

Bylaws are generally formal, static, and focused on authority, membership, quorum, voting, and terms. Operating Guidelines, on the other hand, are flexible, easier to update, and focus on how the council works in practice. The following section is a draft of what the Kitsap Agriculture Advisory Council may want to consider when forming their own Operating Guidelines.

## ***Kitsap County Agriculture Advisory Council Operating Guidelines***

Adopted: [insert date]

### **1. Purpose of the Operating Guidelines**

These Operating Guidelines establish day-to-day practices to help the Council function efficiently and transparently. They:

- Clarify roles, meeting workflows, communication norms, and decision-making procedures.
- Implement Article VII of the bylaws (commitment to adopt operating guidelines).
- **Do not** alter or supersede:
  - *Amended Resolution 011--2026* (establishing the Council).
  - The Council's Bylaws (adopted [Month Day, Year]).
  - The Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) and other applicable county/state requirements.

### **2. Council Mission & Scope**

The Council serves as an advisory body to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), the County Executive, and Department of Community Development as outlined in Resolution 011--2026. Advisory focus includes (*summarized from Bylaws Article II*):

- Comprehensive Plan (Rural & Resource Lands Chapter and related policies).
- County codes/regulations affecting agriculture.
- County positions on state legislation affecting agriculture in Kitsap County.
- Rural Lands Analysis; proposed Working Lands & Agriculture Overlay.
- Agritourism policy and code clarity.
- Land use compatibility and development impacts on agriculture.
- Community complaints related to agriculture and regulatory ambiguities.
- Guidance on usual/customary agricultural and animal husbandry practices.
- Preservation strategies for agricultural lands.
- Updates to CAO, Master Shoreline Plan, Comprehensive Plan.
- Other agricultural policy matters referred by the BOCC or raised by the Council.

### 3. Membership Roles & Responsibilities

Council membership, terms, and officer positions are governed by the Bylaws. Below are additional outlines for each role and corresponding responsibilities.

#### 3.1 Officers

- The Council has a Chair and Vice Chair only (no Secretary).
- Administrative Assistance is provided to the council by nonvoting administrative staff from Kitsap County Department of Community Development (DCD), Washington State University Kitsap Extension (WSU), Kitsap Conservation District (KCD).

#### 3.2 Chair

The Chair provides:

- **Meeting leadership:** Presides over the meetings, ensures respectful and productive discussion.
- **Agenda leadership:** Works with DCD staff to draft and finalize agendas; determines priority order.
- **Meetings management:** Calls special meetings/cancellations consistent with *bylaws*.
- **Spokesperson:** Represents the Council in official communications.
- **Workflow:** Ensures subcommittee charters/reports advance to the full council when ready.
- **Quality & compliance:** Confirms that meeting logistics and postings meet Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA) and bylaws timelines.
- **Elections:** Oversees officer elections each January as required in the bylaws.

#### 3.3 Vice Chair

The Vice Chair:

- Serves as acting chair when Chair is absent or position is vacant.
- Supports agenda prep and meeting facilitation.
- Leads timekeeping and helps maintain meeting focus.
- Coordinates follow-up- assignments if delegated by the Chair.

#### 3.4 Council Members (Voting)

Council Members:

- **Preparation:** Review materials in advance; be familiar with laws/codes affecting agriculture.
- **Participation:** Attend meetings, contribute constructively, declare conflicts when applicable.
- **Follow-through-:** Complete assigned tasks and subcommittee work.
- **Representation:** Share district/sector perspectives while working toward county-wide solutions.

### 3.5 County Staff and Admin Support Staff (Non--Voting)

Designated County staff and admin support staff provide administrative, technical, and procedural support, including meeting logistics, records, and compliance support, including but not limited to:

- **Notetaking & records:** Record attendance and draft minutes/meeting summaries.
- **Posting & notice:** Post meeting notices/locations ( $\geq 7$  days for regular meetings), agendas, and approved minutes per bylaws.
- **Logistics & accessibility:** Arrange rooms/technology and ensure public access.
- **Process support:** Help compile packets, track actions, and support subcommittee workflows.

## 4. Meetings

Meeting requirements are established in the Bylaws; this section summarizes standard practices.

### 4.1 Meeting Schedule & Location

- **Minimum frequency:** At least six (6) in--person meetings per calendar year, with *no fewer than one per quarter*.
- **Location:** Selected to be accessible to the public; rotate within the county where feasible to support agricultural community participation.

