



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole meeting on July 25, 2024,

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 18, 2024
From: Mayor Alto
Subject: Best Use of Evening Council Meetings in Post-Public Hearing Governance

BACKGROUND

In March, Council directed staff to investigate and report back on how evening Council meeting time could be better used in the era of governance where public hearings are essentially prohibited, except in special circumstance.

In June, Council received a preliminary report and asked staff to investigate further, specifically to outline practices undertaken in other Capital Regional District (CRD) municipalities.

The updated staff report to be considered at the July 25, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting identifies trends and opportunities for the public to interact in person with Council. Among the observations:

- Some municipalities hold occasional “town halls” where residents can address Council on any topic.
- Some municipalities have experimented with “Open Houses” where information is shared on a project or topic of local interest.
- Most municipalities have an opportunity for the public to address Council, most on any topic but some limited to topics on that evening’s agenda. The most common range of allotted speaking time is from two to four minutes for individuals. Many Councils limit the total time for addresses (such as 20 or 30 minutes).

Staff also note cost savings from reduced staff time should meetings be consolidated with reduced frequency but with longer times to accommodate additional speakers and/or necessary municipal business.

Staff have provided a comprehensive overview of other municipalities’ evolving use for the Council meeting times that used to be utilized for public hearings.

The following recommendations:

- Reflect increased efficiencies in Council and staff time management, and staff time and costs
- Add more time for more members of the public to address Council

- Create additional new opportunities for listening and learning for members of the public, staff and Council
- Recognize already scheduled regular meeting gaps on the third Thursdays of March (public school spring break), August (Council summer hiatus), September (UBCM) and December (winter holidays).

RECOMMENDATIONS

That, Council amend the applicable procedural and/or other Council policies to accommodate a Council meeting calendar with:

1. Only one evening Council meeting each month on the second Thursday of the month, at which up to 15 members of the public may address Council on any topic for a maximum of three minutes per person.
2. Once each year, on the third Thursday of January, an evening where Council hosts a "Town Hall" where, for up to two hours, members of the public may address Council on any topic for a maximum of 5 minutes per person.
3. Once each year, on the third Thursday of June, an evening where Council hosts an "Open House", at which information will be shared by staff on a current topic of city action, policy, project or program, at which members of the public can ask questions and offer feedback, and where Council members are expected to attend and learn.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Marianne Alto', with a stylized, flowing script.

Mayor Alto.