

Municipality of North Cowichan Public Engagement Committee AGENDA

Tuesday, June 15, 2021, 6:00 p.m.
Electronically

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting, though electronic, is open to the public and all representations to the Public Engagement Committee form part of the public record. At this time, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, public access to Council Chambers is not permitted, however, this meeting may be viewed on the District's live stream webcast at www.northcowichan.ca/meetings.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Purpose: To consider any items of business not included in the Agenda, that are of an urgent nature, must be introduced and approved at the time the agenda is adopted. Matters must be taken up in the order that they are listed unless changed at this time.

Recommendation:

That the Committee approve the agenda as circulated [or as amended].

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2 - 5

Purpose: To consider if there were any errors or omissions prior to adopting the minutes.

Recommendation:

That the Committee adopt the minutes of the meetings held September 3, 2020 and January 28, 2021.

4. BUSINESS

4.1. Draft Engagement Policy

6 - 11

Purpose: To review and provide input on the draft Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy.

4.2. Next Steps

Purpose: For discussion.

5. NEW BUSINESS

6. ADJOURNMENT

Municipality of North Cowichan Public Engagement Committee MINUTES

September 3, 2020, 6:00 p.m.
Electronically

Members Present Mayor Al Siebring, Chair
 Councillor Rob Douglas
 Councillor Rosalie Sawrie

Staff Present Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 Megan Jordan, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement
 Terri Brennan, Executive Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A discussion re: in-person consultations was added to the agenda under New Business as item 6.1

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee approve the agenda, as amended.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee adopt the minutes of the Public Engagement Committee meeting held August 4,, 2020.

CARRIED

4. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

None.

5. BUSINESS

5.1. Draft Communications and Engagement Plan

Jessica Delany, Delaney and Associates, discussed with the Committee the current draft communications and community/stakeholder engagement plan. A few minor edits will be made based on input received from the Committee.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee approve the final draft Communications and Engagement Plan for collection of community and stakeholder input under the draft engagement framework and policy.

CARRIED

5.2. Feedback on Survey

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee approve the draft engagement survey as presented with the minor amendments as suggested by the Committee.

CARRIED

5.3 Sample Graphics

The Committee reviewed the sample graphic and determined that staff are to decide on the final product.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1. In-person Consultation

The Committee determined there were a sufficient number of questions already included in the draft survey to elicit feedback on in-person engagement. Public feedback on in-person engagement will help inform the community engagement and framework policy. Responses specifically from the survey may assist Council with determining the need for in-person consultation in 2021 and 2022, especially when staff bring forward suggestions for Budget 2022 engagement.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 6:33 p.m.

Certified by Recording Secretary

Signed by Chair

Municipality of North Cowichan Public Engagement Committee MINUTES

January 28, 2021, 6:00 p.m.
Electronically

Members Present Mayor Al Siebring, Chair
 Councillor Rob Douglas
 Councillor Rosalie Sawrie

Staff Present Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 Megan Jordan, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement
 Terri Brennan, Executive Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. (There were technical issues and livestreaming started at 6:32 pm)

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee approve the agenda as circulated.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

None.

4. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Presentation of Consultant's Engagement Report

Ms. Delaney presented the key engagement findings, the key elements of policy development direction, and asked for feedback and comments from the committee members.

- We heard from approximately 1,500 stakeholders and community members
- 3 key themes emerged in feedback – seeking inclusive and transparent engagement, hearing community voice, and community engagement is a community effort
- “We’re Listening” survey was open for a month and had 560 respondents, survey engagement through the OCP had 900 responses
- Reviewed the key engagement findings of the “We’re Listening” survey and the key elements of policy development based out of the stakeholder interviews

5. BUSINESS

5.1 Key Elements of Policy

Ms. Delaney reviewed the key elements of the policy as part of her presentation.

- Clear alignment between decision making and engagement objectives
- Transparent and timely information sharing
- Inclusive and meaningful engagement process
- Clear communication on how stakeholder engagement is reflected in decision making (and if not why)
- Measuring and evaluating the engagement process

Next steps are to provide an executive summary, draft the policy, and once approved create a framework to support the policy.

5.2 Closing the Engagement Loop

Delaney and Associates will create an executive summary (with a link to the complete document) that will be provided to the community on what we heard, and advise that we are working on a draft policy, and request feedback from the public on the draft policy once drafted. The draft policy will come back to the Public Engagement Committee after public has reviewed, and then be provided to Council during the summer of 2021.

