

DATE OF MEETING FEBRUARY 22, 2021  
AUTHORED BY KAREN ROBERTSON, DEPUTY CITY CLERK  
SUBJECT PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS POLICY

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To introduce a revised Council policy to establish the process for holding public hearings and for receiving oral and written presentations.

### **Recommendation**

That Council endorse the Public Hearing Process policy as attached to the February 22, 2021 report by the Deputy City Clerk.

## **BACKGROUND**

As outlined in the bylaw and policy renewal project timeline report that was presented to Council on October 19, 2020, staff advised that a revised policy for establishing the process for holding public hearings and for receiving oral and written presentations would be brought forward for Council's consideration.

## **DISCUSSION**

The existing Public Hearing Process policy outlines the process for how correspondence is received for a public hearing; however, it does not outline the details of how information can be received and the process for how a hearing is conducted. This has caused some confusion and so to provide clarity; Council asked that this policy be updated to include more specifics in this regard. Highlights of the changes and additions to the policy are as follows:

- The proposed policy outlines the four ways that written submissions can be received: letter, email, on-line submission, or hand delivery.
- The time for receiving written submissions has been changed from 4:00 pm to 12:00 noon. By having a cut off of noon, this gives staff the time necessary to process written submissions received the day of the hearing, post them to the website and circulate them to Council. It also gives Council additional time to review the material. Citizens can still provide written submissions after the deadline; however, they would need to be provided in-person to be considered as part of the formal record.
- A process for how hearings are conducted, including details for the phone in option for hearings conducted during times that the Provincial Health Orders for mass gatherings are in effect, have been outlined.
- The proposed policy states that Owners/Applicants be given up to 10 minutes to verbally address Council at the beginning of hearing, once staff has introduced the application. It

also clarifies that no late documents, sound recordings, or PowerPoint presentations can be submitted at the hearing as Council and members of the public would not have had the opportunity to review this material in advance. An Owner/Applicant would have the opportunity to make a more fulsome presentation at the time Council considers first and second readings.

- The policy speaks to members of the public being provided three minutes each to express their views on a proposed application. This does not prevent members of the public from speaking multiple times on the application as new information arises and it also does not preclude the Chair, under Section 465 of the *Local Government Act*, from establishing the procedures at the beginning of hearing which may include changing the amount of time that either the Applicant/Owner or members of the public are allowed to speak.
- The policy now speaks to decorum at hearings to convey the importance of ensuring no one feels uncomfortable when presenting their views.

The proposed policy for how a public hearing is conducted is consistent with other municipal policies.

## **OPTIONS**

Option 1:

That Council endorse the Public Hearing Process policy as attached to the February 1, 2021 report by the Deputy City Clerk.

The advantage of this policy, as presented, is that it gives Council, staff, and members of the public more details as to how information can be received and the process for how a hearing is conducted. If adopted, the policy and details would be posted to the City's website.

Option 2:

That the Public Hearing Process policy be adopted with the following amendments (insert proposed changes here).

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

The purpose of the proposed Public Hearing Process policy is to establish the process for holding public hearings and for receiving oral and written presentations.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 – Draft Public Hearing Process Policy

Attachment 2 – Current Public Hearing Process Policy

**Submitted by:**

Karen Robertson  
Deputy City Clerk

**Concurrence by:**

Sheila Gurrie  
Director of Legislative Services

Dale Lindsay  
General Manager, Development Services