

## Public Hearing Process & Chair Introductory Statement

Effective Date: May 14, 2012  
Revised Date: September 4, 2012  
Revised Date: February 17, 2015  
Revised Date: May 26, 2015  
Revised Date: March 20, 2018  
Revised Date: July 14, 2020

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### Policy Statement

1. The Local Government Act requires councils to conduct public hearings before adopting or amending certain land use bylaws such as Official Community Plans and zoning bylaws. Public Hearings provide opportunity for affected citizens to share their views with their elected representatives before bylaws are adopted.

### Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to establish a fair and equitable process for public hearings, ensuring that all persons who believe their interest in property to be affected are provided a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

### Scope

3. This policy applies to all public hearings conducted by Pitt Meadows City Council.

### Exclusions

4. Although procedural fairness is an important aspect to all quasi-judicial roles of Council, this policy does not specifically apply to other hearing processes such as those related to development permits or temporary use permits.

### Definitions

5. In this policy,
  - (a) LGA means the Local Government Act.

## Guidelines

6. All persons who believe their interest in property to be affected by a bylaw that is the subject of a public hearing:
  - (a) must be given an opportunity to be heard and to present their case, subject to reasonable procedural rules;
  - (b) have the right to witness the representations made by others; and
  - (c) have the right to see and comment on all material considered by Council pertaining to the proposed bylaw.
7. The Chair of the public hearing may establish procedural rules for the conduct of the hearing, as per s. 465 of the LGA. This may include the order of proceedings, how speakers will be called, and time limits.
8. Although everyone will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard, the Chair will not tolerate obscene, abusive, vulgar or disrespectful behavior and may, in these instances, interrupt and cut off speakers. The Chair may order the person expelled from the meeting should the person choose to not adhere to the decisions of the Chair.
9. Members of the public may address Council in person, through representatives such as a lawyer, or through written submissions.
10. Members of Council must keep an open mind on the merits of proposed bylaws being considered at the public hearing, and any argument for or against those bylaws.
11. Although it is appropriate for Council members to ask questions of a speaker in order to clarify or expand upon that speaker's submissions, Council members should not engage in debate or argument with speakers at the public hearing.
12. In order to protect the integrity of the public hearing process, it is imperative that, after close of the public hearing, Council members not receive any further information regarding the proposed bylaw, or share with each other information which they may have received in their individual capacity. New information received following the close of a Public Hearing would require a new Public Hearing in order to allow for speakers' comments related to the new information.

## Procedures

13. The Chair will read out loud a Public Hearing Statement at the beginning of the hearing that explains the procedural rules for the hearing. A sample is included in Appendix A. The Chair reserves the right to modify the procedural rules, including time limit per speaker and process for calling speakers, depending on size and location of the particular hearing.
14. City Staff will provide a brief description of the zoning application or the Official Community Plan amendment at the beginning of the hearing.
15. The Corporate Officer will provide a summary of any written correspondence or petitions received for the record.
16. When a large number of speakers is anticipated, the Chair may determine that a speakers list will be implemented. People who wish to speak will place their names on the speakers list provided, and will be called in the order that their names appear on the list.
17. As part of their representations to Council, members of the public will share their full name, street address or general neighbourhood, and city of residence, which will form part of the public record.
18. For public hearings with significant public participation, the hearing may be adjourned and reconvened at a later date without further notice if the time and place for the resumption of the hearing are stated to those present at the time the hearing is adjourned.

## Related Policies and Bylaws

19. Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2834, 2019 – speaks to public engagement and role of Chair in maintaining decorum.

Appendix A  
Public Hearing Statement

## 1 - OPEN MEETING

I now call the Public Hearing to order.

This Public Hearing is convened pursuant to Section 464 of the Local Government Act.

This evening, we are considering: *<Read bylaw Number(s) and Title(s)>*.

Council has given initial readings to this bylaw(s) and is now seeking input from the community.

We will begin with a staff presentation, after which I'll explain the process and rules for providing comment.

## 2 – STAFF PRESENTATION

## 3 – PROCEDURAL RULES

Thank you *<staff name>*. The floor will now be opened for comments. We will be using a speaker's list to call people to the podium. If you wish to speak, but haven't added your name to the list, please make your way to the table in the lobby to do so.

Everyone who deems their interest in property to be affected by this bylaw will be given the opportunity to be heard. No one will be, or should feel, discouraged, or prevented from sharing their views.

The main function of a public hearing is to create an opportunity for citizens to share their opinions with Council regarding proposed bylaws. Council's role is not to debate the merits of a proposed bylaw or to engage in question and comments. Therefore Council will be largely silent this evening, focusing on hearing your submissions and points of view.

We ask that everyone focus on sharing their own perspective and refrain from engaging in debate. As the Chair, my role is to moderate the hearing and ensure we stay on topic and engage in a respectful manner.

Each speaker will have up to five minutes to make their comments. Once all guests have had the opportunity to speak, you will be given a second opportunity to share further thoughts should you be interested.

Once this hearing has adjourned, Council cannot receive any additional information, written or verbal, regarding the proposed bylaw until such time as Council adopts, or defeats, the bylaw.

Madam Clerk, can you please summarize any written submissions received for the public hearing, and then explain for our guests how the speaker's list will work this evening before you begin the presentations.

#### 4 – PUBLIC COMMENT

*<Thank you, Mr. Mayor. We have received [#] written submissions for the public hearing this evening:*

- [#] submissions were received before agenda production and are included in your agenda packages.*



- *[#] submissions were received after agenda production and have been emailed directly to Council, with copies provided on table as well.*
- *Altogether, we have received [give breakdown of for/against/concerned and any petitions].*
- *Copies of all written submissions are available on the table in the lobby for public inspection.*
- *If members of the public would like to submit further written comment, please do so by handing it to the staff member at the table in the lobby before the close of this public hearing. Copies will be made for both Council and members of the public. No further submissions will be accepted once the Chair has closed this hearing.*

*I will now call the first speaker. Each person will have 5 minutes to share their views. Please start by stating your name and address, or general neighbourhood, for the record.*

*Please note that this meeting is being live streamed and will be available on the City's website as a recorded archive after tonight. Any information you share, including your name and address, will be available as part of the public record of this hearing.>*

The Clerk will then moderate the speakers' list and announce each speaker.

*<Mr. Mayor, there are no more speakers on the list.>*

Thank you. I will now call speakers for the second and last time. If you would like to make further comment, or you haven't had a chance to speak yet, please make your way to the podium and form a line.

## 5 – ADJOURNMENT

Seeing there are no further speakers, I now declare this Public Hearing closed and thank each of you for taking the time to attend and for sharing your comments.

*<if Council is considering this bylaw further in the agenda, you may want to tell the audience.>*