### 4.2 Notice and Posting

- **Regular meetings:** Post location and time on the Council website  $\geq 7$  days prior.
- **Special meetings:** May be called by the Chair (or Vice Chair), with  $\geq 48$  hours' notice to members; all special meetings are public per law.
- **Cancellations:** Chair may cancel when no business or conditions warrant; DCD staff notifies members.

### 4.3 Agenda Process

- **Item intake:** Agenda items may be requested by council members, referred by the Kitsap Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) or County Executive, carried over from prior meetings, or derive from the annual work plan.
- **Submission deadline:** Members submit proposed items and materials to DCD staff 10 calendar days before the meeting.
- **Draft agenda:** Prepared by DCD staff with Chair, circulated 7 days prior (align with posting timeline where feasible).
- **Late/urgent items:** At meeting start, Council decides whether/how to address urgent items added after posting.
- **Typical agenda template:**
  1. Call to Order; Land Acknowledgment (optional)
  2. Roll Call / Quorum Check
  3. Approval of Agenda
  4. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

5. Public Comment (general, time limited to 3 minutes per person)
6. Old Business / Action Items Follow -up
7. New Business (presentations, proposals, motions)
8. Subcommittee Reports / Referrals
9. BOCC/Executive, staff, and legislative updates
10. Good of the Order - Member Updates (brief updates)
11. Summary of Actions/Assignments
12. Next Meeting (date/location)
13. Adjourn

#### 4.4 Minutes & Records

- **Recording & content:** Admin support staff record proceedings and prepare written meeting summaries/minutes outlining attendees, absences, overview of discussion, and actions taken.
- **Approval:** Council approves the prior meeting's minutes at the next meeting.
- **Posting:** Agendas and approved minutes are posted by DCD staff to the council website as part of the public record.

#### 4.5 Public Participation

- **Open meetings:** All meetings are open to the public and conducted under OPMA.
- **Public comment:** The Chair may set time limits (3 minutes per speaker) and may request sign-in- to manage time. Comments should be germane to agricultural policy and Council business.
- **Civility:** The Chair may pause or end comment that is out of scope or violates decorum.

#### 4.6 Remote Participation (individual members)

- Regular meetings are in-person.
- Individual member remote participation may be permitted when technology and law allow and as coordinated with DCD staff; counting remote participation toward quorum will follow applicable County policies and state law. The Chair confirms at roll call.

## 5. Process and Decision Making

The Council uses a blended decision-making approach that combines **Robert's Rules of Order** and a **consensus first- model**. Robert's Rules provide structure for meeting procedures, including establishing quorum, approving minutes, managing formal motions, and documenting decisions. For substantive or complex issues, the Council prioritizes consensus, focusing on collaborative discussion, refinement of proposals, and shared ownership of outcomes. When consensus cannot be reached after reasonable effort, Robert's Rules are used to move the matter forward through a formal motion and majority vote.

## 5.1 Quorum & Voting

- **Quorum:** A majority of the currently appointed members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- **Tie votes:** The Chair (or Vice Chair in Chair's absence) casts the deciding vote.
- **When formal actions occur:** Only when a quorum is present. Without a quorum, members may discuss items informally.

## 5.2 Consensus First Decision Making

The Council uses a consensus first decision making model to promote collaboration, shared ownership, and durable outcomes, with the goal of reaching decisions that all members can support or at least reasonably live with; proposals are developed through open discussion, with dissent treated as constructive input and addressed through refinement rather than outvoting, and when good-faith-efforts to resolve concerns do not result in consensus within a reasonable timeframe—or when a timely decision is required—the Council may proceed to a majority vote, at which point the outcome becomes binding and all members are expected to support its implementation.

### Consensus First- Approach (Process Overview):

- A proposal is introduced with sufficient context for understanding
- Members ask clarifying questions to ensure shared understanding
- Open discussion allows members to raise concerns and suggest improvements
- Objections are addressed by revising the proposal to resolve significant concerns
- Consensus is reached when no unresolved, mission-based objections remain
- If consensus cannot be reached after reasonable effort, the Council moves to a majority vote

## 5.3 Motions & Records

- Motions should be clear, specific, and framed as working proposals open to refinement.
- Process: Motion introduced → Clarifying questions → Discussion and collaborative refinement → Testing for consensus → Majority vote only if consensus cannot be reached.
- Amendments are incorporated as part of the consensus building-process rather than handled as separate procedural steps.
- Admin support staff record the motion maker, any substantive revisions, the method of adoption (consensus or vote), and vote outcomes when a vote is required.

