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**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"  
**CC:** "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"  
**Date:** 5/2/2020 8:54:43 AM  
**Subject:** BC Gov News - Province supports local governments to hold public hearings electronically

Morning Mayor and Council

Here's the press release on the changes to the public hearing process.

We are still evaluating the implications of this. It appears to allow us to conduct public hearings without giving people the option to come to city hall. We'll review our current plans to see if we want to change anything based on the new options.

Best  
sadhu

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Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

NEWS RELEASE

Province supports local governments to hold public hearings electronically

VICTORIA - The Province is continuing to support local governments by allowing them to hold public hearings electronically during the current provincial state of emergency.

"Local governments will be a key partner in our recovery effort," said Selina Robinson, Minister Municipal Affairs and Housing. "Construction and development activities are expected to be a key part of B.C.'s recovery efforts - and building housing, in particular, affordable housing, will contribute to our goal to provide affordable housing for all British Columbians. Amending this order will allow local governments to continue their work on land-use decision-making and keep building their communities for the people they serve."

Under the Emergency Program Act, the Province has repealed and replaced Ministerial Order M083 with M139 to expand the authorities given to local governments under M083. The new order will help local governments, improvement districts and the Islands Trust continue to make important decisions for their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, including allowing local governments to hold public hearings electronically.

As public input is an essential part of land-use decision-making, even for those decisions that do not require a public hearing, local governments are still expected to find ways to encourage public participation.

Local governments are required to hold public hearings for some development applications before making a decision. A significant delay in processing development applications could result in cost increases or cancelled projects, and could negatively impact the province's economic recovery.

Local governments are still expected to find ways to encourage public participation during this time and continue to be as transparent as possible by keeping the public informed on any decisions and procedural changes through their websites and social media.

Each local government will need to determine what electronic method works best for it. At the time of public notice, the local government will be expected to provide information on how people can participate in the

hearing. Options local governments may consider include calling in and video conferencing. Local governments will also continue to be required to accept written submissions for public hearings, whether in-person or electronic.

The new order gives the Islands Trust the authority to hold meetings electronically without in-person public participation, allows for bylaws to be read and adopted in a single day and allows the use of electronic options for its public hearings.

In addition, the order authorizes improvement districts to hold trustee board meetings electronically to make financial decisions for their community and allows them to postpone their annual general meetings and elections until COVID-19 is no longer a public health threat.

Learn More:

Provincial guidance for local governments during COVID-19:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/governance-powers/covid-19>

COVID-19 provincial support and information:

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support?](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support?utm_campaign=20200319_GCPE_AM_COVID_6_NOTIFICATION_BCGOVNEWS_BCGOV_EN_BC__NOTIFICATION)

[utm\\_campaign=20200319\\_GCPE\\_AM\\_COVID\\_6\\_NOTIFICATION\\_BCGOVNEWS\\_BCGOV\\_EN\\_BC\\_\\_NOTIFICATION](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support?utm_campaign=20200319_GCPE_AM_COVID_6_NOTIFICATION_BCGOVNEWS_BCGOV_EN_BC__NOTIFICATION)

Contacts:

For non-medical information relating to COVID-19:

Visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19)

Email: [servicebc@gov.bc.ca](mailto:servicebc@gov.bc.ca)

Or call: 1 888 COVID-19

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Media Relations

778 584-1255

Joint Information Centre

COVID Provincial Coordination Plan

[embc.covidjic@gov.bc.ca](mailto:embc.covidjic@gov.bc.ca)

236 478-1336

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