5.3 Project Timeline and Cost Update

The CAO shared the project timeline and advised of the updated projected cost estimate.

6. NEW BUSINESS

None.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 7:19 p.m.

Certified by Recording Secretary

Signed by Chair;

COUNCIL POLICY: COMMUNITY and STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Council Approval Date: TBC Department: TBC

Amended Date: TBC

The Municipality of North Cowichan is committed to inclusive and transparent community and stakeholder engagement. We recognize that each engagement process is unique and needs to be tailored to meet the needs of the decision maker, the community, stakeholders and the project. We also recognize, however, that an overall commitment to engagement and a series of guiding principles can ensure a consistent approach to engagement planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the Municipality of North Cowichan's commitment to inclusive and transparent engagement. Engagement is defined as enabling and supporting the community and stakeholders' participation in Council decisions. Inclusive and transparent engagement means the community and stakeholders will have a voice and influence in decisions that impact them or are of interest to them and that they will receive the information they need to participate.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all departments of the Municipality of North Cowichan.

A legislative requirement for engagement, either through the Community Charter or other legislated processes, will be considered a minimum requirement and will not prevent the municipality from doing more than is required by law.

In the event the Municipality is mandated to conduct engagement by another level of government, the Municipality will work to ensure that engagement process meets the spirit and intent of this policy.

This policy is focussed on engaging community members and stakeholders (ie: groups and/or organizations). Given the traditional territory on which the Municipality of North Cowichan is located and in the spirit of Reconciliation, it is not intended that this policy would guide the working relationships between the Municipality and local First Nations. The Municipality is committed to working collaboratively with Indigenous communities to advance a government-to-government relationship.

3. WHY WE ENGAGE

By adopting this policy, the Municipality is making a high-level commitment to the community and stakeholders that it will plan, implement, evaluate and report on municipal engagement processes guided by this policy and the guiding principles listed below.

The Municipality is committed to engagement because we believe it is foundational to supporting democratic processes. The Municipality also recognizes that engagement helps us make better, more durable and inclusive decisions and that listening and considering different and varied perspectives is key to having fair and more equitable processes.

Finally, the community has said that if there is collaboration, the community will be more reflective of how its residents would like it to be. The Municipality is committed to being an organization that reflects the community it serves and will strive to continuously improve how we communicate and engage.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR INCLUSIVE and TRANSPARENT COMMUNITY and STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The North Cowichan Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy was created to align with the core values of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). They have been modified through the engagement process to develop this policy, to best meet the needs of the community.

4.1 Communications

- 4.1.1 Plain language, highly accessible information needed to understand and participate in the engagement process will be shared in advance of the engagement itself so that participants can share informed input or feedback.
- 4.1.2 The community and stakeholders will know and understand how their input or feedback will inform decision making and if not, why it was not used will be communicated.
- 4.1.3 Communications will be consistently shared across all platforms/channels and will seek to share content with groups who are willing and able to champion the engagement process.
- 4.1.4 Communications will be unbiased and fact-based and when opinions are included, they will be clearly marked as such.
- 4.1.5 Ample notice will be given to promote engagement processes.

Level of Influence	Our Commitment	Implementation (examples)
Inform	We will share information that is highly accessible, in plain language and that supports increased understanding and transparency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Social and digital communications ✓ Advertising ✓ Earned media ✓ Public education campaigns
Consult	We will openly and thoughtfully consider all community and stakeholder feedback on a draft approach, project, strategy or initiative or other Municipal-led work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Surveys ✓ Focus groups ✓ Open houses ✓ Small group meetings ✓ Online engagement tools ✓ Telephone surveys
Involve	We will seek input, insights, ideas and perspectives early in a project and look to integrate these into a draft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All above under consult as well as: ✓ Advisory groups ✓ Pop-up events ✓ Intercept surveys ✓ Workshops
Collaborate	We will partner with the community and/or stakeholders so the result of our partnership is a true collaboration with all voices being represented in the final decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All above under involve and feedback as well as: ✓ Working groups ✓ Task force
Empower	We will place final decision making in the hands of the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All of the above under collaborate as well as: ✓ Referendum ✓ Plebiscite

4.2 Influence

- 4.2.1 The level of influence the community and/or stakeholders will have on particular decisions will vary based on project constraints and considerations. These constraints and considerations will be clearly communicated early in the engagement process.
- 4.2.2 Some municipal projects or initiatives will not provide the community and/or stakeholders with influence in decision making. These projects are at the COMMUNICATE level on the spectrum of engagement. For these projects, the municipality will provide clear and timely information to the community including why there is no engagement for that particular decision.

