

***Bowen Island Municipality***

**POLICY**

**Policy Drafted: February 21, 2007**

**Policy #07-02**

**COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC**

**POLICY OBJECTIVE:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that communications from the Municipality are well coordinated, appropriately managed, cost effective and responsive to the diverse information needs of the Public.

**GENERAL PROVISIONS:**

1. Provide the Public with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, bylaws, programs, services and initiatives.
2. Employ a variety of ways and means to communicate to the Public – such as Municipal Hall visits, the telephone and mail to print media, the Municipal website and periodic electronic communication. Information must be broadly accessible throughout the Municipality. All means of communications – from traditional methods to new technologies – should be considered to reach and communicate with the Public.
3. Identify and address communication needs and issues routinely in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, bylaws, programs, services and initiatives. Internal and external communication requirements must be identified and met when planning, managing or reviewing policies, bylaws, programs, services or initiatives.
4. Responsible use of municipal funds to obtain maximum value is a fundamental requirement in all communication activities.
5. Encourage Staff to communicate openly with the Public about policies, bylaws, programs, services and initiatives they are familiar with and for which they have responsibility. The public interest is best served by communicating openly and responsively about such policies, bylaws, programs, services and initiatives that Staff help to administer, while treating sensitive information with the discretion it requires. Staff are expected to provide information services in a non-political fashion.
6. Input from the Public. Establish mechanisms for the Public to provide input. This will help evaluate progress and meet their information needs as projects and message priorities change over time.

## PROCEDURES:

1. Mayor's Reports – to be prepared monthly. Will include current and ongoing activities and issues facing Council. To be published in the local newspaper(s), included on Council agendas and posted prominently on the Municipal website.
2. Monthly Municipal Update (formerly the CAO's Report) – to be prepared monthly. Will include the previous month's activities by all municipal departments. To be included on Council agendas and posted prominently on the Municipal website.
3. Staff reports - should identify and address communication needs and issues - particularly in relation to the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, bylaws, programs, services and initiatives.
4. Council and Committee meeting agendas – full agendas to be published on the Municipal website and hard copies available for public inspection (see BIM Procedure Bylaw No. 111, 2004). Exceptions – full agendas of meetings that may or must be closed to the Public under section 90 of the *Community Charter*.
5. Council and Committee meeting minutes – draft minutes to be published on the Municipal website and hard copies available for public inspection as soon as reasonably possible. Minutes adopted by Council and relevant committees to be posted on the Municipal website and available for public inspection upon adoption. Exceptions – minutes of meetings that may or must be closed to the Public under section 90 of the *Community Charter*.
6. Municipal Annual Report (section 98 of the *Community Charter*). Before June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year an Annual Report must be prepared and made available for public inspection. The Annual Report must include the following:
  - a. the audited annual financial statements;
  - b. for each tax exemption provided by a Council, the amount of property taxes that would have been imposed on the property in the previous year if it were not exempt for that year;
  - c. a report respecting municipal services and operations of the previous year;
  - d. a progress report respecting the previous year in relation to the objectives and measures established for that year under paragraph (f);
  - e. any declarations of disqualification in the pervious year, including identification of the council member or former council member involved and the nature of the disqualification;
  - f. a statement of municipal objective, and the measures that will be used to determine progress respecting those objectives, for the current and next year;
  - g. any other information the council considers advisable.
7. Council review of the Annual Report. By June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, the CAO must bring forward the draft Annual Report for Council's review.

8. Annual meeting on Municipal Report (section 99 of the *Community Charter*). At least 14 days after the Annual Report (above) is made available for public inspection, Council must consider, at a Council meeting or other public meeting:
  - a. the annual report prepared;
  - b. submissions and questions from the Public.
  
9. Public Input. Ensure that input is received from the Public through an input form prominently displayed on the Municipal website or available for completion at Municipal Hall. As well, input be encouraged through written comments/ correspondence received via drop off at Municipal Hall, e-mail and/or regular mail. A suggestion box is also located at Municipal Hall to receive written comments.
  
10. Communication through the Municipal Website and other means of electronic communication (e.g. e-mails). Ensure that the Municipal website is regularly updated, accurate, easy to understand and accessible. Ensure that printed material for public dissemination is published concurrently on the website. Incorporate mechanisms into the website for receiving and acknowledging public input.
  
11. Periodic Electronic Communication. Advertise regularly in the local paper(s) and on the Municipal website for the Public to sign up for periodic electronic communications distributed via e-mail. The e-mail list would be used to distribute periodic newsletters (incorporating relevant information from the various outputs noted above), information alerts, notice of public meetings, etc.

**Policy adopted by Council at their regular Council Meeting held May 28, 2007**

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Bob Turner  
Mayor

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Isabell Hadford  
Chief Administrative Officer