BYLAWS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

ARTICLE 1. NAME.

The name of the commission is Environmental Commission.

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE AND DUTIES.

The purpose of the Environmental Commission is to:

(A) review and analyze the policies relating to the environmental quality of the city, to act as an advisory commission to the city council, the city manager, and the department in their efforts to oversee the protection and integrity of the natural environment, protect and preserve public and private trees, promote growth management and land use planning, minimize degradation of water resources, protect downstream areas, and promote recreation opportunities and environmental awareness and advise and recommend on any issue which the commission determines necessary or advisable for the enhancement and stewardship of the urban forest both public and private.

(B) assist the city council, the city manager, and the department in studying, promoting and enforcing environmental protection policies to assure the health, safety, welfare and quality of life of all citizens within the City's incorporated boundaries as well as those within its extraterritorial jurisdiction where the boundaries apply.

(C) oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan for the planting, maintenance, and replacement of trees in the City’s jurisdiction, and revise the plan as necessary. When a portion of the plan has been developed and established, it shall be submitted to the city council for adoption before implementation.

(D) advise the city council, the city manager, and the department concerning policies, projects, and programs that affect the quality of life or have the potential to affect the environment, including those that relate to or affect:

(1) water quality:
- (a) watershed protection;
- (b) urban runoff;
- (c) innovative wastewater treatment;
- (d) regional wastewater treatment;
- (e) improvement and protection of the Colorado River and the Edwards Aquifer; and
- (f) wastewater irrigation;

(2) growth management and land use planning:
- (a) municipal utility district review;
- (b) capital improvement project review; and
- (c) the comprehensive plan;

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(3) construction controls for erosion and sedimentation;

(4) City environmental policies regarding monitoring and enforcement;

(5) solid waste disposal plan alternatives;

(6) watershed protection:
(a) flood control;
(b) erosion control;
(c) water quality; and
(d) utility management;

(7) roadway planning;

(8) beautification;

(9) recreation resources;

(10) public education on environmental matters;

(11) hazardous waste materials management;

(12) revegetation and landscaping;

(13) air quality;

(14) noise abatement; and

(15) all matters pertaining to the City's urban forest, including public and private trees.

(E) The commission shall:

(1) review all variances to requirements for water quality protection;

(2) review the monitoring of storm water runoff in developed and undeveloped areas;

(3) review the efficiency of existing and proposed structural and nonstructural water quality controls;

(4) periodically review the effectiveness of Chapter 25-4 (Subdivision);

(5) review waste treatment permits within the city's extraterritorial jurisdiction;

(6) review programs and policies for flood control, erosion control, and water quality;

(7) review capital improvement projects;

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(8) review municipal utility district proposals and amendments;

(9) review roadway plan amendments;

(10) recommend urban runoff standards; and

(11) review the environmental elements of planned unit developments.

(F) Recommend and initiate, with the advice and consent of the city council, specific project studies concerning any of the matters described in Subsections (H) and (I) of Section 2-1-144 of the City Code or any other related environmental or urban forestry issue.

(G) Make reports and recommendations for standards and criteria concerning any of the matters described in Subsections (H) and (I) of Section 2-1-144 of the City Code or any other related environmental or urban forestry issue.

(H) Promote close cooperation between the City and all private citizens, institutions, and agencies interested in or conducting natural resource, environmental, and urban forestry activities, so that all similar activities within the city may be coordinated to secure the greatest public welfare.

ARTICLE 3. MEMBERSHIP.

(A) The commission is composed of eleven commissioners appointed by the city council.

(B) A commissioner serves at the pleasure of the city council.

(C) Commissioners serve for a term of four years beginning March 1st on the year of appointment

(D) An individual commissioner may not act in an official capacity except through the action of the commission.

