



CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

**Tuesday, May 30, 2023
at 6:00 p.m.**

In person at the Snohomish Carnegie 105 Cedar Avenue
and remote on-line/telephone access via *Zoom*

ONLINE Zoom remote meeting access: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87370320934>
or call in at (253) 215-8782 and use Meeting ID # 873 7032 0934

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Boards & Commissions Workshop

3. ADJOURN

NEXT MEETING: The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 6, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in person at the Snohomish Carnegie, 105 Cedar, and online via Zoom.

Specialized accommodations will be provided with 5 days advanced notice. Contact the City Clerk's Office at 360-568-3115. This organization is an Equal Opportunity Provider.



SNOHOMISH CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Date: May 30, 2023

Agenda Section: DISCUSSION ITEMS

From: Linda Redmon, Mayor
Heather Thomas, City Administrator

Subject: **Boards & Commissions Workshop**

SUMMARY: The City Council will hold a workshop to continue discussions on how boards and commissions operate within the City of Snohomish.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS: Council requested a series of discussions to evaluate the structure, composition, and coordination of the boards and commissions. To assist with this process, staff sent a survey to all Council members, board and commission members, and staff that regularly interface or support the boards and commissions. A summary of the survey responses was previously provided to Council as a part of the workshop packet for April 4, 2023.

At the workshop on April 4, Council reviewed materials from the packet. City Attorney Emily Guildner provided a brief overview of the types of committees and the roles of the committees, the committee members, the Council liaisons, and support staff. She explained that the roles and expectations of the committees determine whether they are subject to Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) requirements. If a committee is a body of the Council and taking public input from the community in order to advise Council, they are subject to OPMA and public noticing requirements. Conversely, for example, an ad hoc committee that staff relied on for their experience and subject-matter expertise, but were not necessarily gathering community input for Council, may not be subject to OPMA.

Council discussed how the roles of the committee members and Council liaisons might vary from committee to committee: Planning Commission, Design Review Board and the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee have statutory requirements, while the Youth Council, Park Board and Public Safety Commission do not.

Mayor Redmon noted that without clear direction from Council, the committee members were left to figure out their role for themselves. Defining the roles of the Council, committee members, and staff liaisons could also help provide that direction. Council requested a follow-up workshop to continue discussions and review options one group at a time.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: Based on the conversations during the workshop and survey responses, what follows is a series of the Mayor's recommendations for Council to deliberate on at the upcoming workshop.

- Scope & Purpose of Board/Commission.

If the board or commission is advising on policy and budget items, that fits within the legislative authority assigned to Council. If the group is advising on City operations or maintenance issues, that is within the executive authority assigned to the Mayor and designees.

- With that in mind, and given the explicit statutory requirements, the recommended path is for the Planning Commission, Design Review Board, and Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) to remain as standing (codified) boards or commissions under Snohomish Municipal Code.
 - While the Youth Council is not written into City code, that is by design because they are minors and there are some restrictions that the City must be mindful of. For this reason, the recommendation is to leave their scope and structure as-is.
 - The Park Board could be tasked by Council to support staff in final development of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan and related elements under the Comprehensive Plan Update, and then sunset it as a Council advisory board at the end of 2024. It could then be re-established as a City advisory committee based on needs aligned with Council goals and staff work plans. This aligns with the end of current 3-year terms for all but one existing board member, and with the biennial budget cycle.
 - The Public Safety Commission could have a similar transition, with it becoming focused on supporting staff and Council in the creation of a coalition of neighborhoods (or similar model) and relevant Comprehensive Plan elements, as well as continued efforts around neighborhood watch and emergency preparedness. At the end of 2024, the Commission as it is known today would be disbanded and could potentially transition into a committee supporting staff with the envisioned "Coalition of Neighborhoods." Changing the status of the Commission would potentially allow for greater flexibility in how the body is able to interact with the community.
 - Per SMC 2.06.010 (attached), Council still retains the ability to establish special ad hoc committees or task groups focused on a specific topic for a limited duration.
- Appointments.
Currently, appointments range from 1-year (Youth Council) to 6-year (Planning Commission) terms. The Youth Council appointment terms make sense given expected turnover as students graduate. There has been some concern raised that 6-year terms are too long, especially when trying to recruit new members. It is recommended that Planning Commission be moved to 4-year terms, that Youth Council remain at 1-year, and any remaining boards or commissions be 3-year terms. It is also recommended that, with the exception of Youth Council and Design Review Board, that there be a requirement of geographic diversity among members. There should be a focus for all boards and commissions to have broader demographic diversity to ensure membership is better representative of the community that we serve. LTAC members are prescribed by RCW requirements and would not change.
 - Role of Board/Commission Members.
Advisory boards or commissions have no final authority for policy administration, but rather act in an advisory capacity. They are expected to become individually knowledgeable about their board/commission's unique issues so that their collective advice as a board is credible. This includes reading appropriate literature, visiting relevant sites and events, talking with community members, and other actions as appropriate.

