

# Municipality of North Cowichan Public and Statutory Hearing MINUTES

January 21, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

**Municipal Hall - Council Chambers & Electronically**

Members Present

Mayor Rob Douglas  
Councillor Mike Caljouw  
Councillor Bruce Findlay  
Councillor Becky Hogg  
Councillor Chris Istace  
Councillor Christopher Justice  
Councillor Tek Manhas

Staff Present

Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)  
Bill Corsan, General Manager, Corporate Services and Community Relations  
George Farkas, General Manager, Planning, Development and Community Services  
Amanda Young, Director, Planning and Building  
Andrea Hainrich, Deputy Corporate Officer  
Barb Floden, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement  
Barry Davidson, Manager, Bylaw and Business Licensing Services  
Chris Derouin, Chief Building Inspector  
Chris Osborne, Manager, Planning  
Christina Hovey, Project Planner  
Clay Reitsma, Director, Engineering  
John Horn, Director, Social Planning and Protective Services  
Moudud Hasan, Senior Manager, Engineering (Transportation and Drainage)  
Pablo Golob, Manager, Development Planning  
Rachel Pukesh, Development Planning Coordinator  
Tricia Mayea, Corporate Officer

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

There being a quorum present, Mayor Douglas called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

**3. PUBLIC HEARING MATTERS**

**3.1 Explanation of the public hearing process**

Mayor Douglas outlined the public hearing process.

**3.2 Public hearing for Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4037 [3925 Cowichan Lake Road]**

1. The Mayor called the public hearing to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. The Manager, Development Planning, Pablo Golob, presented the proposed bylaw amendment and answered questions from Council.
3. The applicants, Meghan Terpenning and Shaye Donald, presented details of their application to Council.
4. The Corporate Officer advised that:
  - Notice of this public hearing was posted to North Cowichan's noticeboard, website and social media on January 2, 2026, and published in the Cowichan Valley Citizen on January 14, 2026.
  - All correspondence received has been provided to Council, circulated in an addendum and posted to North Cowichan's website. Printed copies are available in the public hearing information package located in the binder outside of Council Chambers for anyone who hasn't seen them and would like to read the full submissions.
  - A total of 29 written submissions were received:
    - o 17 were in support of the Zoning Bylaw Amendment;
    - o 11 were opposed; and
    - o 1 contained comments.
  - One additional letter was received after the 1:00 p.m. deadline today, in opposition from Leslie Daw. This was read into the record.
5. The Mayor provided an opportunity for persons affected by the proposed bylaw, and 11 people came forward to comment.
  1. Stephen Pannekoek at 3935 Cowichan Lake Road, opposed. Cited concerns about noise, strong odours, proximity to the nearby park, and increased fire risk. Requested that policies be updated and that the Zoning Bylaw Amendment be denied.
  2. Naiomi Palulis, of 1433 Thomson Terrace, in support. Noted that the property is agricultural land intended for agricultural use, highlighting typical farming impacts such as sounds and smells. Also referenced available mitigation measures for odour and light. Added that the proposal could create seasonal employment opportunities.
  3. Lou McKay, 3911 Lake Cowichan Road, opposed. Raised concerns about light and odour impacts and noted the facility would be approximately 100 feet from their home.
  4. Verna Buhler, 3908 Cowichan Lake Road, opposed. Lives across the road from the proponent and referenced the Official Community Plan, emphasizing the need for consistent communication with residents. Expressed the view that neighbours in the area have not been sufficiently consulted.
  5. Jacqueline Boyd, 5883 Heather Street, in support. Noted shared experiences with the applicant and highlighted the applicant's passion for farming and family ties to the agricultural sector. Spoke about their volunteer work, commitment to the community, and resilience in helping sustain and grow the agricultural industry.

6. Greg Terpenning, 4367 Bains Mill Road, in support. Identified as the applicant's next-door neighbour and parent, expressing support for the application. Noted the strengths of the proposal and indicated confidence that the applicants would address concerns as the project moves forward.
7. Jane Wharton, 3972 Sahtlam Rd, in support. Lives behind the applicants' property and expressed support for the application. Initially had concerns about light pollution and the scale of the operation, noting it is considerably smaller than typical industrial cannabis facilities. Reported that the applicants addressed these concerns through mitigation measures and emphasized strong support for young people participating in local agriculture.
8. Britany Foote, 3975 Cowichan Lake Road, in support. A long-time resident speaking on behalf of herself and her parents. After a thoughtful discussion with the applicants, they expressed support for the application.
9. David van Deventer, President of Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce, in support. Expressed general support for business, including agricultural operations. Referred to conversations with the applicant and reminded attendees that the discussion concerns how the crop is grown rather than the type of crop itself.