(E) A commissioner who is absent for three consecutive regular meetings or one-third of all regular meetings in a rolling twelve month timeframe automatically vacates the commissioner's position subject to the holdover provisions in Section 2-1-27 of the City Code. This does not apply to an absence due to illness or injury of a commissioner, an illness or injury of a commissioner's immediate family member, active military service or the birth or adoption of a commissioner's child for 90 days after the event. The commissioner must notify the staff liaison of the reason for the absence not later than the date of the next regular meeting of the commission. Failure to notify the liaison before the next regular meeting of the commission will result in an unexcused absence.

(F) At each meeting, each commissioner shall sign an attendance sheet which indicates that the commissioner does not have a conflict of interest with any item on that agenda, or identifies each agenda item on which the commissioner has a conflict of interest. Failure to sign the sheet results

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in the commissioner being counted as absent and his/her votes are not counted.

(G) A commissioner who seeks to resign from the commission shall submit a written resignation to the chair of the commission, the staff liaison, or the city clerk's office. If possible, the resignation should allow for a thirty day notice so the city council can appoint a replacement.

ARTICLE 4. OFFICERS.

(A) The officers of the commission shall consist of a chair, vice-chair and secretary.

(B) Officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the commission at the first regular meeting after April 1st. In the event a current officer becomes ineligible to serve as an officer, the commission may hold an emergency election as needed.

(C) The term of office shall be one year, beginning May 1st and ending April 30th. An officer may continue to serve until a successor is elected. A person may not serve as an officer in a designated position of a commission for more than four consecutive one-year terms. A person who has served as an officer in a designated position of a commission for four consecutive terms is not eligible for re-election to that designated office until the expiration of two years after the last date of the person's service in that office. The commission may override the term limit provision for an officer by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the authorized commissioners.

(D) A commissioner may not hold more than one office at a time.

ARTICLE 5. DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

(A) The chair shall preside at commission meetings, appoint all committees, and represent the commission at ceremonial functions and approve each final meeting agenda.

(B) In the absence of the chair, the vice-chair shall perform all duties of the chair, in the absence of the chair and the vice-chair, the secretary shall perform all duties of the chair.

(C) The secretary acts as the parliamentarian and can have the main responsibility for assisting the chair and the commission in following Robert's Rules of Order and assisting in issuing motions.

ARTICLE 6. AGENDAS.

(A) Two or more commissioners may place an item on the agenda by oral or written request to the staff liaison at least five days before the meeting. After first consulting with and receiving input from the staff liaison, the chair shall approve each final meeting agenda.

(B) The commission liaison shall submit the meeting agenda through the online agenda posting system for each meeting not less than 72 hours before the meeting.

(C) Posting of the agenda must comply with Texas Government Code Chapter 551 (Texas Open Meetings Act).

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ARTICLE 7. MEETINGS.

(A) The commission meetings shall comply with Texas Government Code Chapter 551 (Texas Open Meetings Act).

(B) Commission meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

(C) The commission may not conduct a closed meeting without the approval of the city attorney.

(D) The commission shall meet twice a month. In November of each year, the commission shall adopt a schedule of the meetings for the upcoming year, including makeup meeting dates for the holidays and cancelled meetings.

(E) The chair may call a special meeting, and the chair shall call a special meeting if requested by three or more commissioners. The call shall state the purpose of the meeting. A commission may not call a meeting in addition to its regular scheduled meetings as identified in its adopted meeting schedule, more often than once a quarter, unless the meeting is required to comply with a statutory deadline or a deadline established by Council.

(F) Six commissioners constitute a quorum.

(G) If a quorum for a meeting does not convene within one-half hour of the posted time for the meeting, then the meeting may not be held.

(H) To be effective, a commission action must be adopted by an affirmative vote of the number of commissioners necessary to provide a quorum.

(I) The chair has the same voting privilege as any other commissioner.

(J) The commission shall allow citizens to address the commission on agenda items and during a period of time set aside for citizen communications. The chair may limit a speaker to three minutes.

