

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: August 4, 2022

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: MAUREEN CONNELLY, MANAGER OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES/
CORPORATE OFFICER

SUBJECT: Proposed Public Notice Bylaw and Amendments to Council Procedures Bylaw

ATTACHMENT(S): Staff Report dated June 3, 2022 titled "Publication of Statutory Notices by Alternative Means"

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council:

1. having considered the principles of effective public notice, as required by *Public Notice Regulation 52/2022*, in determining the most appropriate methods for providing public notice, GIVES FIRST THREE READINGS to "City of Prince George Public Notice Bylaw No. 9329, 2022;" and
2. GIVES FIRST THREE READINGS to "City of Prince George Council Procedures Bylaw No. 8388, 2011, Amendment Bylaw No. 9336, 2022."

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval of the proposed "City of Prince George Public Notice Bylaw No. 9329, 2022", a bylaw that defines methods by which statutory public notice will be provided by the City of Prince George. The report also provides an update to "City of Prince George Council Procedures Bylaw No. 8388, 2011" ("Council Procedures Bylaw") to align definitions with proposed Bylaw No. 9329.

BACKGROUND:

At their June 13, 2022 regular meeting, Council directed Administration to return a bylaw defining the two methods, in addition to posting in the public notice posting place at City Hall, by which statutory public notice will be published by the City of Prince George, in accordance with Section 94.2 of the *Community Charter*.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed "City of Prince George Public Notice Bylaw No. 9329, 2022" defines the two required methods by which the City will publish public notice as the City's website and the City's Facebook page. In addition, there are provisions within the Bylaw allowing for Council or other specified positions within Administration to publish, in a modified form, a supplemental public notice in a newspaper for matters expecting to garner significant interest from the community or impact the community at large. Local governments that choose to adopt a public notice bylaw and alternate methods for public notice must consider the principles for effective public notice that are prescribed in the *Public Notice Regulation*

52/2022. These principles are intended to foster a shared set of good governance expectations among local governments and members of the public and confidence that they will conduct their business in an open and transparent manner. The three principles that must be considered before a public notice bylaw is adopted are:

- Reliable – the publication methods are dependable and trustworthy;
- Suitable – the publication methods work for the purpose for which the public notice is intended; and
- Accessible – the publication methods are easy to access and have broad reach.

The two official means of public notice proposed will be readily accessible by the community, provide reliable, accurate and up to date information and meet the content and timing requirements for publications of notices, as required by legislation. Both the City's website and Facebook page are frequently visited, are accessible from a variety of electronic devices and do not require any information (i.e. login or account) to be provided in order to access the information.

Further, the proposed Bylaw will come into effect November 1, 2022, providing all City departments who would be affected by adoption of the Bylaw (i.e.: financial services, planning and development, legislative services) time to adjust internal processes to meet the bylaw requirements. In addition, this effective date coincides with the start of the newly elected Council term.

In an effort to encourage members of the public to prepare for and familiarize themselves with the change to the publishing of public notices, Administration will include in forthcoming notices, details regarding the "News and Notices" section of the City's Website (www.princegeorge.ca/PublicNotices), the City's email subscription program for published notices, and the City's Facebook page.

To provide clarity between the Public Notice Bylaw and Council Procedures Bylaw, Administration recommends amending the definition of "Public Notice Posting Places" in the Council Procedures Bylaw to align with the definition of "Public Notice Posting Place" in the proposed Public Notice Bylaw. Amending the definition of "Public Notice Posting Places" will affect several sections throughout the Bylaw. As it relates to Council's meeting procedures, it is recommended that publishing continue on the public notice posting place and City website. Therefore, Administration recommends that Council gives first three readings to the proposed "City of Prince George Council Procedures Bylaw No. 8388, 2011, Amendment Bylaw No. 9336, 2022" to provide clarity and alignment of definitions between the two bylaws.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This initiative contributes to Council's focus area of continuous improvement and effective governance.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Local governments that choose to adopt a public notice bylaw and alternate methods for public notice must consider the principles for effective public notice that include reliability, suitability, and accessibility as prescribed in the *Public Notice Regulation 52/2022*. The methods of publishing notice will vary from community to community and depend on local circumstances. The "City of Prince George Public Notice Bylaw No. 9329, 2022" specifies the City's website and Facebook page as the official public notice channels and provides authority to specified positions to supplement with newspaper advertising when appropriate. Residents will also continue to receive individual public notification by mail or hand delivery of certain development applications and public hearings that they are in proximity to, as specified by bylaw and provincial legislation.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Maureen Connelly, Manager of Legislative Services/
Corporate Officer

PREPARED BY: L. Kellett, Deputy Corporate Officer

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2022/08/15