

CHARTER BYLAW 19918

Public Notification Bylaw Amendment No. 1

RECOMMENDATION

That Charter Bylaw 19918 be given second and third readings.

Purpose

Charter Bylaw 18826, Public Notification Bylaw, provides direction and alternative methods for advertising proposed bylaws, resolutions, meetings, public hearings, and other decisions and actions that are legally required to be advertised by the City, and to modify certain notification requirements. The purpose of the proposed amendment in Charter Bylaw 19918 is to allow the City to use the municipal website (edmonton.ca) as the primary method for legally required advertisements pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*, and to provide for an alternate, digital method of notification for large-scale rezonings.

Readings

Charter Bylaw 19918 is ready for second and third readings.

Advertising and Signing

This Charter Bylaw was advertised in the Edmonton Journal on December 23, 2021, and December 30, 2021. It has also been advertised on the edmonton.ca public notices site since December 16, 2021. The Charter Bylaw amendment can be passed following third reading.

Position of Administration

Administration supports this bylaw amendment.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the December 13, 2021, City Council meeting Charter Bylaw 19918 received first reading.

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Report Summary

This report highlights proposed amendments to Charter Bylaw 18826 to address challenges emerging as a result of the pandemic, and to modernize advertising and notification standards and accessibility for the business and residents of the City of Edmonton.

Amendment to Charter Bylaw 18826 would allow the City to use the municipal website (edmonton.ca) as the primary method for legally required advertisements pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*, and address digital notification methods for large-scale rezonings. The proposed digital method is aligned with changing community expectations for access to information via digital methods while still providing options for complementary advertising methods such as print or mail.

REPORT

The Charter Bylaw 18826, Public Notification Bylaw was approved by City Council on October 7, 2019. The Bylaw established alternate methods for legally required advertisements as required by the *Municipal Government Act*.

Charter Bylaw 19918, proposes two amendments to Charter Bylaw 18826 to adjust the way that advertisement and notification may be carried out by the City: (1) to allow the City to use the municipal website (edmonton.ca) as the method for legally required advertisements; and (2) the addition of a section that addresses digital notification methods for large-scale rezonings (as defined in Attachment 1).

Amendments to the Legal Advertising Method

Digital Approach to Legally Required Advertising

During the pandemic, numerous City facilities were closed to align with provincial health orders. These closures limited the City's ability to implement Charter Bylaw 18826 as the Edmonton Service Centre was not accessible. In response to this limitation, Administration is recommending an amendment to use the municipal website (edmonton.ca) as the method for legally required advertisements, removing the secondary requirement to post the notification at a secondary location like the Edmonton Service Centre. This is the material change seen in this Bylaw amendment.

Large-scale Rezoning Notification (500 or more parcels of land)

Through Charter Bylaw 19918, and the City Charter powers, the City of Edmonton can determine a method for digital notification for public hearings related to the rezoning of 500 parcels or more. Once established, this method will allow a more efficient approach to notification for the rezoning of the entire city as part of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative. The method that Administration is recommending is notification through the City of Edmonton website. The notice

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must be posted on the City's website a minimum of 30 days before the public hearing related to the rezoning occurs. This notice must contain the following:

- The municipal address, if any, and the legal address of the impacted parcel of land;
- A map showing the location of the impacted parcel of land;
- A statement of the general purpose of the bylaw;
- A statement of where more information regarding the bylaw can be found; and
- The date, time and place of the public hearing related to the bylaw.

This recommendation is informed through findings from a jurisdictional scan of five cities (Calgary, Ottawa, Vancouver, Victoria, and Winnipeg) and their public hearing notification/advertising requirements and practices (Attachment 3). The cities that were explored leverage digital tools to provide awareness of rezoning public hearings; and have expressed the intention to replace print notifications with digital means of communication where permitted by governing legislation.

Additional Methods of Notification

In addition to the legally required advertising as per the *Municipal Government Act*, Charter Bylaw 18826 permits Administration the flexibility to employ additional methods similar to those already used to inform citizens about City of Edmonton services, programs, projects and other information, such as:

- Posting on City of Edmonton social media platforms
- Inclusion in public service announcements and press releases issued to the media
- Notification by mail or e-mail to relevant stakeholders including Business Improvement Areas, Community Leagues, seniors-serving organizations, social agencies and libraries
- Direct mail
- Roadside signs
- Out-of-home advertising (interior and exterior transit, digital and static billboards, digital signage in recreation centres, etc.)
- Advertisement with local media (newspaper, radio, television) outlets
- Post information signs on site

The City can use any of these additional methods to tailor the medium and message to connect with specific audiences according to the type and content of the notification. Methods will be selected based on which are most appropriate for the audience(s) in question.

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

The general public was not engaged in the drafting of the bylaw since Council is required to advertise and hold a public hearing before passing Charter Bylaw 19918. This will give the public a chance to share their opinions on the proposed recommendations outlined in the bylaw.

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Budget/Financial Implications

The proposed digital method for large-scale rezonings is anticipated as being a lower cost as compared to traditional notification methods (print or mail). The total estimated cost to mail a single notification to all properties in Edmonton is upwards of approximately \$100,000 (one notice per property in Edmonton).

Legal Implications

Amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* permit the City to pass a bylaw establishing a process for giving notice of a proposed rezoning bylaw by digital means where the proposed amendment would affect more than 500 parcels of land. Based on the research described in this report and past research conducted in relation to Charter Bylaw 18826, Administration is of the opinion that posting notification on the City's website is in line with municipal best practices and is likely to bring the information to the attention of substantially all owners of affected parcels of land.

Pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*, Charter Bylaw 19918 was subject to a 60 day petition period following its advertisement to the public. After passage of first reading on December 13, 2021, Charter Bylaw 19918 was advertised in the Edmonton Journal in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*. As sufficient petition was not received, Charter Bylaw 19918 is proceeding to Public Hearing for consideration of second and third readings.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Charter Bylaw 19918 Public Notification Bylaw Amendment No. 1
2. Redline Version of Charter Bylaw 18826 Outlining Proposed Amendments
3. Review of Municipal Best Practices Relating to Public Hearing Notifications

OTHERS REVIEWING THIS REPORT

- M. Plouffe, City Solicitor