(K) The staff liaison shall prepare the commission minutes. The minutes of each commission meeting must include the vote of each commissioner on each item before the commission and indicate whether a commissioner is absent or failed to vote on an item.

(L) The city clerk shall retain agendas, approved minutes, internal review reports and bylaws. The Watershed Protection Department shall retain all other commission documents. The documents are public records under Texas Local Government Code Chapter 552 (Texas Public Information Act).

(M) The chair shall adjourn a meeting not later than 10 p.m., unless the commission votes to continue the meeting.

(N) Each person and commissioner attending a commission meeting should observe decorum pursuant to Section 2-1-48 of the City Code.

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(O) A member of the public may not address a board or commission at a meeting on an item posted as a briefing.

ARTICLE 8. COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS.

COMMITTEES

(A) The Environmental Commission shall have the following committees:

(1) Joint Environmental/Parks Board -The duties of the Joint Committee are to review and recommend actions related to the Barton Springs Master Plan.

~~(2) Urban Growth Policy and Water Quality Protection Committee – The Committee works on environmental aspects or impacts of development, water quality protection and regulation, and related City policies within Austin and nearby areas that could impact Austin, including the recommendations for the Lake Austin Task Force.~~

~~(3) Development – The committee works on development issues and development related ordinances, including any development being planned under the redevelopment exception to the SOS Ordinance as well as CodeNEXT and PUD issues.~~

~~(4) Air Quality Committee – The committee monitors and makes recommendations regarding issues to air quality within the City of Austin and surrounding areas.~~

~~(5)~~(2) Urban Forest Committee – The committee is charged with reviewing matters pertaining to the urban forest.

~~(6) Drainage Infrastructure and Flood Mitigation Committee – The committee monitors and makes recommendations related to the City of Austin's drainage infrastructure, flood mitigation and prevention, structural and non-structural best management practices, including projects, programs, regulations, and policies. The Committee also monitors and makes recommendations regarding implementation of the 2016 Flood Mitigation Task Force report. The Chairs of the Buyout Committee, Operations and Maintenance Committee, and the Capital Improvements Committee of the 2016 Flood Mitigation Task Force shall sit on and participate in this committee as non-voting ex officio participants until December 31, 2021.~~

(B) Each committee must be established by an affirmative vote of the commission. A committee cannot meet until its creation is approved by the Council Audit and Finance Committee. Each committee shall consist of at least three commissioners appointed by the chair. A staff member shall be assigned to each committee by the director of the Watershed Protection Department.

(C) The commission chair shall appoint a commissioner as the committee chair, with the commissioners' consent.

(D) A majority of the total number of appointed committee members constitutes a quorum.

(E) Each committee shall meet on a regularly scheduled basis at least quarterly.

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(F) Each committee shall make an annual report to the commission at the January commission meeting.

(G) Committee meetings must be posted in accordance with Texas Government Code Chapter 551 (Texas Open Meetings Act).

(H) At each committee meeting, a committee member shall sign in on a sheet provided and shall indicate that the member has no conflict of interest with any item on the committee meeting agenda, or identify each agenda item on which the member has a conflict of interest.

WORKING GROUPS

(A) The commission can determine the size of a working group but the number of commissioners serving on the working group must be less than a quorum of the commission.

(B) A working group may designate a chair, with the member's consent, but is not required to do so.

(C) Quorum requirements do not apply to working groups.

(D) Staff support will not be provided for working groups.

(E) Working groups are not required to post their meetings in accordance with the Texas Government Code Chapter 551 (Texas Open Meetings Act).

ARTICLE 9. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY.

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the commission in all cases to which they are applicable, except when inconsistent with these bylaws or with special rules of order which the board or city council may adopt.

ARTICLE 10. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS.

A bylaw amendment is not effective unless approved by the Council Audit and Finance Committee.

The bylaws were approved by the Austin City Council at their meeting held on June 8, 2017.

~~Chuck Lesniak~~Chris Herrington
Environmental Officer

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