4.3 Transparency

- 4.3.1 When an engagement process is launched the decision-making process (ie: the steps in how a decision will be made) will be clearly communicated.
- 4.3.2 The constraints and key considerations of a particular decision will be clearly communicated.
- 4.3.3 If Council is *not* the decision maker, but the sponsor of a process, this will be made clear early in the process.
- 4.3.4 The project lead will report out on what was heard through the engagement process in the form of a “*what we heard*” report.
- 4.3.5 In communications to Council and the community, the project lead will communicate how the “*what we heard*” report influenced decision making, and if not, it will be communicated why input/feedback was not used.
- 4.3.6 Engagement evaluation results will be communicated so that as an organization and community we can build an engaging culture and foster a sense of shared accountability between and amongst the Municipality, the community and stakeholders.

4.4 Equity

- 4.4.1 To encourage participation from all members of the community, engagement will focus on being inclusive, accessible and welcoming for all community members who wish to participate.
- 4.4.2 We will enable inclusive, accessible and welcoming engagement processes in the following ways:
 - ✓ Providing a variety of opportunities to participate that are not time based (ie: not just one meeting on a particular day/time)
 - ✓ We will seek to understand the barriers to participation and work to eliminate or reduce them
 - ✓ We will invite, encourage and support seldom heard and under-represented voices by being flexible, adaptable and open to new ways of engaging, listening and learning
 - ✓ We recognize that as municipal government we do not have all the answers and are willing to listen and learn from our community on how to design safe and accessible processes that work for community, not just government.

5. HOW WE ENGAGE

This policy is not prescriptive in terms of how staff and/or consultants will plan, implement, evaluate or report on engagement programs. An engagement framework will be developed to support staff in how to implement the spirit and intent of this policy. This is a Council policy. The approval of the engagement framework will be the responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer, who will have overall accountability for both the implementation of this policy and the supporting engagement framework.

The engagement framework will be a tool to support staff in consistently planning, implementing, evaluating and reporting on their engagement programs. The framework will include:

- Template to integrate engagement into the overall project charter
- Needs assessment template
- Engagement planning template
- Template for how to implement key engagement techniques, including, but not limited to:
 - Online surveys (short and longer)
 - Focus Groups
 - Pop-up events
 - Small group meetings
 - Other online formats for engagement
 - Advisory and working groups
- Evaluating checklist
- Report back template
- Engagement program checklist
- Appropriate resources allocated as per the annual departmental business planning process

The engagement framework will support staff in their engagement work and ensure a more consistent approach to engagement across all departments.

6. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Communications: To share plain language, highly accessible information that is needed to understand and participate in the engagement process. Communications is not engagement, but a requirement to support an engagement program.

Engagement: To share influence with the community and/or stakeholders in Council decision-making that is at the feedback/input/partner level of the spectrum.

Engagement program: A plan on how to engage the community and/or stakeholders on a specific decision. Typically, an engagement program would include: needs analysis, engagement and communications objectives, engagement and communications techniques, key messages and evaluation measures.

Equity: Work to overcome structures, processes and ways of working that disenfranchise some people and unfairly overrepresent or benefit particular groups of people.

Evaluation: To measure the return on investment of our engagement activities and to measure how inclusive, transparent and equitable we are being in our engagement programs.

Feedback loop: To report back on what was heard in an engagement process with a “what we heard report”. To document the findings of an engagement process and/or to communicate how engagement findings helped to inform a decision.

IAP2: The International Association for Public Participation is recognized as the global leader in public participation and developed a number of tools and training courses to support meaningful and authentic engagement.

Influence: To affect change through participation.

Legislated engagement: Engagement processes which are dictated, defined or mandated through legislation.

Public Participation: Another word for engagement; more specific to public and/or community as opposed to stakeholders or other levels of government.

Transparency: Being clear on the decision, the process by which it is being made and seminal information required to make the decision.