

DATE: July 2, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

SUBJECT: BC Restart Plan Phase 3 - Changes to Local Government Meetings

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated July 2, 2021 from the Acting City Manager titled “BC Restart Plan Phase 3 – Changes to Local Government Meetings”.

PURPOSE:

This report provides an update on phase 3 of the BC Restart Plan and implications for City Council and committee meetings.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:

On July 1st BC moved into phase 3 of the Restart Plan and the provincial State of Emergency was lifted. Phases 2 and 3 of the Plan have permitted limited in-person public attendance at Council and committee meetings through amendments to the Provincial Health Officer’s (PHO) order on gatherings and events.

Under the current order local government meetings must continue to adhere to the rules for organized indoor gatherings for each step of the Restart Plan. In the current phase, restrictions include indoor gatherings limited to a maximum number of 50 people or 50% capacity, whichever is greater and the transition from a COVID-19 Safety Plan to a communicable disease plan.

With respect to the capacity restriction, the maximum number of people includes all elected officials, staff members, and members of the public present at a meeting. The 2nd Floor Conference Room will continue to be available for members of the public to watch the live stream of the meeting and/or wait to speak to Council during a formal public input opportunity (i.e. public hearing, delegation, etc.).

The PHO recommends maintaining some COVID-19 Safety Plan protocols to allow for a transitional period and progression from COVID19 Safety Plans to communicable disease plans. The City’s communicable disease plan has been prepared and updated signage with current protocols has been posted in City Hall meeting rooms and other facilities. Mask wearing is not required, but is recommended in indoor public spaces for all people 12 and older, who are not fully vaccinated.

BC's public health emergency will remain in effect, with reduced requirements, for the duration of phase 3 to support amended public health orders from the PHO. During this transition period, local governments can continue to hold electronic meetings and electronic hearings under the authority of the *COVID Related Measures Act* and Ministerial Order M192. Ministerial Order No. M192 continues to provide local governments with the authority needed to adapt to PHO orders and will remain in effect until September 28, 2021 (90 days after the end of the SOE). During this time, electronic participation for appointed citizen committee members and the use of telephone conferencing for public hearings, delegations and other formal public input opportunities during Council meetings will continue.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

This report summarizes the requirements at phase 3 of the BC Restart Plan. Enhancing transparency and public participation to the extent possible while continuing to operate under the Provincial Health Officer's orders and guidelines will be key considerations going forward. Administration intends to return a report to Council in the fall, following the start of phase 4, to review Council and committee meeting processes and procedures including the process for review of planning and land use applications.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

PREPARED BY: Maureen Connelly, Manager of Legislative Services

Meeting Date: 2021/07/12