



MINUTES

GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 2026-JAN-26, 1:00 P.M.

Shaw Auditorium, Vancouver Island Conference Centre
80 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, BC

- Members: Councillor P. Manly, Chair
Mayor L. Krog
Councillor S. Armstrong
Councillor T. Brown
Councillor B. Geselbracht
Councillor J. Perrino
Councillor I. Thorpe
- Absent: Councillor H. Eastmure
Councillor E. Hemmens
- Staff: D. Lindsay, Chief Administrative Officer
L. Bhopalsingh, General Manager, Community Services/Deputy
Chief Administrative Officer
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
J. Holm, Director, Planning and Development
L. Brinkman, Manager, Community Planning
L. Rowett, Manager, Current Planning
K. Biegun, Planner, Community Development
C. Horn, Planner, Development Approvals
N. Sponaugle, Strategic Initiatives Advisor
A. Chanakos, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

* Denotes electronic meeting participation as authorized by "Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272"

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

- a. Reorder Agenda Item 6(b)(1) Zoning Bylaw Update to precede Agenda Item 6(a)(1) Pre-Zoning for Social Housing.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the agenda, as amended, be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the following minutes be adopted as circulated:

- Minutes of the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting held in the Shaw Auditorium, Vancouver Island Conference Centre, 80 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Monday, 2025-NOV-24 at 1:00 p.m.
- Minutes of the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting held in the Shaw Auditorium, Vancouver Island Conference Centre, 80 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, BC on Monday, 2025-DEC-08 at 1:58 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. AGENDA PLANNING:

a. Upcoming Topics and Initiatives

S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services, spoke regarding topics and initiatives scheduled for upcoming Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meetings.

Committee and Staff discussion took place regarding Staff capacity to produce requested reports and the desire for a report outlining the current state of the City's water system.

It was moved and seconded that the Governance and Priorities Committee approve the "Upcoming Topics and Initiatives" provided in the agenda and add the "Resiliency Efforts of the Water Supply System" topic to a future Governance and Priorities Committee meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

6. REPORTS:

a. City Plan:

1. Zoning Bylaw Update

Introduced by J. Holm, Director, Planning and Development.

Justin Barer, Land Economics Consultant, Urban Systems, was in attendance via Zoom to answer questions.

Presentation:

1. C. Horn, Planner, Development Approvals, provided an on-screen presentation included in the agenda package. Highlights included:

- An update to “Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500” (zoning bylaw) was presented to the Committee in January 2025. Over the last year, Staff conducted background research, including a financial feasibility analysis, architectural modelling and a review of best practices/trends
- Staff revised the key directions guiding the zoning bylaw update to include:
 - Alignment with the City Plan
 - Supporting residential zoning
 - Bonus density provisions
 - Updating for ease of use
- Inclusionary zoning, which was included in 2025, has been removed based on the financial feasibility analysis, and has been replaced with the pre-zoning for social housing initiative to be discussed later in the meeting
- Next steps include drafting key amendments based on direction from Council, and engagement with key partners to take place in the fall, with bylaw adoption set for spring 2027

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Desire to include the general public in the engagement sessions, in addition to key partners
- As a result of continuous changes in the market, the zoning bylaw should reflect the vision of the City Plan
- The review of “Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266” is ongoing, and is anticipated to be presented to Council ahead of the zoning bylaw update
- Staff are working to consolidate zoning types in certain areas for ease of use

Justin Barer, Land Economics Consultant, Urban Systems, advised that creating adaptable units is costly for developers, and the market does not currently support inclusionary zoning.

Committee and Staff discussion continued regarding a desire for a fulsome review of the zoning bylaw update to be presented to Council following the 2026 municipal election, and concerns regarding provincial mandates requiring R5 zoning on single-family lots to allow duplexes and fourplexes.

It was moved and seconded that the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to:

1. Prepare a bylaw to replace “City of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500” in accordance with the Key Directions outlined in the Staff report titled “Zoning Bylaw Update”, dated 2026-JAN-26; and,
2. Proceed with stakeholder engagement prior to returning to Council with a draft bylaw.

The motion carried unanimously.

b. Healthy Nanaimo:

1. Pre-Zoning for Social Housing

Introduced by J. Holm, Director, Planning and Development.

Presentation:

1. K. Biegun, Planner, Community Development, provided an on-screen presentation included in the agenda package. Highlights included:
 - Pre-zoning removes the requirement for an applicant to undertake a rezoning process to obtain the densities and heights set out in the City Plan for affordable housing
 - Funding and financing programs have strict timelines and pre-zoning could help address this barrier
 - Staff recommend considering an overlay approach which would allow development under the regular zoning, while providing the option to develop under the overlay zone to increase density or height in exchange for providing social housing units

- A housing agreement registered on title is recommended to ensure conditions are met and secured for a timeline of 60 years
- As pre-zoning will remove the need for rezoning, Staff recommend employing the new powers granted by the Province to designate a Servicing Officer to secure transportation demand management measures
- Community engagement is expected to take place in February 2026, with a potential bylaw introduction in Spring 2026

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The absence of a definition for affordable housing creates a risk of housing projects that are not considered affordable for low-income households
- Staff originally considered including the entire city in the program; however, increased flexibility leads to more complex regulations. It was recommended to start with a pilot program in a smaller area, and expand the program based on the success of the pilot
- Permissive Tax Exemptions only apply to supportive housing units
- A desire for height restrictions to be enforced on Victoria Crescent and Commercial Street in order to maintain the character of the area
- Research has shown that municipalities that offer greater flexibility in social housing requirements see more development than those with more restrictive requirements

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It was moved and seconded that the Governance and Priorities Committee recommended that Council direct Staff to:

1. Undertake community engagement to seek feedback on the proposed framework and bylaw amendments for the pre-zoning for social housing projects;
2. Prepare an amendment to the “City of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500”, as outlined in the Staff report titled “Pre-Zoning for Social Housing” dated 2026-JAN-26; and,
3. Prepare an amendment to the “Officer Designation and Delegation of Authority Bylaw 2022 No. 7353” to designate a Servicing Officer pursuant to section 5.13.2 of the *Local Government Act*.

The motion carried unanimously.

7. QUESTION PERIOD:

The Committee received no questions from the public regarding agenda items.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 1:57 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER