



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee

Date: January 14, 2025

From: Claudia Jesson
Director, City Clerk's Office

File: 01-0105-01

Re: Regular Council Meetings for Public Hearings Schedule Change

Staff Recommendation

That the Regular Council Meetings for Public Hearings be held on a Monday at 5:30 pm immediately following a General Purposes Committee Meeting.

Claudia Jesson
Director, City Clerk's Office
(604-276-4006)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: EB
APPROVED BY CAO	

Staff Report

Origin

In late November 2023, *Bill 44, Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act* was enacted and introduced significant changes to the City's Public Hearing and respective public notification process.

In terms of *Bill 44* and public hearings, all local governments are prohibited from holding a public hearing on rezoning applications that are consistent with the City's OCP, which is why there are two streams for considering rezoning applications and fewer items being forwarded to public hearings. The new legislation has not eliminated the Public Hearing process but has significantly reduced the items proceeding to a Public Hearing.

The purpose of this report is to adjust the Public Hearing schedule to enable Public Hearings to be held earlier at 5:30 pm following a General Purposes Committee on Mondays, especially when Public Hearing agendas are light in nature.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Strategy #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

Ensure that the citizenry of Richmond is well-informed and engaged about City business and decision-making.

Analysis

In accordance with the *Council Procedure Bylaw No. 7560*, Regular Council Meetings for Public Hearings are to be held on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm.

The new legislation has created two process streams for staff to manage for rezoning applications: (1) items proceeding to a Public Hearing, and (2) non-Public Hearing items proceeding to a Council Meeting. As a result, there has been a shift from having monthly Public Hearings to having virtually no regularly scheduled Public Hearing since October 2024. Thus far all rezoning applications, with the exception of one, have been non-Public Hearing items and have been considered at Council Meetings. With so few Public Hearings having to be scheduled and very few upcoming items to a Public Hearing, it is recommended that, when required, Public Hearings be held at 5:30 pm on a Monday following a General Purposes Committee Meeting.

In terms of public engagement, the proposed earlier start-time will still be late enough to enable the public to attend. There are various ways for the public to provide input into the Public Hearing, including submitting written submissions and participating remotely, if required. It should be noted that live-streaming of the Public Hearings will continue as per usual processes. In terms of the overall public notification process, early notification will continue to take place for all rezoning applications (public hearing and non-public hearing). The public notification process for public hearing bound applications also remains the same.

It should be noted that flexibility always exists to adjust the meeting schedule as unusual or urgent circumstances may arise outside of the usual schedule. There may be a circumstance when a heavy General Purposes Committee meeting cycle coincides with a busy Public Hearing cycle, in which case the start-time for a Public Hearing meeting could be adjusted.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the proposed schedule for Regular Council Meetings for Public Hearings to be held on Mondays at 5:30 pm following General Purposes Committee Meetings be approved.



Claudia Jesson
Director, City Clerk's Office