

REPORT

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: December 12, 2022

From: Lisa Spitale
Chief Administrative Officer
File:

Item #: 2022-744

Subject: Efficiencies – Processes and Council Meetings

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the recommended actions as outlined in this report and direct staff to proceed with implementation.

PURPOSE

This report provides Council with recommendations aimed at creating organizational efficiencies.

BACKGROUND

At the November 28, 2022 Regular meeting, City Council approved the Council schedule for 2023. At the beginning of a new term, it is prudent for Council and Administration to consider actions aimed at creating process and workflow efficiencies. Admittedly, this is a broad topic. Elsewhere on the Council agenda is a report from the A/Director of HR and IT outlining the unprecedented staff vacancies throughout the organization. Given these vacancies, it is prudent to acknowledge that a reduction of resources impacts the organization in several ways, including its ability to deliver services and advance the orderly provision of government.

The latter point is the purpose of this report. A principle of effective governance is the need to optimize the time that elected officials need to govern. Interrelated with this principle is the need to align staff effort to the advancement of Council Priorities.

ANALYSIS

Re-introducing the Council Committee of the Whole Meeting

In previous Council terms, Council utilized the Committee of the Whole format: Council meetings, held in the afternoon, where the majority of staff reports were considered. Most of Council discussion and deliberation took place in these afternoon sessions. The evening Regular Council meeting received the recommendations from the Committee of the Whole meeting and focused on bylaw readings and delegation period.

Two Council terms ago, the use of the Committee of the Whole meetings were suspended. There was some criticism from residents that since the meetings were held in the afternoon, they were unable to view or attend the sessions. Since COVID, the implementation of virtual Council meetings is now routine. With this technology change, there is value in re-introducing the Committee of the Whole format and utilizing these sessions to create efficiencies for the evening Regular Council meeting. The Committee of the Whole meeting could be another place where weighty functions, such as development approvals, could be addressed by all members of Council.

Therefore, it is recommended that Council re-introduce the Committee of the Whole meeting. It would meet once a month at 3 pm on a Council Monday, in Council Chambers, include all members of Council, and be an in-person and virtual meeting for Council, City staff and the public.

Committee of the Whole Resolutions

Given a short turn-around time, it can be challenging for Legislative Services staff to place Council resolutions from an afternoon Committee of the Whole meeting to that evening’s Regular Council meeting. To enable the process to remain nimble, staff would add a standing item to the evening Council meeting that would read as follows:

ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT – [Meeting date]

Recommendation: THAT Council adopt the report of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on [Meeting Date].

Moreover, if requested by a Council member, the City Clerk would provide a verbal summary of the resolutions from the Committee of the Whole meeting. The minutes of the Council meeting would include the Committee of the Whole resolutions adopted by Council.

Development Applications and Development Approvals

When reviewing the contents of existing Regular Council agendas, it is common for over 50% of staff reports to deal with development applications. Planning staff have been implementing several initiatives to streamline the development review process. It is recognized that the ability to remove steps from the review process would help streamline approvals and shorten permit timelines.

One action to streamline the development approval process is to reduce the number of times an application is to be received by City Council. To accomplish this, refinements are needed in the Council deliberation process vis a vis development applications. Therefore, it is recommended that development applications be deliberated by Council in a **new Standing Committee of Council on Development**.

A New Standing Committee on Development

The Committee of the Whole meeting is the ideal session to host Standing Committees of Council.

It is proposed that the Standing Committee on Development would be implemented to streamline the review process by removing the number of times Council receives a development application. This would be accomplished by adding the mandate of the Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC) with the Standing Committee on Development. This would enable Council to deliberate on development applications without the need for staff to bring additional reports to a subsequent Regular Council. This refinement saves both staff time and Council time.

The new Standing Committee on Development would assume the mandate, duties and responsibilities of the LUPC, including:

1. Ensure that the strategic social, environmental, economic and cultural objectives of the City are considered in decisions related to land use, planning and development.
2. Consider and make decisions on development applications where so authorized by the Development Approval Procedures Bylaw.
3. Consider and make decisions on policies, guidelines and programs related to community and regional planning, and the implementation of actions arising from the City's land use plans, and other strategic plans and policies that have a land use component.
4. Consider and make decisions on other policy matters related to land use and planning, as referred to the Committee.

Unlike the LUPC, the Standing Committee on Development would involve all members of Council and hence would be constituted to deliberate. This would allow for timely approval of development applications and development bylaws at this Standing Committee, if Council so desired.

