

Public Engagement at Council Meetings

Effective Date: September 21, 2021

Last Revised: November 23, 2021

1. Policy Statement

Pursuant to their Procedure Bylaw, Pitt Meadows City Council provides opportunities for public engagement at their regular Council meetings and their Engagement & Priorities Committee (EPC) meetings.

2. Purpose

This policy provides guidelines and protocol for the safe, respectful, and orderly administration of Question & Comment Period during Council meetings and public engagement opportunities during EPC meetings.

3. Scope

This policy applies to regular Council meetings and EPC meetings.

4. Exclusions

This policy does not apply to special or in-camera Council meetings, staff meetings, or other non-Council meetings.

5. Regular Council Meetings

The following procedures and guidelines apply to Question and Comment Period during regular Council meetings:

- (1) Question and Comment Period will:
 - a) be conducted at the beginning and end of each regular Council meeting, according to the published agenda; and
 - b) last no more than fifteen minutes unless otherwise authorized by the Chair.

- (2) Members of the public may:
 - c) attend the council meeting to make their comments in person; or
 - d) submit their question or comment in writing through the process prescribed by the Corporate Officer.
- (3) Each person may speak once during each Question and Comment Period for a maximum of 3 minutes, including the time it takes for Council and Staff to respond to their question and/or comment.
- (4) Questions and comments must pertain to topics on the agenda as approved by Council.
- (5) Speakers will abide by the general conduct rules outlined in Part 8 [General Conduct] of this policy.
- (6) Written submissions will abide by the guidelines established in Part 7 [Written Submissions] of this policy.
- (7) Question and Comment Period may be added to a special (public) Council meeting agenda at the discretion of the Chair, depending on the purpose and nature of the meeting. If Question and Comment Period is added to a special (public) meeting, the protocol established above will apply.
- (8) Expanded options for public engagement may be incorporated into a Council meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

6. EPC Meetings

The following procedures and guidelines apply to community engagement during EPC meetings:

- (1) For each substantial agenda item, the Chair will invite comments and questions from members of the public once Council and Staff have had the opportunity to discuss the topic as presented.
- (2) A maximum of 30 minutes will be allowed for public engagement per agenda item, or otherwise at the discretion of the Chair.
- (3) Members of the public may otherwise:
 - a) attend the meeting to make their comments in person; or

- b) submit their question or comment in writing through the process prescribed by the Corporate Officer.
- (4) Each speaker may speak once per agenda item and will have an opportunity for up to five (5) minutes of dialogue with Council.
- (5) Questions or comments must pertain to the current agenda item and will not be permitted on items not yet presented or not on the agenda.
- (6) Speakers will abide by the general conduct rules outlined in Part 8 [General Conduct] of this policy.
- (7) Written submissions will abide by the guidelines established in Part 7 [Written Submissions] of this policy.

7. Written Submissions

This Part applies to all written submissions for Council and EPC meetings.

- (1) Written submissions will be read into the record by the Corporate Officer or their designate.
- (2) Lengthy submissions may be summarized.
- (3) Submissions with inappropriate language, comments or content may not be considered.
- (4) Only one question will be considered from each written submission.
- (5) For Question and Comment Period, priority will be given to submissions related to items on the agenda.
- (6) For EPC meetings, submissions must pertain to items on the agenda.
- (7) Any written submissions that are not addressed during a meeting due to time constraints or for other reasons will be emailed to Council after the meeting.

8. General Conduct

This Part applies to all public engagement opportunities at Council and EPC meetings.

- (1) Speakers will be prioritized in the following order:
 - a) if a speaker's list is used, those speakers who have signed up for the opportunity to speak; then
 - b) other in-person speakers; then
 - c) written submissions.
- (2) Speakers will:
 - a) begin by stating their name and city of residence, with the option to include other details such as address or neighbourhood, if it is helpful to the conversation;
 - b) direct their question or comment to the Chair;
 - c) be concise and avoid repeating previous questions;
- (3) The following topics will not be permitted:
 - a) any matter pertaining to a bylaw or zoning application that is the subject of a public hearing and has not yet been adopted;
 - b) any matter that is before the courts, has been the subject of a claim for damages, or pertains to active requests for proposals;
 - c) requests for financial or in-kind support;
 - d) the promotion of commercial goods or services; or
 - e) other topics deemed inappropriate, vexatious, frivolous, defamatory in nature, or containing abusive language.
- (4) Presentation materials, including PowerPoints, videos and handouts, will not be accepted or presented to Council.
- (5) The Chair reserves the right to limit or defer questions and comments from the public due to time constraints or inappropriate content.
- (6) In order to create and preserve a safe, respectful and orderly environment for everyone, members of the public will:
 - a) show respect through their words and actions towards members of the public, Council members, and Staff;
 - b) refrain from disruptive behaviour that would impede meeting proceedings;

- c) comply with the decisions of the Chair in a prompt and orderly fashion; and
 - d) restrict comments and questions to the appropriate time on the agenda.
- (7) As per the *Community Charter*, the Chair must preserve order. If the Chair considers that another person at the meeting is acting improperly or disrupting the Council meeting, that person's behavior will be addressed. The Chair may order the person expelled from the meeting should the person choose to not adhere to the decisions of the Chair.

9. Related Policies

Other related policies include:

- (a) C010 – Delegations Before Council
- (b) C041 – Public Hearing Process