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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
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Subject: Process for Advisory Committees

Greetings Mayor and Council,

The Acting City Clerk has provided the following to clarify the appropriate processes through which advisory committees make decisions and Council recommendations, both during normal circumstances and the COVID-19 suspension. There have been recent inquiries regarding advisory committee's roles in this respect, and I trust that this information will be useful in answering those questions.

The role of committees is primarily advisory in nature rather than a directive one. While they may advise or recommend a certain course of action, it is not within committees' remit to request that action directly of staff or Council. The Guidelines for Advisory Bodies states that "there is a broad spectrum of direct and indirect ways that the public may be involved and contribute to civic issues, one of which is serving on an advisory body" (page 3). The Guidelines also specify that "an advisory body's role is to provide recommendations, advice, and information to City Council and staff on those matters which relate to the mandate of the advisory body" (page 4) and that "advisory bodies play an integral role in the City's public engagement efforts by focusing on a particular topic that has an impact on the City of Vancouver and its people."

Advisory committees make decisions at their regular meetings by approving motions, which in turn become formal recommendations to Council and/or staff. These recommendations are approved, posted publicly and circulated to Council, the City Manager and relevant staff. Additional actions may also follow these approved recommendations. For example, a staff report presented on a Council agenda may include an advisory committee's decision/recommendation, or an elected official may bring forward an official Council Member's motion based upon a committee decision. In some cases, Council liaisons to committees may share information about a committee decision during Council debate of a relevant agenda item. Finally, committee decisions /recommendations may be communicated directly on a specific item on a Council meeting agenda by the Chair (or a designated committee member) speaking on behalf of the committee and its interests.

Due to their established roles and responsibilities as outlined above, these committees do not have the authority to direct staff or take any action themselves, even if the committee has approved a formal motion. I trust that the above information clarifies committees' roles and responsibilities and we continue to value the work done by the City's advisory committees and we look forward to their meetings resuming in June.

If you have any questions, please let Rosemary or Tina Penney know.

Best,
Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.