



*The City That Soars!*

## REQUEST FOR PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

<b>Meeting Date</b>	January 24, 2012
<b>Agenda Item</b>	1
<b>Title</b>	Annual Review of Commission Standing Rules
<b>Submitted By</b>	Deborah Jones, Staff Liaison

<b>Description</b>	Commission standing rules and policies are to be reviewed annually in January.
<b>Background</b>	<p>Planning Commission policy requires the Commission to review its Standing Rules and other policy documents annually. These documents were extensively reviewed and updated in 2008 with additional corrections in 2009. In 2011, the Planning Commission approved a minor revision of the Commission's Standing Rules. A copy of the revised document is attached for Commission review.</p> <p>As no changes have been discussed in other documents since 2009, those documents (Sikkink's Seven Motion System, Falcon Heights City Code Section 2-118, Planning Commission Policies from the City Administrative Manual) are not attached. Staff requests that Commissioners review their copies from last year and bring any needed changes to the meeting.</p>
<b>Budget Impact</b>	None
<b>Attachment(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Falcon Heights Planning Commission Standing Rules, June 28, 2011.</li> </ul>
<b>Action(s) Requested</b>	<p>Staff requests that Commissioners review the standing rules and make any necessary recommendations for amendment. If no changes are recommended, no action is needed at this time.</p> <p>Staff recommends that commissioners add this document to their code binders or computer files for future reference.</p>

# FALCON HEIGHTS PLANNING COMMISSION

## PLANNING COMMISSION STANDING RULES

February 26, 2008; Revised June 28, 2011

### INTRODUCTION

In the belief that the best decisions are made by the best informed decision makers and that the public decision process is best served when the public has every opportunity to present views, the following rules are established to govern regular and special commission meetings as well as formal public hearings. There are several goals behind these rules.

1. In general, free and open discussion by all interested parties should be an essential part of the decision making process.
2. The commission process should have as little procedural overhead as possible.
3. Time is better spent on substantial matters rather than pro forma matters.

### MEMBERSHIP

The formal commission membership consists of seven to nine appointed commissioners. All seven to nine have one vote each and all can introduce motions. For purposes of leading the meeting, the chair, or in the absence of the chair, the vice-chair will be considered the chairperson. In the absence of the chair and vice-chair, the Commission shall name an acting chair for the duration of the meeting.

### RULES

#### Agenda

1. To be considered, an item must be on the agenda and the agenda must be distributed to all the commission members and any other persons having responsibility for an item at least three working days prior to the meeting. Distribution may be made by electronic media, including the city website. An agenda can be modified with addenda by a majority vote but this should be used only for minor items or items with extreme time constraints.
2. Since there will be audience and possibly cable TV viewers not familiar with each item, the chair, or person appointed by the chair, will give a brief explanation of each item as it is addressed.
3. The order of items on the agenda need not be followed absolutely. The chair may adjust the order in the interest of:
  - a. Filling in time before a scheduled item, i.e., a public hearing.
  - b. Grouping several items to best make use of consultant time.
  - c. Accommodating individuals who have attended the meeting specifically to provide input on an item.

