

Re: REPLIES FROM MUNICIPALITIES ON PUBLIC QUESTION PERIODS

On September 26, 1977, Council considered the following notice of motion:

Re: "PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD"

WHEREAS those citizens appearing as delegation before Council do not get the opportunity to ask questions of Council; and

WHEREAS other Councils in Canada such as Toronto allocate part of Council night as a question period; and

WHEREAS the Burnaby School Board early in 1977 instituted for the first time an open question period that has proved to be very successful;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Burnaby Council commence holding a public question period limited to a maximum of 20 minutes upon completion of the Manager's Report; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this question period be reviewed by Council at the end of six months' time to determine whether or not it has been a worthwhile public service."

Council further resolved that "this matter be tabled for a staff report on the experience of Councils in Canadian jurisdictions who utilize a public question period as proposed by Alderman Randall."

Action on this resolution was deferred, and direction given to staff to obtain information from municipal jurisdictions in British Columbia and elsewhere in Canada on the use and effectiveness of public question periods.

Twenty-nine letters (two from the City of Nanaimo) have been received and appear on the agenda for the consideration of Council. The responses are summarized on the attachment. As noted, public question periods are allowed to occur at five of the municipalities who responded to the survey. With one exception, four of these through the adoption of a formal procedure require questions from the public to be limited to items on the agenda, and furthermore, that such questions be asked only when the formal deliberations of Council have been concluded. In the case of the exception, additional questions may be asked and answered at the discretion of the Chair. The survey also points out that the practice of recognizing delegations is commonly used as a means of maintaining involvement with the public.

The municipalities listed on the attachment that have a question period for the benefit of the public are all located in the lower mainland, and are considerably smaller than Burnaby in terms of population. (The range of the populations is 63,471 to 23,926).

Correspondence from Mission, Saanich and West Vancouver contained comments on unsuccessful attempts to have the public ask questions at meetings of Council. The practice was resumed in West Vancouver in 1975, apparently in compliance with the wishes of a new mayor who came to office in that year.

Only one municipality failed to respond to our request for information. The response rate was therefore exceptional and far in excess of our best expectations.

This is for the information of Council.

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SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Are Public Question Periods Held</u>		<u>Other Forms of Public Involvement Mentioned in the Responses</u>		
			<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Delegations</u>	<u>Informal Discussions with Council at Coffee Breaks</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>
1.	Calgary	469,917		x	x		
2.	Chilliwack	8,634		x			
3.	Coquitlam	55,464	*x				
4.	Delta	64,492		x	x		x
5.	Etobicoke	297,109		x	x		
6.	Kamloops	58,311		x	x		
7.	Keiowna	51,955		x			
8.	Langley	10,123		x			
9.	Maple Ridge	29,462		x			x
10.	Mission	14,997		x			x
11.	Nanaimo	40,336		x	x		
12.	New Westminster	38,393		**x			
13.	North Vancouver City	31,934	*x				
14.	North Vancouver District	63,471	*x				
15.	Port Coquitlam	23,926	*x				
16.	Prince George	59,929		x	x		
17.	Regina	149,593		x			
18.	Richmond	80,034		x	x		
19.	Saanich	73,383		x			

* Questions may be asked after meetings but only on items that appear on the agenda; at Port Coquitlam other questions may be allowed at the discretion of the Chairman.

** The Chairman enquires if anyone in the Chambers wishes to address Council; those wishing to do so are normally recognized.

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Open Line Radio Shows

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			<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Delegations</u>	<u>Informal Discussions with Council at Coffee Breaks</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>
20.	Saskatoon	133,750		x	x		
21.	Scarborough	387,149		x	x		Town Hall Meetings
22.	Surrey	116,497		x	x		
23.	Toronto	633,318		x	x		
24.	Vancouver	410,188		x			
25.	Victoria	62,551		x			
26.	West Vancouver	37,144	x				
27.	Winnipeg	560,874	(reply unclear)				
28.	Borough of York	141,367		x	x		

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