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Association adopts major reforms

John Kounts, Interim Executive Director

The Washington PUD Association took steps this week toward major reform of how it does business.

During an all-day workshop yesterday and today's meeting of the board of directors, association members discussed, recommended and adopted a series of significant changes in how the association will make decisions and take positions; how responsibility for association work will be shared by PUD commissioners, managers and staff; and how the association will be organized administratively.

Association President Robbie Robertson called the reforms a historic turning point in the organization's 74-year history.

The changes—captured in 23 motions passed at this morning's board meeting—embody a range of reforms that had been advocated by association members. They include:

- Revising the association's committee structure and reporting relationships. Three existing association committees (energy, water and telecommunications) will now report to the association's managers section instead of the board of directors, and the association's executive director will chair the managers section. The board created two new committees—government relations and communications—that also will report to the managers section. Association committees will have authority to take direct actions that are consistent with adopted association plans, policies and budgets, rather than submitting all decisions to the board for final adoption. The association's legislative committee will be eliminated. A new committee reporting to the board of directors will promote governance training and leadership development for board members and PUD managers and staff.
- Changes in voting requirements for adoption of positions by the board, committees and executive committee. For the board and most committees, a two-thirds vote will be required to pass a motion, and quorum requirements will increase from one-third to one-half of members being present. The board also committed the association to making decisions by consensus.
- Making the association more forward-looking by establishing a strategic planning committee, creating an annual strategic planning cycle, and accelerating preparation for the state Legislature's annual sessions.
- Extending voting rights to the three PUD managers on the association's executive committee.

Implementing the reforms will require changes in the association's bylaws and its official statement of "Committee Organization, Role and Procedures" (CORP).

Helping guide the reform process was association restructuring specialist Harrison Coerver, a national consultant who has worked with more than 1,200 associations.