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New, easier-to-read look for Courtenay's public notices

Comox Valley Echo April 9, 2013

Public notices posted by the City of Courtenay are getting a new look.

The legal notices, used to notify the public of public hearings and other City business, have been redesigned to be more user-friendly and visually appealing.

"We want to ensure the public is aware of City issues that may affect them or the community at large," said John Ward, Director of Legislative Services.

"We also want them to know that they have a role to play. Public participation is important in Council's decision-making process."

The redesigned public notices will have a standard format, along with plainer language than the old notices. The notices will highlight ways for the public to have their say.

"While the public is welcome to speak at public hearings, we understand not everyone is able to or comfortable with doing that. Written submissions, whether they're by mail or email, become part of the official public record of any public hearing," noted Ward. "We'll have information at the top of the notices with ways people can get involved."

Ward said the motivation behind redesigning the notices was to put the audience first. "The standard public notices used by most municipalities are focused on meeting legislative requirements, but they aren't always easy to understand," said Ward. "We want to continue to meet those legislative requirements, but also make sure that we make the ads as reader-friendly as possible.

"In doing that, we hope our residents and businesses will be better informed and engaged on City issues. If we can do that, it's a win-win for everyone - Council, city staff, and the community."

In B.C. local governments are legally required to publish notices for a variety of topics, including public hearings on rezoning and official community plan amendments, sale of property, elector approval processes, and more.

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