

DATE OF MEETING JULY 4, 2022

AUTHORED BY SHEILA GURRIE, CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

SUBJECT COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS DURING CAMPAIGN PERIOD

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide options to Council for suspending certain activities that will occur during the 2022 General Election Campaign Period.

Recommendation

That Council suspend livestreaming, broadcasting and publishing of recorded Council and Committee meetings to the City of Nanaimo website and direct media requests and quotes for news releases to the CAO during the 2022 General Election Campaign Period from September 17, through to October 15, 2022.

BACKGROUND

During the General Election Campaign Period, Council has historically suspended livestreaming, broadcasting and the publishing of recorded Council and Committee Meetings. This was done during the 2008, 2011 and 2014 election cycles and the recordings of the meetings were then published to the City's website after Election Day. Council opted not to continue this practice during the 2018 Campaign Period. |

DISCUSSION

The Campaign Period for the 2022 General Election begins on September 17, 2022 and runs through to Election Day, October 15, 2022. Staff recommend Council suspend livestreaming, broadcasting and the publishing of recorded Council and Committee Meetings until after Election Day in order to avoid any appearance of favouritism toward current elected officials; and to allow for fair representation for other candidates running. Media requests and new release quotes would also be forwarded to the CAO for handling during this time, rather than the Mayor or another member of Council for the same reason. |

OPTIONS

1. That Council suspend livestreaming, broadcasting and publishing of recorded Council and Committee meetings to the City of Nanaimo website and direct media requests and quotes for news releases to the CAO during the 2022 General Election Campaign Period from September 17, through to October 15, 2022.
 - The advantages of this option: This option allows for a level playing field for current elected officials and candidates that are running for office in the 2022 General Election and aligns with Council's Strategic Plan theme of Governance Excellence.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Citizens will be unable to view meetings during this timeframe until they are posted on the City's website after October 15, 2022.
 - Financial Implications: None.

2. That Council maintain the status quo of broadcasting, livestreaming and posting recorded videos of Council and Committee meetings to the City of Nanaimo website and allow for the Mayor and other members of council to be quoted in news releases and respond to media requests.
 - The advantages of this option: Citizens will maintain the ability to watch meetings real-time and not wait for the recording to become available.
 - The disadvantages of this option: The perception of fairness and equal opportunity may become an issue.
 - Financial Implications: None. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- During the General Election Campaign Period, Council has historically suspended livestreaming, broadcasting and the publishing of recorded Council and Committee Meetings.
- Staff recommend Council suspend livestreaming, broadcasting and the publishing of recorded Council and Committee Meetings until after Election Day in order to avoid any appearance of favouritism toward current elected officials; and to allow for fair representation for other candidates running.
- Media requests and new release quotes would also be forwarded to the CAO for handling during this time, rather than the Mayor or another member of Council for the same reason.

Submitted by:]

Sheila Gurrie
Chief Election Officer]