

1 City of Houston
2 Planning Commission Bylaws
3 Consistent with HMC, Chapter 7.06
4 1st Edition

5
6 **ARTICLE I**

7 Purpose

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9 The following bylaws are hereby adopted by the Houston Planning Commission (“Commission”)
10 of the City of Houston in order to:

- 11 **A.** Improve interactions between the Commission and the applicant, the public, and other
12 administrative agencies;
13 **B.** Provide for the efficient use of the time by Commission members, the public, applicants,
14 and the planning staff; and
15 **C.** Balance the efforts of the Commission between land use applications and the planning
16 work necessary to guide progressive development in Houston.

17
18 **ARTICLE II**

19 Officers

- 20
21 **A.** The officers of the Commission shall be Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.
22 **B.** The annual election of officers shall be the first order of business at the first regularly
23 scheduled Commission meeting in January. The officers will assume office immediately
24 after the election.
25 **C.** Officers shall be elected by a majority of the Commission members for a term of one
26 year.
27 **D.** Election of officers shall be the first order of business at any time that an officer’s seat
28 becomes vacant.

29
30 **ARTICLE III**

31 Duties and Powers of Office

- 32
33 **A.** The duties of the Chairperson shall be to preside at all Commission meetings, to call
34 meetings and to perform other duties as required, retaining the full right to vote in all
35 deliberations of the Commission.
36 **B.** The Chairperson shall decide on all points of order and procedure, subject to Robert’s
37 Rules of Order and the Houston Municipal Code.
38 **C.** The Chairperson shall sign documents on behalf of the Commission.
39 **D.** The duties of the Vice-Chairperson shall be to perform the duties of the Chairperson in
40 the Chairperson’s absence.

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42 **ARTICLE IV**

43 Open Meetings

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2 All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public and shall proceed in accordance with
3 AS 44.62.310, the State of Alaska Open meetings Act.
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5 **Section 1. Regular Meetings**
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- 7 **A.** Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held at 6 PM on the last Thursday of each
8 month.
9 **B.** Only those matters stated in the public notice of the meeting shall be acted upon at a
10 regular meeting.
11 **C.** An exception to B above may occur for an emergency or time sensitive action item to
12 be placed on the agenda too late for public notice if:
13 **1.** The request is presented by the Mayor, or is the Mayor is unavailable, the
14 Deputy Mayor, and includes a written statement as to why the item needs
15 immediate Commission consideration and action;
16 **2.** And the item's late placement on the agenda is approved by the Commission
17 members according to the Robert's Rules of Order;
18 **3.** And the majority of the Commission votes in approval of adding the item to the
19 agenda.
20 **D.** No new agenda item will be considered after 10 PM unless agreed to by three members
21 present and the meetings will adjourn prior to 11 PM unless an extension is approved
22 by four of the members present.
23 **E.** Before official and formal action can be taken, a quorum shall be present. A quorum is
24 defined as three Commission members for the purposes of these bylaws.
25 **F.** The Chairperson, after discussion with the Mayor and Public Works Director, may cancel
26 meetings when appropriate.
27

28 **Section 2. Special Meetings**
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- 30 **A.** Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or three members of the
31 Commission.
32 **B.** Only those matters stated in the public notice of the meeting shall be acted upon at a
33 special meeting.
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35 **ARTICLE V**

36 Rules of Proceedings
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38 Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order,
39 Newly Revised or other rules the Commission may adopt.
40

41 **Section 1. Order of Business**
42

- 43 **I.** Call to Order

- 1 **II.** Roll Call
- 2 **III.** Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
- 3 **IV.** Approval of the Agenda
- 4 **V.** Public Comments
- 5 **VI.** Special Orders of the Day
- 6 **VII.** Reports
- 7 **VIII.** Minutes
- 8 **IX.** Persons to be heard
- 9 **X.** Public Hearing
- 10 **XI.** Unfinished Business
- 11 **XII.** New Business
- 12 **XIII.** Public Comments
- 13 **XIV.** Commission and Commission Staff Comments
- 14 **XV.** Adjournment

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16 **Section 2. Procedure**

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- 18 **A.** At each regular meeting of the Commission the applicant and all persons having an
- 19 interest in or desiring to be heard upon any matter, which is the subject of a specific
- 20 agenda item requiring a public hearing, shall be given an opportunity to be heard for a
- 21 maximum of three five minutes during the public participation portion of the meeting.
- 22 **B.** There shall be a time during regular meetings for members of the public to address the
- 23 Commission concerning any matter relevant to the Commission’s jurisdiction that is not
- 24 on the agenda for a maximum of five minutes.
- 25 **C.** All members of the public speaking before the Commission shall give their name,
- 26 community, or whom they are representing.
- 27 **D.** Teleconferencing by a Commissioner may be used for all lawful activities of the
- 28 Commission and, if all voting individuals have an opportunity to evaluate all testimony
- 29 and evidence, to vote on actions. Teleconferencing may not be used as a regular form
- 30 of participation for regular meetings of the Commission.
- 31 **1.** The vote at a meeting held by teleconferencing shall be taken by roll call.
- 32 **2.** If the chair chooses to participate by teleconferencing the Vice-Chair shall preside.
- 33 **E.** A person wishing to speak before the Commission under the agenda item “reports” shall
- 34 file an appearance request with the clerk specifying the topic on which the person
- 35 intends to speak and shall limit their presentation to seven minutes.
- 36 **1.** To qualify to appear on the agenda under “reports” the requestor must be a
- 37 member of a governmental agency, a party with the City has an agreement, or a
- 38 member of a City or Borough board or commission.
- 39 **2.** City Officials do not have to file an appearance request.
- 40 **F.** A person wishing to speak before the Commission under the agenda item “persons to
- 41 be heard” shall file an appearance request with the Clerk specifying the topic on which
- 42 the person intends to speak. The Clerk shall place the appearance request on the next
- 43 available regular meeting agenda.