The Mayor called for a second time, and 1 person came forward to comment:

10. Verna Buhler 3908 Cowichan Lake Road, spoke again in opposition. Stated that a commercial operation is not compatible with a residential neighbourhood. Raised concerns about unpleasant odours, particularly when hosting guests. Also referenced the international Spring Convention for the Rhododendron Society of the Cowichan Valley, noting its unique significance in the region.

The Mayor called a third time, and 1 person came forward to comment:

11. Verna Buhler 3908 Cowichan Lake Road, in opposition. Reiterated concerns related to the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society's upcoming international tour in the area. Also noted issues with the facility's energy consumption and light pollution, stating these impacts would erode the character and appeal of the neighbourhood.
6. The Mayor called again for a third and final time, and nobody came forward.
  7. The applicants, Meghan Terpenning and Shaye Donald, responded to questions brought up in the public hearing.
  8. The Mayor declared the public hearing for Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4037 [3925 Cowichan Lake Road] closed at 7:56 p.m. and reconvened the regular Council meeting.

#### **4. BYLAWS CONSIDERED AFTER PUBLIC HEARING**

##### **4.1 Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4037, 2025**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council gives third reading to Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4037, 2025. CARRIED

The regular Council meeting was recessed at 8:06 p.m.

## 5. PUBLIC HEARING MATTERS

### 5.1 Public hearing for Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4030 [2-6380 Lakes Road]

1. The Mayor called the public hearing to order at 8:06 p.m.
2. Development Planning Coordinator, Rachel Pukesh, presented the proposed bylaw amendment and answered questions from Council.
3. The applicants, Masika Allan and Randy Westlake, presented details of their application to Council, and answered questions from Council.
4. The Corporate Officer advised that:
  - Notice of this public hearing was posted to North Cowichan's noticeboard, website and social media on January 2, 2026, and published in the Cowichan Valley Citizen on January 14, 2026.
  - All correspondence received has been provided to Council, circulated in addendums and posted to North Cowichan's website. Printed copies are available in the public hearing information package located in the binder outside of Council Chambers for anyone who hasn't seen them and would like to read the full submissions.
  - A total of 3 petitions were received:
    - o 2 petitions in support of the Zoning Amendment have been received;
      - o 1 with 60 signatures, and
      - o 1 electronic petition with 1733 names, as of January 14, 2026
    - o 1 petition in opposition of the Zoning Amendment has been received, with 39 signatures.
  - A total of 94 written submissions were received
    - o 56 in support of the Zoning Bylaw Amendment;
    - o 38 opposed the Zoning Bylaw Amendment; and
    - o 1 late submission was received after the 1:00 p.m. deadline today, in opposition from Chandra Unguran. This was read into the record.
5. The Mayor provided an opportunity for persons affected by the proposed bylaw, and 34 people came forward to comment.
  1. LeeAnne Marshall, 6380 Lakes Road, strata property 1, in support. Identified as the closest neighbour to Oak & Vine and spoke on behalf of themselves and their spouse. Commented on their views of the property, the owners' transparency, and recent upgrades. Recalled experiences from past weddings and the associated increase in traffic.
  2. Jori Fales, 206 Wilson Road, in support. Spoke as a close friend of the applicants, highlighting their kindness and thoughtfulness. Expressed full support for both applicants and their ability to work well together. Also emphasized their shared commitment to the local community.
  3. Jan Malherbe, 6387 Lakes Road, in opposition. Spoke on behalf of himself and his wife, stating he chose to focus on facts rather than personal views about the

applicants, emphasizing land-use considerations. Outlined the expectations of the Temporary Use Permit and reminded Council that the approval would not be permanent, noting staff had expressed concerns. Also indicated support for staff's recommendation regarding road widening.

