

Planning Commission Operating Agreements 2016

While bylaws lay out formal rules and expectations for a group, operating agreements provide an opportunity for a more informal or general agreement on the conduct and values members expect one another to uphold. While the Eugene Planning Commission has had operating guidelines in the past, the current Planning Commission has not endorsed any specific guidelines. The examples and suggestions below offer a jumping off point, should the current commission decide to pursue this tool.

1994 Planning Commission Operating Guidelines

1. **Please give your first and greatest allegiance to the Planning Commission.** Many of us have other civic and professional responsibilities, but we regard our Planning Commission service as the most important of our commitments.
2. **Don't speak or allow yourself to appear to be speaking for the entire Planning Commission.** We try to consult one another before becoming involved in situations that might require us to take positions on planning-related issues.
3. **Protect your impartiality.** Minimize your contact with people and organizations that have frequent dealings with us. Each time one of us has to declare a bias or a conflict of interest, we lose a decision maker in a process where we may need the extra opinion. Even in legislative proceedings that aren't bound by the rules of quasi-judicial hearings, it helps to have maintained a reasonable distance from both sides of an issue. Never declare a position or promise a vote to anyone. It's not only inappropriate, it's impractical. Your opinion may change after testimony and discussion.
4. **Deal fairly, openly and respectfully with people.** Don't ambush staff with questions they may not have considered. Be attentive during hearings, and don't criticize or argue with witnesses. Include the public in the process by avoiding jargon, taking a moment to explain things that may not be obvious to anybody but you and the rest of the Commission, and explaining the positions you take. Be civil in discussion; don't embarrass other commissioners or denigrate their views.
5. **Do your homework.** Don't rely on others to do the reading and thinking for you. Be prepared to ask questions of staff and witnesses in an organized, logical fashion.
6. **Participate fully.** Avoid absences. At meetings, don't wait for somebody else to ask a question or frame the issue for discussion.
7. **Be considerate of the Planning Commission's time (or lack thereof).** Be succinct. In discussion, don't go off on tangents or make comments that won't advance the Commission's efforts to come to a decision. Don't ask us to read outside materials unless you believe them to be timely and important. If you're having trouble with an issue that others seem to understand, consult staff privately rather than take up meeting time with your questions.
8. **Do what's best for Eugene now and in the future.** Take the job to heart. Put the community's gain well ahead of any personal gain you might realize from a decision. Hear all sides of an issue. Look for reasonable compromises when appropriate. Strive for policy built on community consensus instead of division.

Suggested Possible Operating Agreements

Planning Commissioner Conduct

- Do what is best for Eugene now and in the future
- Bring a city wide perspective
- Be fair, open and respectful
- Prepare for each meeting
- Participate fully
- Be considerate of the Planning Commission's time
- Protect your impartiality

Meeting Protocols

- 3 minute rounds
- Consider allowing the Chair to let someone else keep the queue
- Consider doing Planning Commission motions under a stricter Robert's Rules of Order structure
- Give updates on boards and commissions

Planning Commission Representation at Meetings

- Authorize Chair and Vice Chair or delegate to speak on behalf of the Planning Commission at the City Council. Clarify how a member of than chair or vice chair can be authorized to represent a Planning Commission position on a subject