City Council wished to establish the same guidelines for recruitment, interviews and appointments for all City boards, committees and commissions, and adopted Resolution No. 1521 on August 12, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 1521 established general recruitment, selection and appointment guidelines for appointments to the City of St. Helens boards, committees and commissions; and

WHEREAS, the Council wishes to update the guidelines adopted in Resolution No. 1521 to better meet the needs of the City.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ST. HELENS
RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

1. The City Recorder shall send a press release to the local newspaper of record announcing all board, committee and commission vacancies as they become available. A "vacancy" is defined as an unoccupied position, resulting from a voluntary resignation or involuntary termination. A member whose term expired does not create a vacancy, unless that member is resigning at the end of his/her term or the majority of the board, committee or commission wishes to terminate said member.
2. Any individual or group is encouraged to submit names for consideration to the City.
3. All new applicants shall submit a written application to the City Recorder's Office.
4. Members wishing to continue their appointment for another term will inform the City Recorder but need not submit a new application. If a member has served two consecutive full terms, a press release shall be sent to the local newspaper of record, each subsequent term expiration thereafter, to solicit new applications for that position. The incumbent may be reappointed at the discretion of the interview panel and City board, committee or commission. If an individual has been off a City board, committee or commission for a year or more, they must complete a new application.
5. The recruitment period to the board, committee or commission shall be for a finite period. At the end of the advertising period, the Council liaison shall determine if the pool of candidates is sufficient to continue with the selection process or may continue the recruitment period for a set or unlimited period until it is determined there is a sufficient pool of candidates.
6. The Council liaison to the board, committee or commission shall be responsible to assemble an interview committee. The interview committee shall be responsible to make recommendations via the Council liaison to the Mayor and City Council.
7. Appointments must comply with any ordinances, bylaws, Charter provisions, or state or federal laws concerning the board, committee or commission. In the event of any inconsistency between these policies and a chapter relating to a specific board, committee or commission, the specific chapter shall control.

8. In order to become more familiar with each applicant's qualifications, the interview committee may interview all or a shortlist of applicants for a position. The number of applicants to be interviewed is at the interview committee's discretion. The interview committee also has the discretion to reject all applications in favor of re-advertising if no applicants are found to be suitable for the board, committee or commission.
9. Reappointments to a City board, committee or commission shall be considered in accordance with the guidelines listed in this section, together with the type of service the individual has already given to the board, committee or commission and his/her stated willingness to continue.
10. Consideration should be given to residents outside the City when the board, committee or commission or function serves residents outside City boundaries.
11. Board, committee or commission members shall not participate in any proceeding or action in which there may be a direct or substantial financial interest to the member, the member's relative or a business with which the member or a relative is associated, including any business in which the member is serving on their board or has served within the previous two years; or any business with which the member is negotiating for or has an arrangement or understanding concerning prospective partnership or employment. Any actual or potential conflict of interest shall be disclosed at the meeting where the action is being taken.
12. Board, committee or commission vacancies are filled by appointment of the Mayor with the consent of Council. Board, committee or commission members shall serve without compensation except the Planning Commission that may receive a monthly stipend at the discretion of the City Council.
13. Individuals appointed to one City board, committee or commission shall not serve on any other City board, committee or commission during the term of their appointment; provided, that the Council may waive this limitation if it is in the public interest to do so.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council on this 18th day of December, 2013, by the following vote:

Ayes: Locke, Carlson, Conn, Morten, Peterson

Nays: None


Randy Peterson, Mayor

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder