



REGIONAL DISTRICT
of Fraser-Fort George

Development Services

PUBLIC HEARINGS

What are Public Hearings

A public hearing is an official public meeting held by the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George when the Regional District Board is considering a change to an existing land use bylaw. Any person(s) who believe that their interest may be affected by the proposed land use change may speak or present written comments expressing their opinion. The minutes of the public hearing, and all written comments received are provided to the Regional District Board prior to making a decision.

Public hearings are held according to the *Local Government Act*. They are a formal process to gather comments. The main function of a public hearing is to listen and receive comment from the public concerning the proposal. No decision pertaining to the proposed bylaw are made at a public hearing.

A public hearing is chaired by a Regional District Director. The role of the Chair of the public hearing is to oversee the proceedings of the meeting.

COVID 19 Impacts

In accordance with the Provincial Health Officer Ministerial Order No. M192, members of the public are prohibited from attending Regional District Board meetings and public hearings. In an effort to adhere to provincial orders while still providing the public with an opportunity to provide comments on a bylaw, a public hearing will be held remotely via telephone conference call.

The public will have an opportunity to provide their views when the Chair of the public hearing calls for comments from members of the public.

How to Provide Comments for a Public Hearing

Everyone is given a reasonable opportunity to be heard at a public hearing. No one will be, or should feel discouraged or prevented from making their views heard. As a public hearing is an impartial and open forum, the public is asked to refrain from expressions of positive or negative emotion whether you favour or oppose any matter pertaining to the proposed bylaw.

Residents can provide comments on a bylaw that is the subject of a public hearing through the following means:

1. Submit written comments to the Regional District in advance of the public hearing

Written comments will be accepted by the Regional District in advance of a public hearing until 12:00 pm the day before the public hearing through the following methods:

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Email: developmentsservices@rdffg.bc.ca

Mail or Hand Delivery: 155 George Street, Prince George, BC

Fax: 250-562-8676

Please ensure written comments have the following information:

- Bylaw or application the comments pertain to; and
- Name of Author

Please refer to the Regional District's website for the public hearing notice including written comment submission deadlines and background information pertaining to the application.

Written comments received by 12:00 pm the day before the public hearing will be posted to the Regional District's webpage.

<http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/services/development/land-use-planning/current-applications>

Any written comments received before the public hearing is closed will be provided to the Regional District Board. All written comments received prior to the close of the hearing will form part of the permanent record of the public hearing, will form part of the Board agenda, become public record, and will be posted on the Regional District's website. By submitting a written comment you are consenting to the disclosure of any personal information that you provide. Anyone wishing to comment on the content of written comments may do so.

2. Submit written comments to the Regional District the day of the public hearing:

After 12:00 pm the day before the public hearing and until the close of the public hearing, written comments can be submitted to the Regional District through the following method:

Email: developmentsservices@rdffg.bc.ca

Please ensure written comments have the following information:

- Bylaw or application the comments pertain to; and
- Name of Author

Please refer to the Regional District's website for the public hearing notice including written comment submission deadlines and background information pertaining to the application.

<http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/services/development/land-use-planning/current-applications>

Written comments received after 12:00 pm the day before the public hearing and until the close of the public hearing will be read into the minutes of the public hearing.

Any written comments received before the public hearing is closed will be provided to the Regional District Board. All written comments received prior to the close of the hearing will form part of the permanent record of the public hearing, will form part of the Board agenda, become public record, and will be posted on the Regional District's website. By submitting a written comment you are consenting to the disclosure of any personal information that you provide. Anyone wishing to comment on the content of written comments may do so.

Regional District of Fraser-Fort George

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Tel: 250-960-4400 • Fax: 250-562-8676 • Toll Free: 1-800-667-1959 • www.rdffg.bc.ca

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3. *Speak live via telephone conference call.*

Members of the public interested in participating in the public hearing via telephone conference call are recommended to dial into the meeting at least 10 minutes before the start of the public hearing. The public hearing notice detailing date, time, phone number and meeting ID of the public hearing can be found on the Regional District's website.

