



Memo to Council

Date: November 28, 2023
Subject: Increasing Transparency through a Lobbyist Registry and Meeting Registry –
Motion Served by Councillor Haven Lurbiecki

Motion Served

Notice of the following motion was provided at the November 14, 2023, Regular Council meeting:

THAT staff be directed to develop a policy defining lobbying activities that attempt to influence municipal decisions on land-use;

AND THAT a public-facing lobbyist registry and public-facing meeting registry of councillor meetings with lobbyists and developers be implemented.

Background

Transparency is the bedrock of democracy. It is paramount to public trust in institutions and governments. This is no doubt why many jurisdictions have enacted lobbyist registries. A lobbyist registry aims to enhance accountability and public confidence in government decisions by informing the public about communications that may be attempting to influence the decision-making of elected officials.

In local government contexts lobbying most often occurs related to the largest financial interests that council decision-making controls: land-use. At the same time land-use decisions can have the most impact on a community and the daily lives of residents. Given the immense public interest in land-use decisions made by council any lobbying activities towards members of council/participated in by members of council should be disclosed to the public. Yet as it stands now in Port Moody if a councillor chooses to meet with a paid lobbyist and/or a proponent of a development¹ project there is no requirement to record and disclose this meeting. The only way to “find out” if a meeting occurred is through a Freedom of Information request made by a member of the public. This onus should instead be placed on elected officials to proactively report to the public (for whom they work).

There are several examples Port Moody can draw from in the development of a municipal lobbyist registry including the City of Surrey and the City of Kelowna. The provincial government also enacted a lobbyist registry² and the Union of BC Municipalities has endorsed resolutions

¹ In provincial legislation a lobbyist is defined as "An individual who, for payment, undertakes to lobby on behalf of a client" or and in-house lobbyist which is "An employee, officer or director of an organization who receives payment for the performance of the person's functions, and lobbies on behalf of the organization or an affiliate."

² Provincial level Lobbyist Registry has all lobbyist meetings published monthly see www.lobbyistsregistrar.bc.ca

calling for a system like the provincial system³. This demonstrates that there is broad support and need for lobbyist registry systems in government.

The effect of the above motions would be to create a webpage on the City's website that 1. lists registered lobbyists in Port Moody and 2. lists meetings that occur between lobbyists and councillors, and the creation of a policy which would require that members of council to disclose any such meetings to the city within a timely manner.

The need for this registry is urgent given the significant number of upcoming development proposals Port Moody will be considering in the immediate term. The community has the right to know the activities of councillors regarding each of these proposals.

Requested Timeline

<u>Level</u>	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Staff Turnaround Time</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulatory or interjurisdictional requirements• Major and immediate risk and/or financial impact	< 3 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Time-sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant impact to the community• Significant financial impact	3-6 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-urgent	All other work	< 12 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Council Strategic Plan Alignment

This motion aligns with the following Council Strategic Plan Goal(s):

- Sustainable Core Services: Lead with Good Governance.

Council Options

The following responses are available for Council consideration:

1. Receive for information.
2. Refer to staff to bring back a report (staff will determine if the nature of the work warrants a project proposal or a staff report, and will include considerations with respect to feasibility, resources, timeline, strategic plan alignment, and legislative analysis).
3. Other.

³ 2017, 2019