To advise means to give an opinion, to inform, to counsel, and to recommend. It is not appropriate for boards or commissions to direct staff or provide assignments to staff to carry out on their behalf. Instead, they may generate ideas for consideration, such as for community awareness or outreach, projects, education, workshops, fundraising, or special events, in keeping with the overall work plan, and without creating undue burdens for existing staff. They can request timeframes for follow-up by staff, but those timeframes are subject to staff availability and City

needs.

Members may speak as members of the board/commission, but they may not represent their own views or recommendations as those of the group, unless the board/commission has officially voted to nominate them as a spokesperson for the group on a specific topic.

Any community event planned by the board/commission, unless part of the approved work plan for the year, shall be pre-approved by the Mayor or designee. Similarly, any work product of the board/commission must be approved by the Mayor or designee prior to being disseminated to the community on behalf of the City or the board/commission, with the exception of annual reports, agenda packets, or proposed work plans.

- Role of Council Liaison(s).

City Council liaisons are non-voting members of a board or commission. Their role is to keep the board or commission updated on City Council topics and actions taken at regular or special meetings, provide clarity on how the board or commission's activities fit within Council's adopted goals, and provide context for how local decisions and policies fit within regional and state plans and programs. The Council liaison also helps to keep roles and responsibilities clear between Council, the board or commission, and City staff. Areas needing further clarification or guidance from the full City Council should be brought up by the Council liaison(s) at regular City Council meetings under New Business or Councilmember Comments. The City Council may determine any specific guidelines or tasks to be referred to an advisory body by motion, resolution or ordinance.

- Role of Staff Liaison(s).

Staff have developed work plans to support mandatory activities, as well as to accomplish actions that support Council's 2023-2024 goals. The City is not in a position to consistently have 2-4 staff members present at 5-6 monthly board or commission meetings, many of whom are also required to be at regular Council meetings.

The Mayor shall assign staff to provide limited support to assist each advisory body. This person shall perform tasks such as guiding the advisory body on the creation of a yearly work plan, setting monthly meeting agendas with the collaboration of the advisory body's chair, noticing meetings, preparing and disseminating meeting minutes, posting minutes to the City website, and coordinating required training opportunities. This staff liaison will generally advise on City business related to the activities of the advisory body, but some special topics relevant to the board/commission's approved work plan may require advance scheduling of department directors or their designee or policy guidance from City Council.

- Frequency & Duration of Meetings.

Board/commission meetings should be no more than once per month, unless a special meeting is requested by the City Council or staff for a time sensitive purpose. Meetings should be no longer than two hours, except for rare occurrences. A board or commission can have special task groups or ad hoc meetings to continue or divide work up as needed to achieve timelines or deliverables, provided those groups do not constitute a quorum of the body and do not require additional staff support.

- Outstanding Questions.

- Is there a need/scope not being met by an existing board or commission?

FISCAL IMPACT: None

SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTION: For discussion only. Council is asked to provide direction based on the Mayor's recommendations.

REFERENCE(S): April 4, 2023 Workshop [_04042023-1235 \(snohomishwa.gov\)](#)

COUNCIL GOAL(S): Community Involvement, City Services

ATTACHMENT(S):

Chapter 2.06 SMC, Uniform Policies for Boards and Commissions.pdf

Chapter 2.06

UNIFORM POLICIES FOR BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Sections:

- 2.06.010 Purpose**
- 2.06.015 Application**
- 2.06.020 Attendance Policies – Termination and Replacement**
- 2.06.030 Residency Requirements**
- 2.06.035 Exceptions to the Residency Requirements**
- 2.06.040 Membership**
- 2.06.050 Membership – Vacancy**
- 2.06.060 Membership – Appointment**
- 2.06.070 Council Liaison**

2.06.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish uniform policies for City boards and commissions and to establish a process for review to ensure that the organization is efficient and nonbureaucratic. It is further to assure public access to all meetings of such boards and commissions.

It shall also be a statement of the Council that all committees are creatures of the legislative body and shall not be deemed independent or autonomous to the legislative body.

- A. All committees of the City of Snohomish shall be created by ordinance of the City Council and shall contain a statement of purpose and need.
- B. There shall be only four (4) types of committees in the City of Snohomish and they shall have the following purposes:
 - 1. *Standing Committees.* Such committees are established to conduct business delegated by the legislative body (City Council) and may be authorized by separate state statute or City ordinance. Example of a standing committee is the Planning Commission.
 - 2. *Special Committees.* Such committees are to investigate a special subject and report back to the City Council. An example is the Midtown Planning Commission.
 - 3. *Citizen Advisory Committees.* Such committees are to promote citizen, community member, property owner and business owner participation on a particular subject or function. An example is the Public Safety Commission.

