

RULES OF PROCEDURE
COWLITZ COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

WE, THE MEMBERS of the Planning Commission of Cowlitz County, State of Washington, created by a Resolution of the Board of Cowlitz County Commissioners, pursuant to Chapter 201, Laws of 1959, do hereby adopt, publish, and declare the following rules of procedure:

I. NAME

The official name shall be “The Cowlitz County Planning Commission”.

II. MEETINGS

- A. All meetings will be held in the County Administration Building, Kelso, Washington, unless otherwise directed by the chairperson of the Planning Commission. Regular meetings shall be held the third Wednesday of each month and shall be open to the public.
- B. Special meetings shall be at the call of the Chairperson.
- C. When a regular meeting falls on a legal holiday the Commission will convene at the call of the Chairperson.
- D. If no matters over which the Planning Commission has jurisdiction are pending upon its calendar, a meeting may be cancelled at the call of the Chairperson or the Director of Building and Planning.

III. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA AND MEETING MATERIALS

1. Preparing for a Public Hearing

- A. Setting Public Hearings: Staff will request the Planning Commission set the date and time of a future public hearing during a meeting, or staff may request the Chair of the Planning Commission set a public hearing for the next regular meeting to avoid excessive delays to an application. Staff shall inform the entire Planning Commission when a hearing is added to the agenda between meetings.
- B. Providing Notice of Application for Public Hearing Projects: Notice of application for projects requiring public hearing shall be in accordance with the applicable requirements of Cowlitz County Code Title 18 Land Use and Development.

2. Hearings

A. The agenda and all supporting material for the hearing shall be distributed to the members of the Planning Commission and made available to the public 13 calendar days prior to the scheduled hearing date. If this day should fall on a holiday, or a day when the office of Building and Planning is not open for business, then the agenda and supporting materials shall be distributed the day prior to the holiday.

B. The agenda and all supporting materials shall be distributed digitally to the members of the Planning Commission via email. Printed copies shall be made available upon request, will be postmarked no later than 12 days prior to the scheduled hearing date.

C. The agenda and all supporting materials will also be made available for review and download on the Cowlitz County Building and Planning website 13 calendar days prior to the scheduled hearing.

D. Public comments received after distribution of the meeting materials will be distributed to the Planning Commission at close of business the Thursday prior to the scheduled hearing via email, and comments received after the Thursday before the hearing will be printed and made available at the hearing.

2. Legislative Workshops

A. The agenda and the most current supporting material for the workshop shall be distributed to the members of the Planning Commission and made available to the public 13 calendar days prior to the scheduled workshop date. If this day should fall on a holiday, or a day when the office of Building and Planning is not open for business, then the agenda and supporting materials shall be distributed the day prior to the holiday.

B. The agenda and the most current supporting materials shall be distributed digitally to the members of the Planning Commission via email. Printed copies may also be mailed upon request and will be postmarked no later than 12 days prior to the scheduled workshop date.

C. As workshop development of ordinances and guiding documents is an iterative process, the supporting materials may be updated or amended between the date of distribution and the workshop date. In this event, the revised materials, including public comments submitted to the Department, will be distributed digitally via email to the members of the Planning Commission and uploaded to the Building and Planning website as soon as they are available. No further amendments or updates to the workshop supporting materials will be made after close of business on the Monday

immediately prior to the workshop. Any amended or updated materials after this date will be distributed and discussed as part of the workshop.

D. The agenda and all supporting materials will be made available for review and download on the Cowlitz County Building and Planning website 13 calendar days prior to the scheduled hearing. Amended materials will be updated on the website as soon as they are available.

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson elected from the appointed members of the Commission and such other officers as the Commission may, by majority vote, approve and appoint.

2. The election of officers shall take place once each year on the occasion of the first meeting in February of each calendar year. The term of office for each officer shall run until the subsequent election provided, however, that any officer may be removed at any time by vote of a majority of the full Commission.

3. The vacancy of an office caused by the resignation of any officer of the Commission during his/her term of office shall be filled for the remaining term of office in the following manner: The Chairperson's office shall be automatically filled by the Vice-Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson's office shall be filled by a majority vote of the Commission.

V .CHAIRPERSON

1. The Chairperson shall preside over the meetings of the Commission and may exercise all the powers usually incidental to the office. Nothing in these rules shall prevent the Chairperson from exercising his right to vote on all matters before the Commission, except those with which he has a Conflict of Interest.

2. The Chairperson shall have full power to create standing or temporary committees, of one or more members, charged with duties, examinations, investigations and inquiries relative to one or more subjects of interest to the Commission. No standing or temporary committee shall have the power to commit the Commission to the endorsement of any plan or program without its submission to the body of the Commission.