4. Kelly Olson, 2521 Townend Road, in support. Reflected on having similar experiences and expressed support for the business and its longstanding history as a commercial operation. Noted the applicants' efforts to address neighbours' concerns and highlighted the limited number of events held each year.
5. Tammy Markwart, Blue Lily Event Planning, 3508 Honeycrisp, Langford, in support. Spoke of her experiences working with the applicants as a wedding planner. She shared the alignment of the applicants, and of their values and the impact on the local economy. She mentioned the applicant's attention to detail, and the high standard of work in the weddings they have done. She spoke of her business skills and professionalism, while creating a wonderful experience for guests.
6. Shelly Buchan, of 970 McDonald St, in support. Spoke from experience working with the applicants as a wedding planner. Highlighted the alignment of the applicants' values, their positive impact on the local economy, and their strong attention to detail. Noted the high standard of their work and their professionalism in creating excellent guest experiences.
7. Kianna Woods, daughter of the applicant, in support. Commented on the applicants' efforts and the minimal disruption experienced. Referred to the work they have contributed, and the care invested by their parents in operating the venue. Emphasized the consistent care and attention given to all weddings held at the property.
8. Peter Culligan, 6367 Woodland Drive, in opposition. Opposed the application, stating it is not suitable for a residential neighbourhood. Raised concerns about noise, traffic volume, vehicle speeds, and the risks associated with alcohol consumption increasing the likelihood of accidents. Also emphasized the need for road widening, ongoing monitoring of conditions, and encouraged Council to take a more proactive approach.
9. Rick Taylor, 6325 Lakes Road, in opposition. Addressed concerns about allowing this commercial use in the area, noting it is not aligned with the existing Zoning Bylaw or the Official Community Plan. Pointed out that while properties within the ALR may permit certain commercial activities, the primary use in this case is "commercial assembly" rather than farming. Cautioned that approving the application could amount to spot use and set an undesirable precedent. Recommended increased oversight moving forward.
10. Zack Brown, 1751 Stamps Road, in opposition. Spoke as a winemaker and grape grower affiliated with the Wine Island Grape Growers Association (WIGA). Expressed strong support for vineyards and noted being familiar with the neighbouring property and the applicants' plan. Raised concerns about permitting ten events and stated the applicants appeared more focused on hosting weddings than on grape production, noting this shift has occurred at some other vineyards in the Cowichan Valley as well.

11. Tasha, 3065 Mattin Road, in support. Spoke as a makeup artist who has worked with Oak & Vine on many occasions, noting the venue's contribution to their livelihood. Highlighted the applicants' strong attention to detail and the overall appeal of the venue. Mentioned that many venues in the area have closed and emphasized the importance of supporting local businesses. Encouraged Council to allow weddings at the site.
12. Gurninder Sandhu, 6350 Woodland Drive, in opposition. Opposed the zoning amendment, stating the use is not appropriate for a residential neighbourhood. Spoke about the division it has created and noted that most supportive letters came from outside the area, rather than from those whose daily quality of life would be affected. Raised concerns about noise and traffic. Observed that much of the support focused on the applicants' character rather than on the implications of allowing a permanent commercial assembly use. Warned that approving the application without firm rules would set a precedent for similar uses in residential neighbourhoods. Urged Council to reject the application.
13. Erin Brownley, 3365 Woodland Drive, in opposition. Opposed allowing this operation in a residential neighbourhood. Referred to multiple neighbours who would be affected and stated it is unfair for one property owner to limit others' ability to enjoy their own yards. Emphasized the land-use implications, expressing that the operation is not truly a farm and would function mainly as a backdrop. Stated that the location is not appropriate for this use.
14. Susi Jorgensen, 6367 Woodland Drive, in opposition. Opposed the rezoning, drawing on personal experience living near a wedding venue in another municipality. Stated that the use is no longer appropriate and noted that the previous Temporary Use Permit was granted during the pandemic, making it unclear how full-capacity operations would affect the neighbourhood. Emphasized the need to observe actual impacts before making a long-term decision. Referenced the OCP and zoning bylaw provisions related to Temporary Use Permits and suggested Council may not have complete information. Also pointed to recent upgrades to the property and the significant financial investment for what is described as a temporary use. Urged Council to reject the application.
15. Brittany Foote, 43 Lois Lane, Duncan, in support. Spoke as a close friend of the applicant, highlighting their strong character and hardworking nature. Noted the intention behind the business and the value of creating a venue that supports meaningful moments, family experiences, and community connection. Emphasized the thoughtful vision for the property and the economic benefits it brings to the valley, including local employment.
16. Carreen Unguran, 6392 Lakes Road, in opposition. Noted the Temporary Use Permit process and suggested that events should be counted as multiple occurrences rather than single ones. Pointed to the need for amendments to the business bylaw to properly address and enforce operational concerns. Stated that the use is not appropriate for this location.
17. Brenda Schneider, 2258 Woodland Place, in opposition. Opposed the permanent wedding-use application, citing negative impacts on neighbouring residents,

including traffic and noise concerns. Urged Council to deny the application so residents can continue to enjoy their homes and neighbourhood.

