

# **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:

- a) Implement Article VII of the bylaws (commitment to adopt operating guidelines).
- b) Do not modify or supersede:
  - i) *Resolution 011-2026* (establishing the Council).
  - ii) The Council's Bylaws (adopted [Month Day, Year]).
  - iii) The Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) and other applicable county/state requirements.

### **2) Meetings.**

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

- a) Typical agenda template:
  - i) Call to Order; Pledge of Allegiance (optional); Land Acknowledgment (optional)
  - ii) Roll Call / Quorum Check
  - iii) Approval of Agenda
  - iv) Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes
  - v) Public Comment (general, time limited to 3 minutes per person)
    - (1) Scheduled agenda items
    - (2) Scheduled or non-scheduled items
  - vi) Old Business / Action Items Follow -up
  - vii) New Business (presentations, proposals, motions)
  - viii) Subcommittee Reports / Referrals
  - ix) New Requests & Emerging Topics (requests or issues from agriculture community/organizations)
  - x) BOCC, staff, and legislative updates
  - xi) Good of the Order - Member Updates (brief updates)
  - xii) Summary of Actions/Assignments
  - xiii) Next Meeting (date/location)
  - xiv) Adjourn
- b) **Public Participation.** If a public comment identifies an emergent, the council will adhere to the procedures laid out in section 7 of this document.
- c) **Remote Participation** (individual members)
  - i) Regular meetings are in person.
  - ii) 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.

### **3) Process and Decision Making.**

The Council uses a blended decision-making approach that combines Robert's Rules of Order with a consensus first model to promote collaboration, shared ownership, and durable outcomes. 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 through open discussion, collaborative refinement of proposals, and consideration of dissent as constructive input, with the goal of reaching decisions that all members can support or reasonably live with. When good-faith efforts to resolve concerns do not result in consensus within a reasonable timeframe at the Chair's discretion, or when a timely decision is required, the Council may proceed under Robert's Rules through a formal motion and majority vote. Once adopted, the outcome is binding and all members are expected to support its implementation. The failure to exactly follow either model will not affect the validity or effectiveness of the action.

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

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

#### **b) Motions & Records.** Motions should be clear, specific, and framed as working proposals open to refinement.

- i) **Process:** Motion introduced → Clarifying questions → Discussion and collaborative refinement → Testing for consensus → Majority vote only if consensus cannot be reached.
- ii) Amendments are incorporated as part of the consensus building process rather than handled as separate procedural steps.
- iii) 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.

### **4) Communication Protocols**

#### **a) Between Meetings**

- i) **Email.** DCD staff will use email as the primary method of communication for packets, reminders, and coordination. Any information a Council member wishes to share with the rest of the Council shall be sent to DCD staff who will then share the information. Council members shall not correspond via email

with a quorum or the Council as doing so would be an OPMA violation. Council members may correspond with one or two other council members regarding Council business but must copy DCD staff to ensure all public records are maintained.

- ii) **Shared materials:** DCD staff will maintain a shared repository (e.g., webpage or shared drive) for packets, minutes, and reference materials.
- iii) **Media inquiries:** The Chair is the spokesperson. All members shall refer media requests to both the Chair and DCD staff.

**b) Materials & Deadlines**

- i) Member submissions for agenda ideas or materials for a set agenda item are due  $\geq 10$  calendar days before the meeting to DCD staff.
- ii) DCD Staff will aim to distribute meeting materials 7 days prior to meeting (coinciding with posting).
- iii) At the Chair's discretion, a member may submit late materials. The Chair may, however, defer discussion at the meeting if members haven't had time to review.

**5) Subcommittees**

**a) Formation & Charters**

- i) The Council may form temporary or standing subcommittees for specific topics; recommendations to form will follow the decision making process in Section 3.
- ii) Each subcommittee should have a brief charter including purpose, scope, deliverables, timeline, membership, and report back plan.
- iii) All subcommittees shall have fewer members than a quorum of the Council.

**b) Membership & Leads**

- i) Members in a subcommittee shall be appointed by the Chair after consultation with the Council, aiming for balanced representation.
- ii) Each subcommittee shall vote on a Lead member (member or officer) to:
  - (1) Schedule meetings with DCD staff support as needed.
  - (2) Coordinate agendas and notes.
  - (3) Deliver written reports/recommendations to the full council.

**c) Procedures & Reporting**

- i) Subcommittee outputs must specify problem statement, options considered, recommended action, and any minority views.

**6) Annual Planning**

**a) Annual Work Plan**

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

**b) Annual Reporting**

- i) With admin support staff, submit an annual report summarizing issues, recommendations, actions, and outcomes to the BOCC and County staff by January of the next year.

**7) Handling Requests and Topics Raised From the Public**

- a) The Council may receive requests, questions, or topics from members of the public, partner organizations, or individual Council members outside of regularly scheduled meetings or outside of items included in the approved annual Workplan. These may arise through direct communication with Council members or during the Public Comment period of a meeting.
- b) To ensure transparency and consistency, ALL such requests will be handled as follows:
  - i) **Placement on Agenda**
    - (1) Items will be put under “New Requests and Emerging Topics” standing agenda item section at regular meetings.
    - (2) All requests received in official council member capacity outside of meetings should be brought forward under this agenda item for Council awareness and consideration.
  - ii) **Initial Consideration by the Council**
    - (1) The Council will briefly review and determine the nature of the request, including whether it aligns with the Council’s purpose and current priorities.
    - (2) The Council acknowledges that this process will continue to be refined over time.
  - iii) **Determination of Next Steps**

Based on discussion, the Council may take one of the following actions:

    - (1) **Address as an Emergent Issue** - If the Council determines the request is time-sensitive or requires prompt attention:
      - (a) The Council may call a special meeting to address the issue; and/or
      - (b) The Council may establish a temporary subcommittee to further assess and respond.
    - (2) **Assign for Further Exploration** - The Council may form a working group or assign members to gather additional information and bring recommendations back to a future meeting.
    - (3) **Defer to Future Workplan Consideration** - If the issue is not considered emergent, the Council may defer the topic for consideration during the next Workplan development or amendment process.
  - iv) **Documentation and Follow-Up**
    - (1) All requests and resulting Council actions will be documented in meeting notes.
    - (2) Any working groups or follow-up actions will include clear expectations, timelines (as appropriate), and reporting back to the full Council.

## 8) Member Onboarding & Orientation

### a) Welcome & Timeline

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

### b) Orientation Packet

- i) Resolution 011-2026; Bylaws; these Operating Guidelines.
- ii) Council roster and position descriptions (member categories per Bylaws).
- iii) Annual calendar; current work plan; recent minutes and actions.
- iv) Summary of relevant codes/plans (e.g., Rural & Resource Lands elements).
- v) Kitsap Agricultural Code.
- vi) Rural and Resource Lands Chapter.
- vii) OPMA overview and training; conflict of- interest/ethics basics (OPMA to be completed within 30 days of appointment).
- viii) Agenda and minority report templates.
- ix) Kitsap County Advisory Council Handbook.

## 9) Amendment Process (for these Guidelines)

- a) Per Bylaws Art. VII, these Guidelines may be approved or amended by a majority vote of a quorum of council members.
- b) **Process:** Proposed changes should be submitted in writing to DCD staff at least 10 calendar days before a regular meeting for inclusion in the packet.
- c) **Effective date:** Upon adoption unless otherwise specified.
- d) **Review cycle:** The Council will review these Guidelines annually (typically in January).