1 The Clerk shall not accept appearance requests involving:

- 2 **1.** Items that have other clearly defined channels of resolution by the administration
3 or council;
4 **2.** Items scheduled for public hearing on an agenda;
5 **3.** Items upon which litigation involving the applicant or applicant’s representative is
6 currently pending.
7 **G.** In lieu of appearance requests, the Commission shall accept brief communications on
8 any subject.
9 **H.** Persons who do not wish to speak before the Commission under persons to be heard,
10 and who do not wish to submit written communications, may be heard under “public
11 comments,” which is scheduled for each regular meeting.
12 **I.** All presentations to the Commission shall be limited to five minutes, unless otherwise
13 ordered by the Commission.
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16 **ARTICLE VI**

17 Establishment of Annual Goals

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19 **No later than January**, the commission shall examine its goals from the previous year and set
20 goals for the New Year.
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22 **ARTICLE VII**

23 Committee of the Whole

- 24
25 **A.** At any regular or special meeting where convening as the Committee of the Whole is
26 an agenda item, the Commission may, by vote, convene as a Committee of the Whole:
27 **1.** No votes may be taken and no decisions may be taken in Committee of the
28 Whole; and
29 **2.** The topics to be addressed in a Committee of the Whole shall be included in
30 the published notice.
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32 **ARTICLE VIII**

33 Conflict of Interest

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35 No Commission member shall vote on any question that he/she has a direct or indirect financial
36 interest. Interest will be interpreted as presented in AS 39.52, MSB 2.71.020 (c) and HMC
37 29.20.010. Additionally, no Commission member shall represent any non-municipal board before
38 the Commission of which he/she is a member. This restriction does not apply to any board,
39 Commission or Committee under the City of Houston governance.
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41 **ARTICLE IX**

42 Voting
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- 1 **A.** Each member of the Commission, including the Chairperson, shall be entitled to one
- 2 vote on any matter before the Commission.
- 3 **B.** Three affirmative votes shall be required to carry any measure before the Commission
- 4 unless a greater number is required by ordinance.
- 5 **C.** Failure of a motion to approve any matter upon which the Commission is authorized
- 6 to act shall be deemed a denial.
- 7 **D.** The Commission must submit written findings setting forth the facts it finds relevant
- 8 to its decisions and the reason for the decision or recommendation.
- 9 **E.** Failure of a motion to deny any matter upon which the Commission is authorized to
- 10 act shall not constitute approval.

11 **ARTICLE X**

12 Decisions

- 13 **A.** All permit actions of the Commission must be in the form of a resolution setting forth:
- 14
 - 15 **1.** The date of significant meetings or hearings related to the request;
 - 16 **2.** The decision; and
 - 17 **3.** The basic facts and the reasoning leading to the decision; and
 - 18 **4.** Conditions of the permit.
- 19 **B.** The decision must be signed by the Chairperson or the Vice-Chair if the Chairperson
- 20 is absent.
- 21 **C.** All permit actions by the Commission shall be summarized in a permit by the public
- 22 works staff. The recommended conditions of approval or disapproval on a permit
- 23 forwarded to the Houston City Council shall be mailed to each applicant. A copy shall
- 24 be retained in accordance with the adopted records retention schedule.

25 **ARTICLE XII**

26 Consensus

- 27 **A.** With the consent of the Commission, the Chairperson may appoint ad hoc committees
- 28 of the Commission for special study or review.
- 29 **B.** No committee of the Commission shall have the power to commit the Commission to
- 30 the endorsement of any plan or program, without its submission to the Commission
- 31 for consideration at a regular or special meeting.

32 **ARTICLE XIII**

33 Staff Support

- 34 **A.** The Public Works Director and the public works staff shall assist the Commission.
- 35 **B.** The City Clerk's office shall act as the parliamentarian to the Commission and shall
- 36 keep minutes of all meetings, which shall be a public record.

37 **ARTICLE IX**

1 Notice of Meetings

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3 In accordance with AS 44.62.310, 6 calendar days public notice of all regular and special meetings
4 of the Commission shall be posted at City Hall and on the City of Houston’s web site through the
5 clerk’s office.

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7 **ARTICLE X**
8 Amendment

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10 These bylaws may be amended by an affirmative vote of at least three members of the
11 Commission at any regular or special meeting, provided that notice in writing has been given to
12 each Commission member at least ten days prior to the meeting, or provided that the proposed
13 amendment was read at the last regular meeting of the Commission.
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