

What is a Public Hearing?



A Public Hearing is a vital part of Council's review when applications are made to change the City's Official Community Plan or Zoning Bylaw. A Public Hearing is the primary means for the public to present their views to Council on the item(s) contained in that evening's Public Hearing agenda. The Public Hearing is Council's opportunity to listen to members of the public. The purpose is not for Council to discuss and debate the topic. Simply put, the public speaks and Council listens.

When are Public Hearings Held?

Typically, Public Hearings are held on the first Thursday of each month.

How Are Public Hearings Advertised?

Staff and Council want to ensure that residents have adequate notice and access to information on bylaw amendments. There are a number of ways in which this takes place:

- **On-Site Signage** Where applicable, on-site signage is displayed on the property, which gives general information about the application, and provides contact information. The date, time, and place of the Public Hearing will be added to the sign 10 days prior to the Public Hearing date.
- **Mail Out & Delivery** Where applicable, Public Hearing notices are mailed and/or hand delivered to property owners and tenants within a 10 metre radius of the subject property. The notices are sent 10 days prior to the Public Hearing date.
- **City Hall** The Public Hearing notice and background materials for all agenda items are available for viewing at the City of Nanaimo Service and Resource Centre, located at 411 Dunsmuir Street.
- **Newspaper Advertisements** Public Hearings are advertised in local newspapers the week before the Public Hearing. You can find them in the Tuesday and Thursday editions of the News Bulletin newspaper.
- **City Website** The Public Hearing notice is posted on the City's website at: <https://www.nanaimo.ca/your-government/city-council/council-meetings/meeting-documents-and-videos>.

What Happens at a Public Hearing?

1. The Mayor (or chairperson) calls the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. City staff describes the procedure for the meeting and proceeds with the first agenda item.
3. When applicable, the applicant is usually invited to speak first followed by the general public. There are no requirements to register for speaking in advance of the meeting nor is there a speakers list at the meeting.
4. Everyone who wishes to speak will be given an opportunity to be heard. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, those who wish to speak again may do so. Please keep in mind that if you choose to speak again, you should be presenting new points, not repeating what you have already stated.
5. The Mayor (or chairperson) calls three times, to ask if anyone else would like to speak, should no one appear at the podium to speak, the item is then closed.
6. Staff introduces the next agenda item and the above steps are repeated.
7. Once all agenda items have been closed, the mayor will adjourn the Public Hearing meeting.

What Happens After the Public Hearing?

Council members cannot accept any further information or submissions after the close of the Public Hearing; this is to allow a fair process as established by provincial case law. The Public Hearing is held as part of a Special Council Meeting, therefore following the close of the hearing, the Special Council Meeting will resume (that same evening) and bylaws may be considered for Third Reading.