



REGIONAL DISTRICT  
of Fraser-Fort George

Development Services



## PUBLIC HEARINGS

### WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEARING?

A public hearing is an official public meeting held by the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, where any person(s) who believe that their interest in a property may be affected by a land use proposal may speak or present a written submission expressing their opinion.

Public hearings are held according to the *Local Government Act*. They are a formal process to gather comments.

### WHAT TRIGGERS A PUBLIC HEARING?

The most common reason for a public hearing is to consider a proposed change in land use that requires:

- **The introduction or amendment of an Official Community Plan Bylaw or Zoning Bylaw.** These bylaws are most often intended to change the permitted density or use of land. For example: to allow subdivision or change the use from residential to commercial.

### HOW ARE PEOPLE NOTIFIED ABOUT A PUBLIC HEARING?

- **Newspaper:** Public hearings are advertised in a local newspaper. The advertisement gives a brief description of the bylaw, the subject property, the date, time and place of the public hearing, and where to find further information. There may be other media coverage as well, depending on the scale of the proposal.

- **Mail:** Property owners adjacent to the subject property are mailed a copy of the public hearing notice.
- **Notification of Application Signs:** The applicant may be responsible for erecting a sign, identifying the land is subject to an application, on the parcel a minimum of 14 days before the start of a public consultation phase. The sign provides a summary of the proposed development.
- **Public Posting:** Public hearing notices are posted at the Regional District office at 155 George Street, Prince George and on the website: [www.rdffg.bc.ca](http://www.rdffg.bc.ca).

### WHO CAN ATTEND AND SPEAK AT A PUBLIC HEARING?

Public hearings are open to the public. Anyone who feels their interest is affected may attend. If you cannot attend, you may submit a written comment by fax, mail, email or hand delivery, by the required deadline, that will be submitted into the public hearing and attached to the minutes. **Please note:** all submissions must include the author's name.

At a public hearing speakers are to state their name and direct their comments to the Chair. The Chair will restrict comments to the topic at hand.

All information that has been gathered as part of the processing of a land use change application is available to the public, subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Regional District of Fraser-Fort George

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### WHAT HAPPENS AT A PUBLIC HEARING?

1. The Chair of the public hearing, a Regional District Board Director, opens the public hearing and provides introductions and instruction.
2. Development Services from the Regional District makes a presentation explaining the application.
3. Letters received are submitted into the public hearing.
4. Comments are heard from the applicant.
5. Presentations are received from the public.
6. The Chair closes the public hearing or states the time and place where it shall reconvene.

### CAN A VOTE BE TAKEN AT A PUBLIC HEARING?

The purpose of a public hearing is to give everyone an opportunity to be heard without being discouraged or prevented from making their views known. It is also not the function of the Regional District to debate the merits of the proposal at the public hearing. No vote is held so that all views may be expressed in a fair and unbiased setting.

### WILL MY OPINION BE HEARD BY THE BOARD?

Each land use application is considered on its own merits. Reports are submitted to the Board and are available for viewing on the Regional District's website as part of the monthly meeting agenda.

Reports include:

- background information about the property and surrounding land use, such as the Official Community Plan designation and policies, current zoning, and known past history of the property and neighbourhood
- comments received from referral agencies such as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the Ministry of Environment and First Nations
- minutes of the public hearing
- summary from Development Services

The Board makes their decision based on all information received, together with the collective knowledge and experience of the fourteen Board Directors.



### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A PUBLIC HEARING?

The Regional District Board cannot receive additional comments from the public after the Chair has closed the public hearing. The minutes of the public hearing are presented in a report submitted to the Board. After receiving the report regarding the public hearing, the Board may advance, defeat or further review the proposed Bylaw.

*This information has been prepared to provide convenient information only. It is neither a bylaw nor a legal document. If any contradiction between this information and the relevant bylaws and/or applicable codes arises, such bylaws and/or codes shall be the legal authority.*