Enhancing the Preliminary Application Review (PAR) stage

Planning Staff in the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department is also exploring changes to the **Preliminary Application Review (PAR)** stage. Specifically, they are exploring eliminating the need for a detailed preliminary report to Council at the start of the rezoning/OCP/HRA application. This would significantly shorten the timeline between application intake and approval.

As a next step, this efficiency will be examined in relation to holding public hearings and their relationship to public consultation in the development review process.

Policy on Voluntary Amenity Contributions for Small Projects

Planning Staff also recommend streamlining the **Voluntary Amenity Contribution (VACs)** process. Specifically, staff would create a public-facing policy on VACs for smaller rezoning applications, generally those with fewer than 50 units. This policy would provide clear, Council endorsed expectations to developers regarding a smaller project's contribution to providing the amenities needed to support the community's growth. As such, this action would eliminate the need for a further report to Council seeking approval on negotiated VACs.

This would build on the City's current practice which is to apply a set rate per unit for smaller applications, with the option to negotiate to a lower amount depending on the specific context of the application.

Next steps include engaging the City's economic consultant to update the set rate for small projects and bring forward a draft policy to Council for endorsement.

It is not recommended that this streamlined process be implemented for larger rezoning applications (the City would continue the current practice, which is to receive a land lift analysis from the City's economic consultant; negotiation of a combination of in-kind and financial contributions; and referral of the amenity package to Council for endorsement prior to First and Second Readings of the related bylaws).

Information-Only Reports to Council

There are two type of City staff reports on a Council agenda – reports with an action recommendation (in other words, reports that require *the deliberation of Council*) and reports for information-only (reports that do not require the deliberation of Council). Information-only reports are typically updates provided to Council and the community. In most cases, these reports are not time sensitive.

Since both type of staff reports go to Council, the net effect is that scarce resources – staff time, Council time – are not being optimized.

Therefore, the following is recommended:

1. Information-only reports will no longer appear on the Council Consent agenda.
2. Information-only reports will be listed and provided to the community on the City's website. This step will ensure information transparency.
3. A new heading will be added to the Regular Council agenda "Information Reports".
4. All recent information-only reports, added to the City's website, will be listed under the "Information Reports" heading.
5. Council members wishing to discuss an information-only report will be able to request that a specific report be addressed, and advise the City Clerk that it be added to the subsequent Council meeting agenda for discussion. This step will ensure Council's ability to address information-only reports if Council so chooses.

The Delegation Bylaw

The City's Delegation Bylaw and the City's Officers bylaw requires updating. This is the bylaw where City Council delegates certain authority to designated senior City staff. The Community Charter authorizes that Council stipulate the powers that are to be granted to City staff and there is a reconsideration provision for some of the powers. Updating the Delegation Bylaw is an on-going action item for Administration. At this time, there is one function staff recommends adding to the Delegation Bylaw: delegating the authority to administer the Noise Bylaw.

Administering the Noise Bylaw

Council currently delegates noise bylaw issues for City conducted works to the Director of Engineering. It is recommended that the Delegation Bylaw be amended to extend this delegated authority for all private development and civic projects, including works to be completed by third parties such as Metro Vancouver, TransLink and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. For those projects, it is recommended that the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development be delegated the authority, as this department manages the private developments and is able to evaluate the merits of the noise variance request.

In subsequent Council reports, staff will provide further recommendations for additional delegated authorities in the Delegation Bylaw.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following outlines the lists of recommendations in this staff report:

1. Re-introducing the Committee of the Whole Council meeting.
2. Creating a new Standing Committee of Council on Development.
3. Reporting back on enhancing the Preliminary Application Review (PAR) stage.

4. Creating a Policy for streamlining the Voluntary Amenity Contribution (VACs) process for small projects.
5. Information-only staff reports to Council listed on the City's website.
6. Amending the Delegation Bylaw to include administering the Noise Bylaw for private development and civic projects.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Several departments have been engaged in the preparation of this report and have collaborated on the recommendations as outlined. SMT continually explores efficiencies in the organization and will provide subsequent reports to Council regarding additional proposals.

OPTIONS

There are two options for Council's consideration:

Option 1 - Council endorse the recommended actions as outlined in this report and direct staff to proceed with implementation; or

Option 2 – Provide further direction to staff.

Option 1 is recommended

This report was prepared by:
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer

This report was approved by:
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer