

CITY OF LYNDEN PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission is a commission that is appointed by the City Council. The purpose of the Commission is to advise and make recommendations to the City Council regarding land use policy, zoning, and all development proposals. The Commission works directly with the Planning Department.

ORGANIZATION

The Commission consists of seven (7) members who are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Commissioners are appointed to six-year terms.

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are elected annually by the Commission at an “Annual Meeting.” Meetings are currently held twice a month, on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, except during the summer months, when the Commission meets only once a month.

MEMBER ROLES

The Commission's work covers a wide range of issues within the City of Lynden and the surrounding community. While many issues must be acted on quickly, other project issues involve a significant time commitment to reach completion. This variety of issues causes regular attendance and active participation by members to be fundamental to the completion of the necessary tasks.

Perhaps the most significant responsibility the members have is to maintain an open mind to all issues that come before the Commission. Listening, learning and the discussion of issues are important qualities of commissioners. Decision-making should be based on information gathered and what can be seen as working toward the betterment of the city or working toward the Vision Statement as adopted in the Comprehensive Plan. Maintaining objectivity in the face of special interest groups is often difficult, but essential for a balanced approach to economic development. Both long-term objectives and short-term benefits should be considered on all issues.

Although the Commission acts as a group, it is expected and desirable that debate and divergent viewpoints are present among the commissioners. However, personal view points are not to be represented to outside organizations or individuals as being of the Commission, the City or City Departments. Special interests, which may not represent the betterment of the community, must remain separate from the Commissioner's obligations. Conflicts of interest must be avoided and will not be tolerated.

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The Commission has powers under the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), 35A.63.020 and 35.63, and the Lynden Municipal Code, Chapter 2.08.

The Commission has the responsibility of reviewing land use developments, administering the Lynden Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Ordinance, and the City's environmental policy and ordinances. The Commission is responsible for the approval of all Shoreline Permits; and makes recommendations to the City Council on all comprehensive plan amendments, subdivisions, planned residential developments, ordinance amendments and land use policy.

STAFF

The Planner is responsible for the general administration of the business and affairs of the commission, subject to the direction of the Commission. It is the responsibility of the Planner to advise the Commission regarding all matters relating to planning, zoning, and subdivision of land or land development within the City. The Planner attends all regularly scheduled and special meetings of the Commission. The Planner shall keep all records of the Commission. It is also the responsibility of the Planner to prepare the agenda and to review the business matters to be considered by the Commission.

The Planner shall also prepare the recommendations of the Commission to be presented to the City Council on all land use matters. These recommendations will be approved by Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Commission before the submittal to the City Council.

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JOB DESCRIPTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

QUALIFICATIONS: Applicants must . . .

1. Be a resident of the City of Lynden.
2. Have a willingness and dedication to commit both time and personal energy to the Planning Commission.
3. Have an interest in comprehensive community planning, zoning and subdivision of land, and the protection of the environment.
4. Have a desire to assist in implementing the City of Lynden's Vision Statement and land use policies, including the Comprehensive Plan, Subdivision Ordinances, Zoning Ordinances and environmental policy, for the purpose of protecting the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the City of Lynden.
5. Have a willingness to encourage and accept input from citizens, organizations and those directly affected by land use related actions made by the Commission.
6. Have the ability to maintain an objective approach to community development issues in order to promote the highest "quality of life" possible for the residents of Lynden.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. The general purpose of the Planning Commission is to advise the City Council on all development matters in the community.
2. Specific duties include the preparation, administration and implementation of Lynden's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Environmental Policy and other land use policy.
3. The Planning Commission is required to make formal recommendations on all zoning and subdivision applications.
4. Attend and participate in regularly scheduled meetings and special meetings.
5. Attend and participate in appointed study committees that may be required to conduct the affairs of the Commission.
6. Work closely with City Staff, the City Council and other city committees and commissions.
7. Annually elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson to the Commission.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS TO:

1. City Council

PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION:

1. Self-evaluation by the Commission.
 2. Regular attendance and participation.
- DUTIES OF CHAIR (and Vice Chair):

1. To preside at all meetings of the Commission and to preserve order and enforce required Commission procedures and Roberts Rules of Order.
2. To submit such recommendations and information that would be considered proper concerning the business and procedure of the Commission.
3. To act as spokesperson for the Commission.
4. To encourage active discussion of all items brought before the Commission.

