



NEWS RELEASE

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TOWNSHIP POLICY FORMALIZES DEVELOPER HELD PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

A new policy will formalize how public information meetings are hosted by developers in the Township of Langley.

On March 7, Township Council adopted a Developer Held Public Information Meetings Policy that includes the criteria, logistics, and reporting requirements for meetings put on by developers through their own initiative or at the request of the Township.

Public information meetings are often held by developers to engage area residents, share information about proposed developments, and gather feedback so that issues and concerns can be identified and addressed early in the development approval process. The sessions also help provide relevant information to Council.

Last June, Council requested that a policy be created to formalize the meetings, and guide the proponents in organizing, conducting, and reporting on the sessions.

The need for the policy was put forward by the Township's Community Participation, Infrastructure, and Environment Advisory Committee, and echoed in the findings of the Mayor's Standing Committee on Public Engagement.

"It is in everyone's best interest if proponents who want to build significant projects meet with members of the public, educate people about their plans, and collect input before the application is advanced to Council for consideration," said Mayor Jack Froese. "It ensures concerns are dealt with at an early stage, provides relevant information to those interested in the project, and streamlines the process."

"Council wants to ensure that these meetings meet criteria, are consistent, and are held to certain standards," Froese said. "It is all part of the Township's goal to enhance public engagement and ensure people are informed and involved when planning our community's future."

The new policy would be used for proposed Official Community Plan and zoning bylaw amendments, development variance permits, and land use contract amendments or discharges.

Under the policy, public meetings will be scheduled in consultation with Township staff, and must be held in an accessible location, preferably close to the subject site. They should take place during or extend into the evening on weekdays so that those who work during the day can attend. Weekends and holidays are to be avoided.

Applicants must distribute advance notice of the meeting - along with a description of the proposal, a map, and contact information - through mail-outs to affected property owners and residents, newspaper advertising, and on the proponent's website.

The public sessions can include open houses, presentations, displays, small group discussions, question and answer periods, and feedback forms and surveys. All relevant plans, studies, and technical information about the proposal must be made available for review at the event, and a sign in sheet will record the number of attendees.

A member of the Township's Community Development Division will attend to observe, answer Township-specific questions, and verify that input was correctly gathered and analysed. The proponent is also required to provide a summary report to the Township.

The new Developer Held Public Information Meetings Policy was created based on the Township's current practice, a review of other neighbouring municipalities, and the recommendations of the Mayor's Standing Committee on Public Engagement. The Urban Development Institute was also consulted and supports the policy.

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