



COALITION OF VANCOUVER NEIGHBOURHOODS

<http://coalitionvan.org>

July 23, 2019

City of Vancouver Council

Dear Mayor Kennedy Stewart and Councillors,

Re: Proposed Amendments to the procedure Bylaw No. 9756 and New Pilot Program

Agenda July 24, 2019: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20190724/cfsc20190724ag.htm>

Report: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20190724/documents/cfsc4.pdf>

The Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods (CVN) **opposes** this report's recommendations and encourages council not to approve it. Many concerns need to be addressed first.

This report has been brought forward without any meaningful public consultation. The proposals would restrict democratic processes and the relationship between elected officials and the public they represent. Vancouver has a long history of public participation in the democratic process of governance, but these changes would seriously undermine that process.

The report was only made public with 3 working days notice for the public to respond. The report lacks basic information such as a red-lined document that compares the proposed bylaw text with the previous version, showing additions and deletions. This was added to the website only today, which is not enough time for tomorrow's council meeting. This is completely unreasonable.

We have identified numerous concerns that need to be considered. A partial list is in the attached Appendix A. We urge you to address the many issues raised and revise the bylaw accordingly.

We also are opposed to the proposed pilot project that would restrict councillors from asking speakers questions.

These proposed changes to the bylaw go far beyond the recent pilot program. Council members' motions are proposed to require 2 meetings notice (4 weeks), which is much longer than current bylaw which requires only one week ahead, or the current pilot of 1 meeting notice (2 weeks). Meanwhile, there is no change to current practices of last minute staff reports and Council agendas, which should be required 2 weeks in advance of the Council meeting.

Please do not approve the report recommendations, as they would serve to undermine the democratic process.

Sincerely,

Larry Benge, Co-Chair

Dorothy Barkley, Co-Chair

On behalf of the Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods

Member Groups of the Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods

Arbutus Ridge Community Association
Arbutus Ridge/ Kerrisdale/ Shaughnessy Visions
Cedar Cottage Area Neighbours
Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council
Dunbar Residents Association
Fairview/South Granville Action Committee
False Creek Residents Association
Grandview Woodland Area Council
Granville-Burrard Residents & Business Assoc.
Greater Yaletown Community Association
Joyce Area Residents
Kitsilano-Arbutus Residents Association
Kits Point Residents Association
Marpole Residents Coalition
Norquay Residents

NW Point Grey Home Owners Association
Oakridge Langara Area Residents
Residents Association Mount Pleasant
Riley Park/South Cambie Visions
Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners Association
Strathcona Residents Association
Upper Kitsilano Residents Association
West End Neighbours Society
West Kitsilano Residents Association
West Point Grey Residents Association

Appendix A

Proposed Amendments to the procedure Bylaw No. 9756 and New Pilot Program

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20190724/documents/cfsc4.pdf>

General Comments:

Many of the proposed amendments are anti-democratic by reducing the relationship between elected officials and the electors they are responsible to represent. For example, the text proposes that:

- Council members' motions require 2 meetings advance notice (4 weeks). This is much longer than the current bylaw which requires only 1 week, or the current pilot of 1 meeting notice (2 weeks). (9.1, 9.3)
- Meanwhile, there is no change to current practices of last minute staff reports and Council agendas, which should be required 2 weeks in advance of the Council meeting. (3.3)
- Only one speaker or representative per organization be allowed. This ignores the fact that individuals within an organization may personally have different issues or concerns. (7.5)
- Councillor's questions to speakers cannot be leading to allow speakers more time. (7.7)
- The proposed new pilot program would not allow Councillors questions to speakers at all.
- Speakers' time reduced from 5 minutes to 3 minutes and groups from 8 min. to 5 min. when the report states that the majority of the public did not support this change. (7.5, 7.7,13.18)
- Moving of Councillors' motion are only allowed to be 2 minutes, when speakers get 3 minutes, and restrictions on Councillors citing their preamble. (9.6)
- Public hearing agendas are proposed to only be made public 3 business days before the hearing. It should be posted at least 2 weeks before the hearing. (13.7)
- Electronic meetings are proposed to be allowed for special Council meetings and In-Camera meetings. There are concerns that this is premature, especially regarding public participation and for what kind of issues would be allowed in special Council meetings. (Part 14,14.2)
- Special Council meetings have no definitions and can be initiated by the Mayor without a Council vote. (Definitions, 2.5)
- Councillor's motions are being redefined as a referral report that doesn't allow speakers from the public.
- A new definition of improper conduct has been added that could result in Councillors being removed from the meeting. It also poses restrictions on the public, advisory committee members, and councillors from being critical of the city or staff policy, programs or practices. This could be in conflict with the Vancouver Charter as well as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. (Definitions, 4.4(e), 7.8)
- It removes the pilot of 3 pm hard start at Council committee to hear from speakers on Councillor's motions that was to make speaking times more predictable for the public.
- Bylaw circulation to Council doesn't require links to reports or red line copy showing changes. (10.1)
- The bylaw should restore the deleted clause that restricts a Councillor who has been absent from an entire public hearing from voting. (former 18.27 to be added as 13.26)
- The expanded role of City Manager to comment on advisory committee reports undermines the independence of advisory committees. (15.15)
- There are many issues that require clarifying language regarding: public hearings and meetings in general election year should be restricted until the new council turnover not just to election day; the recording of meetings and clarification of archived videos being easily accessible online; the public's rights to record public meetings; the processes related to requests by the public to speak; limits on reconsideration of an adopted motion; authenticating of public comments; and more. (2.3, 2.9, 3.14, 7.3, 8.6, 8.14, 13.11)