18. Andrew Boudreau, 2265 Woodland Drive, in opposition. Stated the proximity of their properties. They noted their support for local business and the importance of shopping locally. They emphasized that they are not opposed to the weddings themselves, but rather to the receptions and the disruption they cause. They referred to the size of other reception venues and the distance those venues maintain from neighbouring properties. They also noted that guests generally prefer to be outside. They raised concerns about the liquor licence and the potential risks to the community. Asked that Council consider denying this request for the sake of the community, as well as based on their previous experiences with a TUP.
19. Sarah Davis, 2263 Rosewood Ave, in support. Spoke as a personal friend. They highlighted the individual's character and their willingness to stand up for others. They emphasized their strong work ethic, attention to detail, and genuine care for the events they host. They also spoke about their hardworking nature and the efforts they have made to minimize disruption to neighbours, acting in alignment with community values.
20. Suzanne Porter, 6433 Tyler Place, in opposition. As a neighbour within 200 m, they spoke in strong opposition. They stated that the land use is not appropriate for the area and would permanently change their way of life. They referenced previous petitions and past experiences. They noted that event participants will not remain inside at all times. They also raised concerns about the additional events permitted—five “non-wedding” events. They pointed out that a good-neighbour agreement is not enforceable, as it relies solely on good intentions. They emphasized that a TUP is required and referenced the past history of complaints associated with TUPs.
21. Jamie Penny, 6329 Lakes Road, in opposition. Questioned if a ‘Good Neighbour Agreement’ is enforceable, if the terms aren't followed. He mentioned the option to consider a TUP. He urged Council to test this with a TUP first. He also invited Council to consider the impact on neighbouring farms conduct their usual activities during weddings. This is a land use decision for Council. Decide if this is an appropriate use for Council. He raised the question if neighbours should have to live next to this, if the applicant wouldn't.
22. Cynthia Montgomery, Lakeview, in opposition. They referred to this property as the party palace situated in the middle of a quiet neighbourhood. They noted that previous Councils had sought restrictions and received promises of compliance, which were not upheld. Subsequent Councils repeated the same requests, and compliance still did not occur. They spoke about the history of the property and the absence of required permits. They questioned the owners' integrity and whether they act as responsible corporate citizens, expressing the belief that they behave as though the rules do not apply to them. They pointed out that the zoning needed to be created specifically for this site because it did not previously exist. They also expressed concerns about the potential lack of enforceable rules.

23. Shandra Unguran, Lakes Road, in opposition. They mentioned that the individuals submitting comments do not live in the area and raised concerns about the names and addresses provided in the submissions. They noted that the website for the online petition does not require real names or addresses from people adding their support. They argued that the same “not limited to North Cowichan” logic should apply in this situation and questioned how the input meaningfully relates to North Cowichan. They also expressed concern that “click activism” could influence the process in the wrong direction.
24. David van Deventer, President of Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce, in support. They spoke about the economic impact of this proposal and urged Council to approve the change along with allowing 10 events per year. They discouraged the need for traffic-related requirements. They highlighted the support expressed by the Chamber. They also commented on the character assassination occurring in the public forum and noted how disappointing it is to see. They emphasized that these discussions could occur without attacking anyone’s personal character.
25. Abraham Lee, 165 Edward Drive, Lake Cowichan, in support. Identified themselves as a DJ in the area. They discussed the noise levels and expressed that the venue is being treated unjustly.
26. Jennifer Edwardson, North Cowichan, in support. They spoke in support of the venue. They encouraged change to move forward and urged people to stop engaging in character assassination.

The Mayor called a second time, and the following people stepped forward.

27. Tammy Markwart, Blue Lily Event Planning, 3508 Honeycrisp, Langford, in support. Mentioned the process involved for permitting and managing the event. Also noted the character assassination and the disappointment.
28. Andrew Boudreau, 2265 Woodland Drive, in opposition. They noted that they work with the applicants and are familiar with the process of obtaining a TUP prior to a permanent permit being issued. They stated their belief that this is the best option for them.
29. Jan Malherbe, 6387 Lakes Road, in opposition. They expressed agreement with points made by both sides and noted the bi-directional negativity occurring throughout the process. They also raised concerns about the intimidation felt by neighbours who are being named and shamed. They urged that more serious consideration be given to the matter and that additional time be provided.
30. Kelly Olsen, 2521 Townend Road, in support. They spoke about concerns raised by others related to alcohol issues along the roadside. They noted that noise from other types of events is also possible in the area, such as from farming activities or nearby schools. They also raised questions about the traffic issues and why these concerns should apply specifically to Oak and Vine but not to other locations.
31. Zac Brown, 1751 Stamps Road, in opposition. Spoke of the impact on the business community and vineyard experiences. He reviewed how events are permitted as a secondary use for vineyards. He noted the negative impact on

other vineyards, if one should be interested in pursuing this as well. He noted the poor health of the vineyards.