## 5.4 Minority Opinions (Bylaws Art. VII)

A minority report is a formal written statement submitted by one or more council members who disagree with a decision or recommendation adopted by the majority. Its purpose is to document dissenting views, outline alternative reasoning or concerns, and ensure those

perspectives are part of the official record. A minority report does not alter the Council's decision but promotes transparency, preserves differing viewpoints, and may inform future reconsideration or external review.

- Any member(s) may submit a minority opinion for the official record.
- **Must include:** the specific issue (and draft language if applicable), rationale, and, when possible, preferred alternative.
- **Signatories:** List all members supporting the minority report.
- **Timeline:** Provide minority report to DCD staff within 5 business days of the meeting at which the vote occurred (or submit with packet if anticipated), for inclusion in the record and any transmittals.

## 6. Communication Protocols

### 6.1 Between Meetings

- **Email** is the primary channel for packets, reminders, and coordination; Council members should "Reply All-" to avoid inadvertent OPMA issues.
- **Shared materials:** DCD staff maintain a shared repository (e.g., webpage or shared drive) for packets, minutes, and reference materials.
- **Media inquiries:** The Chair is the spokesperson. Members should refer media requests to the Chair and DCD staff.

### 6.2 Materials & Deadlines

- **Member submissions** for agenda items: due  $\geq 10$  calendar days before the meeting to either DCD staff or Chair.
- **Packet distribution:** Aim to distribute 7 days prior to meeting (coinciding with posting).
- **Late materials:** Allowed at Chair's discretion; may be deferred if members haven't had time to review.

## 7. Conflict of Interest, Ethics, and Individual Representation

**7.1 Member Role and Representation:** All members seated on the council serve as individual representatives. Members do not represent affiliated organizations, advocacy positions, or personal business interests, and shall not use their position to advance personal or farm business gain.

**7.2 Conflict of Interest:** Members are required to disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest to the council. To do so:

- **Disclosure:** Members disclose any actual or potential conflict at the start of the agenda item.

- **Recusal:** When a conflict exists, the member does not participate in discussion or voting on that item and the recusal is noted in the minutes.
- **Appearance of fairness:** Members should avoid even the appearance of undue influence or personal gain.
- **Guidance:** When in doubt, consult DCD staff for referral to County legal/ethics resources.

## 8. Subcommittees

### 8.1 Formation & Charters

- The Council may form subcommittees for specific topics; recommendations to form require full Council concurrence prior to submission to the Board when applicable.
- Each subcommittee should have a brief charter including purpose, scope, deliverables, timeline, membership, and report back plan.

### 8.2 Membership & Leads

- Appointed by the Chair in consultation with the Council, aiming for balanced representation.
- Each subcommittee names a Lead (member or officer) to:
  - Schedule meetings with DCD staff support.
  - Coordinate agendas and notes.
  - Deliver written reports/recommendations to the full council.

### 8.3 Procedures & Reporting

- Subcommittees operate under these same rules unless otherwise directed.
- Subcommittee outputs must specify problem statement, options considered, recommended action, and any minority views.

## 9. Annual Planning

### 9.1 Annual Work Plan

- **Timing:** Draft each January–February, adopt by March when feasible.
- **Inputs:** BOCC/Executive referrals, Comprehensive Plan schedule, code update calendars, rural lands analysis needs, agricultural community feedback.
- **Contents:** Priority topics, target outputs (e.g., memos, draft code feedback), subcommittee assignments, and a milestone calendar.

### 9.2 Annual Reporting

- **Annual report:** With admin support staff, submit an annual report summarizing issues, recommendations, actions, and outcomes to the BOCC and County staff by **December of each year.**

## 10. Member Onboarding & Orientation

### 10.1 Welcome & Timeline

- **Within 30 days** of appointment, new members receive an orientation from DCD staff and the Chair.
- **Mentorship:** The Chair may pair new members with an experienced member for the first 2–3 meetings.

### 10.2 Orientation Packet

- Resolution 011--2026; Bylaws; these Operating Guidelines.
- Council roster and position descriptions (member categories per Bylaws).
- Annual calendar; current work plan; recent minutes and actions.
- Summary of relevant codes/plans (e.g., Rural & Resource Lands elements).
- OPMA overview and training; conflict of- interest/ethics basics (OPM to be completed -within 30 days of appointment)
- Agenda and minority report templates.

## 11. Amendment Process (for these Guidelines)

- Per Bylaws Art. VII, these Guidelines may be approved or amended by a majority vote of a quorum of council members.
- **Process:** Proposed changes should be submitted in writing to DCD staff at least 7 days before a regular meeting for inclusion in the packet.
- **Effective date:** Upon adoption unless otherwise specified.
- **Review cycle:** The Council will review these Guidelines annually (typically in January).