



Legislation Text

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CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE _____

COUNCIL BILL _____

..title

AN ORDINANCE relating to procedures for filling Council vacancies; adding a new Chapter 3.93, consisting of Section 3.93.010, to the Seattle Municipal Code.

WHEREAS, vacancies on the City Council must on occasion be filled before a democratic election can take place; and

WHEREAS, the public has a strong interest in its representation on the City Council; and

WHEREAS, there is no language in the Seattle Municipal Code defining a formal appointment process to fill vacant city council positions in a uniform and transparent manner; and

WHEREAS, past City Council appointments have not always been transparent or accountable; and

WHEREAS, the Charter of the City of Seattle was enacted for the purpose of allowing “fair and equitable participation of all persons in the affairs of the City” and “to provide for transparency, accountability, and ethics in governance and civil service”; and

WHEREAS, in September 2017, a coalition of community members and groups formed under the banner of Transparent Seattle to seek an open process for community engagement to fill a City Council vacancy; and

WHEREAS, the vetting process chosen by the City Council in 2017 and the public forum organized by Transparent Seattle gave thousands of community members the opportunity to participate in the appointment process by reading publicly available applications, attending/watching a forum open to the public, and attending/watching a public comment session where community members and candidates

alike shared their vision for Seattle and the vacant seat; and

WHEREAS, the public application process chosen by the City Council and the public forum organized by

Transparent Seattle gave an opportunity for qualified, lesser-known candidates to be introduced to the public and the City Council; and

WHEREAS, this process led to the October 2017 appointment of Kirsten Harris-Talley; and

WHEREAS, a process with robust public input and engagement from community entities will best represent the needs of the groups most impacted by City Council decisions; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. A new Chapter 3.93 is added to the Seattle Municipal Code as follows:

3.93 COUNCIL VACANCIES

3.93.010 Procedures for filling Council vacancies

If a City Council seat becomes vacant, as part of filling the vacancy under the City Charter, Article XIX, Sections 5 and 6:

A. The Council shall accept applications from anyone qualified to become a Councilmember. Within five business days of the seat becoming vacant, the City Council shall publish application procedures including, at minimum, the method(s) for submitting applications, requirements for document types and content of the submissions, the deadline for submissions, the method(s), requirements, and an estimated timeline of necessary events under the City Charter and this Chapter 3.93 to fill the vacancy.

Within five business days of the seat becoming vacant, the City Council shall also publish application procedures for community entities (such as groups listed in Section 15.52.005's definition of "special event type," subsection 4.c, as organizing a community event) interested in participating in the public forum development process including, at minimum, the method(s) for submitting applications, requirements for document types, content of the submissions, the deadline for submissions, and criteria for evaluation.

B. After the deadline for applicant submissions, the City Council shall publish all submissions meeting

the application standards developed under subsection 3.93.010.A.

C. After the deadline for community entity submissions, the City Council shall develop a public forum to be hosted for interviewing applicants. The City Council shall consult with community entities, if any such entities make submissions and are selected by the City Council, the community entities can then inform the forum structure, questions, and accessibility considerations. Only applicants that submitted completed applications material may participate in the public forum.

D. After the interview process under subsection 3.93.010.C, the City Council shall meet to consider the applications.

E. The City Council shall have at least one meeting after applications have been made public under subsection 3.93.010.B at which public comment is permitted concerning the filling of the vacancy and at which candidates who participated in the forum may address the City Council.

F. Only applicants who participated in the public forum in subsection 3.93.010.C and addressed the City Council at the meeting in subsection 3.93.010.E may be appointed to fill a City Council vacancy.

Section 2. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.

Passed by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2017, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this _____ day of _____, 2017.

President _____ of the City Council

Approved by me this _____ day of _____, 2017.

Tim Burgess, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2017.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)