<http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/services/development/land-use-planning/current-applications>

Steps to enter the telephone conference call:

- a) Call the telephone conference call phone number
- b) Enter the meeting ID and press #
- c) You will be prompted to enter in a participant ID and press # **or** just press #. You should not need to enter the participant ID and can press # to enter the meeting.
- d) You will be placed in a waiting room prior to being admitted into the public hearing.
- e) Regional District will admit you into the public hearing. You will be placed on listen only mode (muted) when you enter the public hearing.
- f) Generally, you will be placed on listen only mode (muted) until the Chair asks for public comments. Should you wish to speak at the meeting you will be asked to identify this by **pressing *9**. Through the use of a speaker's list the Chair will call on members of the public to provide their verbal comments. Once you have provided your comments, you will be placed back on listen only mode (muted).
- g) When it is your turn to speak **you will be prompted by the telephone conference system to press *6 to be taken off listen only mode (muted)**. You will be placed back on listen only mode (muted) when you have finished speaking.

When speaking at the public hearing, members of the public will be asked to provide their name for the record of the public hearing.

Once all attendees have provided their verbal comments, and the Chair has called for any final comments three time, the public hearing will be closed.

No further comments will be accepted or presented to the Board after the close of a public hearing.

Telephone conference call commands:

- ❖ To enter the Speakers' List, **Press *9**.
- ❖ To mute/ unmute yourself **Press *6**

Additional Information

Below is additional information to consider prior to attending a public hearing.

Speakers' List

- At the start of the meeting the Chair of the public hearing may implement a speakers' list where members of the public may be required to identify if they would like to speak.
- If a speakers' list is implemented, members of the public will be asked to identify they wish to speak by **pressing *9**.

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- The Chair of the public hearing will then call on those that have indicated they wish to speak. When it is your turn to speak **you will be prompted by the telephone conference system to press *6 to be taken off listen only mode**. Speaker's list is utilized to ensure members of the public have an opportunity to provide verbal comments. The Regional District does not guarantee that speakers will be called in any specific order. Once you have finished speaking you will be placed back on listen only mode (muted).
- A person wishing to speak for a second time must enter the speakers' list again by **pressing *9**. Only after everyone who wishes to speak has done so, speakers who require additional time or have additional comments to make, will be given an opportunity to address the Public Hearing further.

Time Limit

An initial submission for all speakers is limited to five (5) minutes. After all speakers have been heard for the first time, a speaker may speak for a second time with new information. A second and any further submission for all speakers is limited to five (5) minutes.

General Guidelines

- It is recommended to call in to the public hearing 10 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.
- Your comments must be relevant to the item being considered at the public hearing.
- You will have 5 minutes to speak.
- Address your comments to the Chair of the meeting.
- Do not use speaker phone.
- Turn off surrounding audio sources when connecting via telephone to reduce feedback.
- When prompted to speak, state your full name prior to providing comments.
- The Chair will call three (3) times for any speakers wishing to speak to the item at hand.
- If you are disconnected from the public hearing, please call in again.
- If your telephone conference call commands are not working, please hang up and call in again.

Unforeseen Issues

Unforeseen issues or technical difficulties may arise but may not necessarily invalidate a public hearing. If technical difficulties or unforeseen issues arise such as too many attendees, technical problems, power outage, etc. where the Chair determines the public hearing needs to be suspended before all attendees who wish to speak have been given the opportunity, the hearing may be adjourned and resumed at a later date. If the time and place for the resumption of the public hearing is stated to those present when the public hearing is adjourned then no further notice of the public hearing is required. If the time and place for the resumption of the hearing is not stated when the public hearing is adjourned, new notification must be given per *Local Government Act* requirements.

The Regional District will endeavor to provide real-time updates on its social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) should any unforeseen issues or technical difficulties arise.

The Regional District is not responsible for ensuring you have adequate resources or equipment to access the public hearing through telephone conference call or any costs associated with you attending through telephone conference call.

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