DUTIES OF THE CITY PLANNER TO THE COMMISSION:

1. To advise the Commission regarding all matters relating to the planning, zoning, subdivision of land or land development within the City.
2. To attend regularly scheduled and special meetings of the Commission.
3. Responsible for general supervision over the administration of the business and affairs of the Planning Commission, subject to the direction of the commission.
4. The City Planner shall keep all records of the Commission.
5. Responsible for the preparation of the agenda and reviews of the business matters to be considered by the Commission.
6. To serve as an advisor to the Commission on all matters subject to Commission consideration.

CITY OF LYNDEN
PLANNING COMMISSION
Procedural Policies

- PC1. Meetings: Meetings shall be held the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m., unless additional meetings are called by the Chairperson. Changes in the day and or the time of Planning Commission meetings must be published in the approved publication.
- PC2. Attendance: Attendance is vital to the fulfillment of a Commission member's duties. Members who miss more than four (4) meetings per year or three consecutive meetings, may have the nature of the absences reviewed by the Mayor and the Commission Chair, and a recommendation may be forwarded to the council that the member be removed for poor attendance.
- PC3. Conflict of Interest: Members who fail to disclose a conflict of interest may be asked to resign immediately.
- PC4. Hearing Policy: The Planning Commission operates by Robert's Rules of Order with the following hearing process.
1. Open Public Hearing
 - a. Ask if any member has an interest in the project (financial or personal) or has had prior discussion with proponents.
 - b. Remind audience to clearly state their full name and address when testifying.
 - c. Remind audience that testimony should be directed to the Commission, not others in the audience.
 2. Request Staff Report.
 3. Request testimony from proponents:
 - a. spokesperson, if any
 - b. others in favor
 4. Request testimony from opponents:
 - a. spokesperson, if any
 - b. others opposed
 5. Allow rebuttal: New information is not allowed, unless rebuttal from opposition is also allowed.
 6. Close Public Hearing: Planning Commission discusses proposal among themselves. They may direct specific questions to anyone in the audience. Members of the audience should

not be providing any input unless specifically asked by a member of the Planning Commission.

7. The Planning Commission can decide:
 - a. To deny approval of request
 - b. Approve the request based on recommendations set forth in the staff report.
 - c. Approve the request based on recommendations set forth in the staff report, but place added conditions on the request.
 - d. Continue the decision to another date -- remember the hearing is closed.

8. Specify reasons for action. The City Council depends on the recommendations of the Planning Commission for its decision making process. Any item, with the exception of shoreline permits, will go before the City Council, either for approval or as an appeal to the Commission's decision. Specific reasons for actions taken by the Planning Commission should be provided to the City Council as a basis for their decision.

- PC5. Agenda: All items to be brought before the Planning Commission shall be submitted to the Planning Department, and all fees paid in full, by the second Monday of the month prior to the meeting date. The Planning Commission may establish an agenda item which allows non-hearing items to be brought to the Commission for general information and consideration.

CITY OF LYNDEN

A COMMISSION MEMBER'S CODE

As a commission member, I believe that the primary purposes of a commission are to achieve effective and wise guidance of the City through group thinking and action, to raise the standards of the commission membership and to improve the level of services to the community which supports it.

I realize that mine is a community trust, that I represent all the people and that I have a duty to the community as well as to the commission I pledge myself. Therefore, to cultivate an "educated heart" so that I may be sensitive to my obligations and relationships in this trusteeship, I subscribe to the code of an ethical person, remembering that ethics refers to what a person is morally obliged to do or not to do in a given situation.

I believe that commission service can be an expression of democratic citizenship, signifying a willingness to accept community responsibility and the charge to preserve the popular control of American public services. Respecting the dignity and worth of the individual, I shall base my relations with people on their qualities as individuals without distinction as to race or creed or gender or color or economic or social status. I believe that a person's greatest possession, as well as his or her greatest contribution to society, may lie in the ways in which he or she differs from me, rather than in the ways in which we are similar. I shall accept these differences and try to build a useful relationship upon them.

I uphold the principles of my organization, recognizing and assuming my responsibility to establish and administer the best possible program and policies for my commission. I shall learn its programs and objectives, give to it a fair share of my time and personal abilities, and keep a community wide perspective knowing that, for sound community service, my commission's work must be coordinated with the total community.

I promise to be loyal to my own organization and a good neighbor to other agencies. My attitude shall be one of cooperative open-mindedness and objectivity. In carrying out my assignments, I shall be professional in realizing it is not possible to lay down absolute rules for all situations. I shall be willing to think things through with other commission members, weighing alternatives and exercising good judgment in choosing among them.