

KitsapCounty

PLANNING COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

Planning Commission Rules of Procedure

DATE: October 20, 2026
TO: Kitsap County Planning Commission
FROM: Scott Diener, Planning Manager
SUBJECT: Rules of Procedure for the Planning Commission

Overview

The Kitsap County Planning Commission is governed by Rules of Procedure. Since the last update in 2017, the Department of Community Development has welcomed new leadership and staff, new Planning Commissioners, and DCD observes improvements would be beneficial. DCD has prepared a revised set of Rules of Procedure to provide the Planning Commission with a clear and modern framework for conducting its business.

Background

The Planning Commission held a workstudy to review proposed changes on September 29, 2026. Several issues were discussed and DCD has also added two new suggestions to provide additional clarity:

New change, section III.F: Staff would like to clarify the rules on appointing a secretary.

There are 2 alternatives to having a secretary, so either option should be permissive:

Secretary. The Planning Commission ~~shall~~ may appoint the Clerk to serve as Secretary. In that capacity, the Clerk shall perform the duties of both the Clerk and the Secretary. Alternatively, the Planning Commission may appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the Planning Commission.

Staff support this change.

Matrix change 10, Section IV.F: Add: ...Board “to, at minimum, review its roles, responsibilities, expectations, and performance.” Leave the balance of the section as presented. This request is understandable since we are currently redefining the PC-BCC relationship. **Staff support this change.**

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New change 14, VI.C: In the first line, the reference to ‘Findings’ should be struck, since it is out of place and not mentioned and is addressed in Section IV.C. of the Rules. **Staff support this change.**

Change 22, IX.A: The Planning Commission discussed recusal and abstention of voting by Commissioners. Recusal means nonparticipation because of a conflict, bias, appearance-of-fairness concern, or legal or ethical reason. This is different than, but could have applicability to, abstention which means choosing not to vote.

For rules of recusal there is plenty of support:

- A commissioner who knows a recusal issue exists should disclose it before the item begins. If discovered during discussion, the commissioner should disclose and recuse immediately rather than waiting for the vote.
- Recusal should extend to the entire item, including presentations, questioning, deliberation, motions, and voting. The commissioner should not attempt to influence other members.
- The basis for recusal should be stated on the record, but personal information should not be required. This promotes transparency, confidence, consistency, and a record.
- Requiring a stated basis helps distinguish a genuine conflict from an abstention or reluctance to vote. It also allows the chair or counsel to evaluate whether recusal is necessary.
- Impartiality concerns are judged by whether a reasonable, disinterested person could question the decision-maker’s impartiality under the circumstances.

DCD believes rules on recusal promote transparency and helps to fulfill an expectation by the public they will perform in all decision-making unless there is a good publicly-stated reason not to. As always, a member can ask their peers to decide if there may be a conflict, etc.

With respect to abstention, the proposed rules state a member should advise why they are abstaining. Staff is comfortable, for consideration by the Planning Commission, with the following change to the last sentence of this section:

*Where an abstention is considered or used, the member ~~shall~~**should** advise the*

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reason for the abstention.

Staff support for this change is neutral.

Change 30, IX.K: This section simply states that a majority present may vote on disputed questions raised during the performance of duties. This action is infrequent and would apply to many of the preceding rules in Section IX. It does not change required majority-of-appointed vote obligations, eg, decisions on the Comprehensive Plan or development code. **Staff support the original proposed language.**

Change 32, X: There was a question on where stipends are reflected now. They are covered in KCC 2.56.040.1.b:

Planning commission members shall receive a stipend approved by the board of commissioners in the department of community development annual budget.

Staff support the original proposed language.

Change 36, Ground Rules #4: Time limits for public comment and testimony were considered by the Planning Commission. Staff feel that locking down time provides consistency and equity to attendees and takes pressure off the Planning Commission to extend greater time on what is usually an ad-hoc basis. It is important to note there is other opportunity for comment or testimony in the form of providing written materials and additional opportunities before the Board of County Commissioners. **Staff support the original proposed language.**

Proposed new Section IX.L: Incidental motions should include Point of Order. Under Robert's Rules a Point of Order allows a member to identify a possible violation of meeting rules or procedures. A member may interrupt proceedings to raise a Point of Order, briefly stating the concern. The Chair must rule whether the Point of Order is valid or not valid. No second, debate, or vote is required nor allowed. Proposed language would read:

L. Point of Order. Upon raising Point of Order, the Chair shall rule the Point of Order valid or not valid.

This language would need to be in the form of an amendment to the proposed rules. **Staff support new proposed language.**

DCD thanks the Planning Commission in advance for its consideration of these elements. We look forward to new and improved Rules.