3. The Vice-Chairperson shall, in the absence of the Chair-person, perform all duties incumbent upon the Chairperson. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, both being absent, the members present may elect for the meeting a temporary Chairperson who shall have full powers of the Chairperson during the absence of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

VI. SECRETARY

The Secretary shall be the Director of the Building and Planning Department or their representative. The Secretary shall keep a record of all meetings of the Commission and its committees when requested to do so, and these records shall remain the property of the Building and Planning Department.

VII. QUORUM

Four members of the Planning Commission shall constitute a quorum. All actions of the Planning Commission shall be determined by a majority vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present, provided, that where State Law, County Resolution or Ordinance requires a vote larger than the majority of a quorum, such provision shall govern.

VIII. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Each member of the Commission shall contact the Building and Planning Department not later than 5:00 p.m., on the Monday preceding the next scheduled meeting regarding his/her attendance at the scheduled meeting.

In the event of a member being absent from two (2) consecutive regular meetings, without a valid and justifiable reason, the Chairperson shall be directed, at the discretion of the Commission, to call upon the Board of County Commissioners for action.

IX: APPLICATION AND PETITION

1. Applications and petitions will be accepted by the Planning Commission only when properly filed with the Secretary.
2. In order that proper deliberation and consideration be given any application, the Planning Commission reserves the right to withhold any decision on any application for a period not to exceed thirty-five (35) days from the date of the Public Hearing.

X. AGENDA

An agenda shall be prepared for each meeting, consisting of the following order of business:

1. Roll Call
2. Minutes
3. Communications
 - 3.1 Commissioners
 - 3.2 Public
4. Public Hearings
5. Other Business

6. Adjournment

XI. AMENDMENT

The Rules of Procedure may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Commission by a majority vote of the entire membership.

XII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST/APPEARANCE OF FAIRNESS

If a member has a conflict of interest with an item to be considered by the Planning Commission, he or she shall remove himself/herself from the proceedings prior to consideration of the item. He or she shall retire to another room until a vote is taken on the item.

XIII. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

1. Parliamentary Procedure shall conform to Robert's Rules of Order.

2. Normal Meeting Procedure:

2.1 Call the Meeting to order.

2.2 Introduce self, Commission and staff members.

2.3 State the purpose of the meeting.

2.4 Tell where agenda is located and where copies of Planning Department records and other materials to be used in the hearings are located.

2.5 Cite your authority (ordinance) for conducting the hearing.

2.6 Describe the rules which will be followed in the hearing (attached).

2.7. Tell when and in what form decisions on the applications or special projects are issued.

2.8 Tell how to appeal from decision and time limits for appeal.

2.9 Ask audience to observe the following guidelines when testifying:

a. All testimony must be given at microphone so that everyone can hear and so verbatim record (tape recording) will be complete.

b. When a participant first speaks, please state full name, spell last name, and give complete mailing address and whom he/she represents if he/she represents anyone.

c. When a participant speaks again, please state name each time so testimony can be identified on the verbatim record.

d. Testimony must be relevant to the matter being heard and should not be repetitious.

e. Chairperson may limit time of each speaker.

3. Normal Hearing Procedure:

3.1 Open the public hearing portion of the meeting.

3.2 Call Case Number.

- 3.3 Staff report presented.
 - a. Present additional correspondence from public.
 - b. Applicant and Planning Commission question staff.
- 3.4 Applicant's testimony given.
 - a. Planning Commission and staff may question applicant.
- 3.5 Testimony of other interested persons.
 - a. Questions directed to staff and Planning Commission.
 - b. Comments supporting or opposing proposal.
 - c. Planning Commission may ask questions.

3.6 Additional testimony from those who previously testified.

(The Chairperson may set a time limit for each speaker).

- a. Staff may ask questions or make further comments.
- b. Planning Commission may ask questions.

3.7 Continue or close hearing.

3.8 If continued, determine:

- a. Time required to get facts.
- b. Available hearing dates.
- c. Announce time, date, and place when hearing will reopen.

3.9 If closed, the Planning Commission discusses and disposes of the matter under consideration. A motion to approve or deny must include findings of fact.

4. Additional Rules Pertaining to Public Hearings:

4.1 The Chairperson is responsible for establishing ground rules for public hearings. The Chair may limit the time of speaker for purposes of conducting a hearing in a timely fashion.

4.2 Planning Commission members shall request permission of the Chair to ask questions and make comments during a public hearing except during a period of discussion as declared by the Chair.

4.3 During the period of discussion, the hearing may be re-opened by the Chairperson to admit new evidence.

XIV. AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC

These rules and procedures and any amendments thereto shall be recorded in the County Auditor's Office. Copies shall be available in the Building and Planning Department for review.

DATED this _____ day of _____

SIGNED:

Chairperson

Vice-Chairperson

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION:
