

CITY OF SEATAC
Planning & Economic Development Committee
Minutes of July 16, 2019

Special Joint Meeting
With the Planning Commission

PED Committee Members present: Joel Wachtel, Chair; Stanley Tombs

PED Committee Members absent: Peter Kwon

Planning Commission Members present: Leslie Baker, Tej Basra, Roxie Chapin, Tom
Danzler, Jagtar Saroya, Brandon Pinto, Andrew Ried-Monro

Members absent: None

Other Councilmembers: DM Clyde Hill; Mayor Erin Sitterley; Rick Forschler; Pam Fernald

Staff present: City Manager Carl Cole; Senior Planner Kate Kaehny; Jennifer Kester,
Planning Manager; Steve Pilcher, CED Director; Senior Assistant City
Attorney Mark Johnsen

1. Call to Order

PED Chair Wachtel called the joint meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Earl Gipson commented that he believes the Commission's Bylaws amendments must be approved by the City Council. He objected to the manner by which the Bylaws were transmitted to the Council. He stated that he sees a pattern of decreased transparency and is concerned that meetings are not being recorded. He asks that the Council vote in an open public meeting to decide whether they wish to see Bylaws amendments.

3. Planning Commission Bylaw Amendments

Chair Wachtel asked Sr. Asst. City Attorney Mark Johnsen to provide comments on the manner of the change to the Bylaws. Mr. Johnsen noted that the Municipal Code was changed in 2017 to state that the Council does not need to approve the Bylaws of the Commission. He also noted the matter will be on the Council meeting for next Tuesday's (July 23) meeting. Mr. Johnsen pointed out that the Code also makes it clear that the Council has oversight of the Commission and all committees.

Vicki Lockwood commented there is a distinction between "committee" and "commission."

Mr. Johnsen pointed out the Code typically refers to "boards, committees and commissions."
It was noted that the Code could be amended to provide greater clarity.

A concern was raised that Section 6.2 deletes the reference to providing a summary of public hearings and inquired as to why this change was made.

CED Director Steve Pilcher noted that staff had recommended the changes to Section 6.2 since the same information is provided in a Council agenda bill. He also noted that the change to the Municipal Code had essentially indicated that the Council did not need to review Bylaws for any of its committees.

CM Fernald spoke in favor of providing more thorough minutes and recording of meetings.

City Manager Carl Cole noted that he has faith in his staff and that if there are issues, they should be brought to him instead of being discussed in an open public meeting.

CM Forschler related his concerns with prior Planning staff and his concern that the Bylaws changes give the Planning staff too much power.

CED Director Pilcher noted his approach to taking of minutes and the reason why Section 4.5 includes mention of the CED Director.

Commissioner Chapin explained that things were worse in the past, but she has confidence in the current staff. She noted that the Commission's Bylaws only relate to how they conduct their meetings.

Commissioner Dantzler expressed his appreciation for the meeting and individual comments.

Planning Commission Chair Basra agreed that he viewed the Bylaw changes as how the Commission chooses to run its meetings. He stated he was shocked when the recording of their meetings ceased. He indicated that he is pleased with the staff and has good communications.

CM Tombs spoke in favor of recording meetings. He stated that waiting two weeks to receive a report from public hearings is too long. He favors making the recordings available shortly after the meeting.

Chair Wachtel noted that the Bylaws should be rewritten to incorporate the changes discussed during the meeting.

Planning Manager Jennifer Kester noted there is not sufficient time to rewrite the Bylaws in time for this to be in front of the Council at its 7/23 meeting.

City Manager Cole indicated the item can be pulled from the 7/23 agenda.

PED Chair Wachtel adjourned the joint meeting at 6:30 p.m.