## Process - Regular and Special Planning Commission Meetings

1. For these proceedings the commission will use the 'open discussion' procedure. That is, discussion is open to any member before or after a motion is made. This privilege is also extended to the city planner and any of the consultants who may have an interest in or can contribute to the item at hand.
2. At the discretion of the chair, this privilege is also extended to those members of the audience who wish to provide input. The chair may also rule out of order any input felt to be redundant, superfluous or irrelevant.
3. The chair can make liberal use of the "unanimous consent" procedure. That is, items that in the judgment of the chair are likely to be unanimously approved, can be introduced for approval with the statement "If there are no objections, ... stands approved (or denied)." If any commissioner has an objection, then the item reverts to the standard motion procedure. This "unanimous consent" procedure cannot be used for items requiring formal votes, i.e. resolutions.
4. The standard motion procedure is changed to not require a second. A motion need only be made to be considered. This also applies to amendments.
5. To eliminate confusion, only one amendment will be considered at a time and that amendment must be germane to the motion. An amendment cannot itself be amended. If a change to an amendment is deemed appropriate, the amendment should be withdrawn and reintroduced accordingly.
6. The general mode of voting will be by acclamation but with enough clarity that the individual votes can be recorded in the minutes. If in doubt, the secretary can request a clarification.
7. The meeting will be electronically recorded and the recording will be retained for at least 6 months following approval of the minutes for that meeting and shall, if possible, be made accessible on the city website during that period. The standard retention can be extended if in the judgment of the city planner such action is warranted.
8. If the commission action is the result of a resident request and that request is denied in whole or in part, reasons of fact supporting the denial will be made part of the public record.
9. No commission meeting will extend beyond 10:00 P.M. except by unanimous vote. This rule is not subject to the modification or suspension provisions of the Standing Rules.

## Process - Public Hearings

Since a public hearing is a more formal procedure and often requires certain procedures and actions to be legal, the meeting rules are changed accordingly.

1. The primary aim of a public hearing is to take input from the public. To accomplish this in the most effective manner the chair will introduce the hearing with an explanation of the issues. This explanation will be given by the chair or a person designated by the chair. The use of explanatory visual aids is encouraged.
2. Following the explanation and before public input is taken, the chair will state the areas where input will be appropriate, the maximum time to be allotted to any individual presenter and any other rules deemed appropriate to guarantee that all concerned parties have a fair and adequate opportunity to be heard. The chair will then open the hearing to input from the public.
3. At the discretion of the chair, all individuals wishing to speak must fill out and submit an identification form and speak into a recording microphone. Individuals not wishing to speak in public may provide a written statement. The commission may take up to 15 minutes to review written statements presented at the meeting. If the commission decides to not act on the issue at the public hearing meeting, it may by majority vote extend the time where written input will be taken to a day no later than 1 week before the next meeting where a deciding vote is planned.
4. All speakers are expected to be business-like, to-the-point and courteous. Anyone not abiding by these rules will be considered out-of-order.
5. The commission will refrain from initiating a discussion during the public input phase of the hearing except to clarify points brought up. These 'point of information' requests should be held to a minimum.
6. Once the public testimony phase is complete the chair will announce the public hearing to be closed and the commission will revert back to its open discussion mode of operation. From this point on, public input will only be appropriate when solicited by the commission.
7. Voting on any motion that results from a public hearing may be by roll call if requested by a commissioner.
8. It shall be the intent of the commission to vote on the issue at the same meeting as the public hearing and as close in time to the public hearing as possible. Should it be necessary to defer voting until a later date, that procedure will be clearly explained to the audience.
9. No public hearing will extend beyond 9:30 p.m.
10. If the motion contains conditions, as may occur in conditional use or variance requests, those conditions will be conveyed in writing to the requestor.
11. If the public hearing is the result of a resident request and that request is denied in whole or in part, reasons of fact supporting the denial will be made part of the public record.

## ADOPTION/MODIFICATION/SUSPENSION

These rules with the exception of the mandatory 10:00 P.M. adjournment, can be adopted, modified or suspended in whole or in part by a 3/4 vote of the commission. If suspended, they are automatically reinstated at the next meeting. Should they be suspended or a situation occurs that is not covered by the standing rules, Sikkink's Seven Motion System (attached) will apply.

## ANNUAL REVIEW

These rules will be reviewed annually in January.

## INTERPRETATION

The chair will interpret the rules. However, the chair's interpretation can be appealed by any commission member and can be overruled by a majority vote.

### *History*

- *Annual review by the Commission on 2/24/09 – No changes*
- *Annual review by the Commission on 1/26/10 – No changes*
- *Annual review by the Commission on 2/22/11 – Change recommended to clarify sequence of events in Process – Public Hearings, Item 2. Change approved 6/28/2011*