32. Cynthia Montgomery, in opposition. They stated that their intention was not character assassination. They noted the ongoing non-compliance issues. They expressed concerns that the newly created zone lacks rules and bylaws and questioned whether the noise bylaw would apply to this property.
33. Zac Brown, 1751 Stamps Road, in opposition. They again spoke about the unfair competitive advantage. They referred to the sale of the property to a craft distillery and noted the licensing requirements involved. They stated that the letter of rationale could function as a workaround to those requirements. They expressed concern that the penalty of a liquor license suspension would reduce accountability. They highlighted the need for nearby vineyards to conduct farm activities on weekends. They also noted biosecurity concerns, including the risk of insect infestations being spread on visitors' shoes. They emphasized the risks posed by wedding guests entering farm areas. Drawing on their previous profession, they spoke about traffic-safety risks on this high-volume road. As a farmer and small business owner, they stated that they are not in support.
34. Careen Unguran, 6392 Lakes Road, in opposition. They spoke about the perceived economic benefits compared with the real economic costs of the activity. They addressed tax rates and expressed concern that the business is not paying its fair share, resulting in costs being transferred to taxpayers. They noted the responsibilities that other businesses and property owners must meet. They highlighted the economic and biosecurity risks posed to neighbouring vineyards. They emphasized the unfair advantage created by the proposal and urged Council to reject the application.

The Mayor called a third time, and final time, and nobody stepped forward.

6. Applicants Randy Westlake and Masika Allan, responded to questions and concerns brought up during the public input.
7. The Mayor declared the public hearing closed at 10:40 p.m.

## **6. BYLAWS CONSIDERED AFTER PUBLIC HEARING**

Council recessed at 10:47 p.m. and reconvened at 10:54 p.m.

### **6.1 Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4030, 2025**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council gives third reading to Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4033, 2025.

(Opposed: Douglas, Justice)

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council directs staff, as a condition of rezoning, to enter into a Good Neighbour Agreement with the applicant.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council directs staff, prior to consideration of adoption of the rezoning, to undertake amendments to Municipality of North Cowichan Business Licence Bylaw No. 2002 to authorize the Business Licence Inspector to impose additional conditions on business licences, including but not limited to hours of operation, use of amplified music, on-site parking, and the requirement for a Good Neighbour Agreement and compliance therewith. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the following motion:

*THAT Council requires, as a condition of rezoning, a Section 219 Land Title Act covenant to be registered on title of the subject property and common property that restricts commercial assembly use on the subject property in the following ways:*

- a. No more than 10 events per year with a maximum of 80 attendees at each event;*
- b. That an event be limited to a 24-hour period;*
- c. That events be limited to a maximum of two per calendar month, leaving neighbours with about half of summer weekends free*
- d. That a schedule of events is available in advance to neighbours*
- e. That all amplified music will be contained behind closed doors of the assembly use building on the premises;*
- f. That the event, including all music shall end at 11:00 pm with all attendees having vacated the premises by 11:30 pm;*
- g. That the operator shall hold a valid business licence for the commercial assembly use; and*
- h. That a Good Neighbour Agreement be in place.*

be amended as follows:

Strike out the words '24-hour' from bullet b. and replace with the words '36-hour'.

(Opposed: Douglas, Istace, Justice)

CARRIED

And, be amended as follows:

Add wording to bullet c. to limit events to five events in July and August.

(Opposed: Caljouw, Findlay, Hogg, Manhas)

DEFEATED

And, be amended as follows:

To remove bullet c.

(Opposed: Douglas, Istace, Justice)

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council requires, as a condition of rezoning, a Section 219 Land Title Act covenant to be registered on title of the subject property and common property that restricts commercial assembly use on the subject property in the following ways:

- a. No more than 10 events per year with a maximum of 80 attendees at each event;
- b. That an event be limited to a 36-hour period;
- d. That a schedule of events is available in advance to neighbours
- e. That all amplified music will be contained behind closed doors of the assembly use building on the premises;

- f. That the event, including all music shall end at 11:00 pm with all attendees having vacated the premises by 11:30 pm;
- g. That the operator shall hold a valid business licence for the commercial assembly use; and
- h. That a Good Neighbour Agreement be in place. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council rescind the resolution to: *"require shoulder pavement widening along Lakes Road in accordance with the recommendations of the Senior Manager of Transportation, to be completed to the satisfaction of the Engineering department prior to consideration of final adoption of zoning amendment"* passed at the December 17, 2025 Regular Council meeting. (Opposed: Douglas, Istace, Justice)

CARRIED

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

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Certified by Corporate Officer

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Signed by Mayor