4. *Council Committees.* A Councilmember shall chair Council committees and serve the purposes established by RCW Title [35A](#). (Ord. 2409, 2021)

2.06.015 Application.

This chapter shall apply to all boards and commissions created and/or regulated by the City.

- A. Every odd-numbered year, unless prohibited by state statute, the City Council shall discuss and reauthorize committees of the City, as it deems appropriate. If there are no changes to the purpose and need of a board or commission, a reauthorization resolution shall reaffirm the current purpose and need for the committee. Termination of or changes in the purpose and need as contained in the original authorizing ordinance require an amending ordinance.
- B. The City Council may determine that a committee no longer is needed to provide advice to the Council, or to provide for an operational need of the organization and in such case, the City Council may choose to not reauthorize the committee. An ordinance repealing the original authorizing ordinance shall be placed on the Council agenda for formal action.
- C. The City Council may exempt specific standing committees from provisions of this chapter.
- D. For the purpose of implementing this chapter, the review schedule should be every two years beginning with 2021 and then on each successive odd-numbered year:

Lodging Tax Advisory Commission	January 1
Planning Commission	March 1
Design Review Board	March 1
Park and Recreation Board	July 1
Public Safety Commission	July 1
Youth Council	September 1

(Ord. 1809, 1996; Ord. 1836, 1997; Ord. 2409, 2021; Ord. 2461, 2023)

2.06.020 Attendance Policies – Termination and Replacement.

All board and commission members shall attend at least seventy-five (75) percent of all regularly scheduled meetings in any calendar year. The only exception to this attendance policy is for the Lodging Tax Advisory Commission, which meets only once a year. Failure to attend seventy-five (75) percent of regularly scheduled meetings may result in removal by the Mayor. (Ord. 1809, 1996; Ord. 1825, 1997; Ord. 2409, 2021)

2.06.030 Residency Requirements.

The majority of all board and commission members must live within the City limits. These residency requirements shall commence immediately. Current board and commission members who do not fulfill the residency requirements shall be allowed to finish their current terms but will not be eligible for reappointment. If a board or commission member moves out of the area, that member is no longer eligible to serve. Exceptions to the above regulations are listed in SMC [2.06.035](#). (Ord. 1825, 1997; Ord. 2409, 2021)

2.06.035 Exceptions to the Residency Requirements.

- A. Members of the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Board must live within the City's urban growth boundary as defined by the most current adopted Community Development Plan Map.
- B. Membership on the Design Review Board, because of the expertise required to perform the duties of the Board, shall be limited to those with an interest in the City as a result of either living, working, owning property or business, and/or belonging to one (1) of the City's civic organizations. (Ord. 1837, 1997; Ord. 2233, 2012; Ord. 2409, 2021)

2.06.040 Membership.

The Mayor and Council shall seek to appoint persons who possess qualities of impartiality and broad judgment, and an ability to reconcile conflicting viewpoints. The Mayor shall strive to maintain a diverse representation of membership within a commission. (Ord. 2409, 2021)

2.06.050 Membership – Vacancy.

Vacancies on a board, committee, or commission shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments and shall be made for the remainder of the term of the member being replaced. Application notice to fill vacancies shall be posted to the community within two (2) weeks of vacant positions, or as soon as practicable after notice of the vacancy. The Mayor shall make an appointment from qualified applicants within two (2) months of vacancy, or longer with Council approval. All members shall conform to the attendance requirements set forth in SMC [2.06.020](#), and may be replaced or terminated in accordance with that section. (Ord. 2409, 2021)

2.06.060 Membership – Appointment.

All boards, committees, and commissions shall have members appointed by the Mayor subject to Council confirmation; provided, that Council members have an opportunity to review the application of the Mayor's appointee prior to the meeting at which the Council is to confirm the appointment. (Ord. 2409, 2021)

2.06.070 Council Liaison.

Each Council committee shall have at least one (1), but no more than three (3), Councilmembers appointed as a liaison. The liaison is to act as the primary two (2) way communication channel and establish and nurture a working relationship between Council and board, commission, or committee for their mutual benefit. (Ord. 2409, 2021)

The Snohomish Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 2465, passed March 7, 2023.

Disclaimer: The city clerk's office has the official version of the Snohomish Municipal Code. Users should contact the city clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

[City Website: www.snohomishwa.gov](http://www.snohomishwa.gov)

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