

# Agreement

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## Summary of OPC Discussion Groups June 21, 2014 Retreat

### Preface

The public interest is best served by a diverse Planning Commission representing a broad set of viewpoints, knowledge, experience and expertise.

The Planning Commission is a volunteer group appointed by the City Council to help to form land use and related policy. All members come to the Planning Commission work to help make the City a better place to live, work and play. Each Commissioner is appointed because they bring a unique perspective and have something to offer in this process.

The Planning Commission is a deliberative body and functions best when members question assumptions and reasoning of fellow commissioners and staff. In order to be effective the Planning Commission must trust one another and the city staff. Trust is based on communication and respect.

When disputes arise between members the best approach to resolving them is generally the simplest – face to face communication. Each Commissioner should work to resolve conflicts at the lowest possible level and with the least amount of conflict and with the highest levels of respect for other members.

The (Agreement or Protocol) below is not intended to address issues of impropriety, such as state statutes or City policies. Should a Planning Commission have concerns that an action by the Planning Commission, a Planning Commissioner or City Staff has transgressed the legal framework in which the Planning Commission operates the Planning Commissioner should raise those concerns with the City Manager immediately. It is the job of the City Manager or their designee to investigate all such complaints and determine an appropriate course of action based on the laws of the state of Washington and the City's Administrative Guidelines.

For all other issues related to operations and decision making of the Planning Commission the following (agreement or protocol) shall apply:

## Agreement

### CONFLICT AVOIDANCE AND RESOLUTION WITHIN THE PLANNING COMMISSION

#### Themes from Commissioner Comments:

*Need for guidelines for raising and discussing concerns/things uncomfortable with OPC members*

*Minimize opportunity for conflict and misunderstandings*

*Protocol is needed for handling conflict - need for order of operations*

*Resolve issues and concerns in a manner that follows channels that build trust and respect*

#### Objectives

- Avoid conflict through early and timely communication to clarify information, point of view, context, perspectives and motives.
- Support communication and problem solving among Planning Commissioners.
- Preserve the integrity of the Planning Commission. Acknowledge that the Planning Commission does get judged by the actions and opinions of its members.
- Establish steps for authentic dialogue about perceived, potential and real conflicts or disputes within the Planning Commission.
- Define a process for timely response to potential conflicts or disputes.
- Address conflicts and grievances with good faith, honesty and respect.
- Resolve issues in a manner that builds and maintains trust and respect among Planning Commissioners.
- Except as otherwise noted herein, internal resolution of conflicts and grievances is in the best interest of individual Planning Commissioners and the Planning Commission as a whole.

#### Procedure

It is in the best interest of the Planning Commission, the individual Commissioners and city staff to resolve disputes and disagreements internally. When a Planning Commission member is in disagreement with an issue or Planning Commission actions, these are the steps for addressing the issue:

1. When a misunderstanding or conflict arises between Commissioners is incumbent for the Commissioners to identify a neutral location and specific time to hear one another's perspective and seek understanding of the nature of the conflict and opportunity for resolution. If a resolution is not possible then pursue the steps below.

2. Contact the Planning Commission Chair to discuss the issue with the intent to find resolution to the concern or conflict. The Chair may choose to take the issue before the Commission. If this is not a satisfactory option then:
3. Take the issue or concern to the Vice Chair or another Leadership Team member with the intent to find resolution to the concern or conflict. If this is not a satisfactory option then:
4. Contact the person that is most appropriate to inform of the concern, this may be: the OPC staff liaison; the Director or Deputy Director of Community Planning & Development; the City's Communications Manager or the City Attorney. If this is not a satisfactory option then:
5. Take their concern to the City Manager or the City Councilmember who is appointed as the liaison to the Planning Commission.

Out of respect and concern for the integrity of the Planning Commission, individual Commissioners, and City Staff, members are expected to follow the above steps to seek resolution of the issue.

