

August 12, 2024

Mayor Amarjeet Sohi
2nd Floor, City Hall
1 Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2R7

RE: Proposed Amendments to Bylaw 18155, Council Procedures Bylaw

Mayor and Council:

On behalf of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce (ECC), I am writing to express strong opposition to *Bylaw 20915 – Amendments to Bylaw 18155 – Council Procedures Bylaw*, which will be considered at the [August 20, 2024, City Council meeting](#). This bylaw responds to the following motion that was passed at the July 4, 2024, City Council meeting:

That Administration prepare amendments to Bylaw 18155, Council Procedures Bylaw, to change the distribution date for agendas from 10 clear days prior to the meeting to the Thursday prior to the meeting.

The proposed bylaw change is ill-advised, poorly conceived, and highly problematic. If approved, it will impair the accessibility, accountability, and transparency of Council’s decision-making, and it will limit the ability of Edmontonians from fully participating in local democracy. This change raises several concerns that I believe warrants further consideration:

- **Accessibility:** The current requirement of publishing agendas 10 clear days prior to the meeting provides citizens, businesses, media outlets, advocacy groups, and elected officials adequate time to review meeting materials thoroughly. This period is crucial for creating awareness of municipal issues, conducting necessary research, engaging constituents and elected officials, and formulating informed opinions. Reducing this timeframe to just a few days before the meeting significantly limits accessibility to municipal affairs and will lead to rushed or uninformed decision-making.
- **Accountability:** City Council plays a critical role in ensuring the accountability of City Administration, particularly as it relates to delivery of public services and management of taxpayer dollars. At the same time, Edmontonians play a critical role in ensuring the accountability of City Council as representatives of the electorate. Reducing the timeframe in which the public and elected officials have access to meeting materials significantly impairs their ability to uphold the integrity of local democracy and in holding municipal government to account.

- **Transparency:** Adequate notice and time for review are fundamental to maintaining transparency and fostering public engagement in the municipal decision-making process. The current 10-day period ensures that the public has sufficient time to access, understand, and provide feedback on agenda items. Shortening this period will undermine public confidence and reduce opportunities for meaningful community participation. This is especially true for individuals from diverse or traditionally underrepresented groups. A transparent and accessible decision-making process is essential for a thriving and resilient Edmonton, and for ensuring elected officials make informed decisions on behalf of their constituents.

It was concerning to witness select members of Council vote in favor of this proposed bylaw amendment which runs counter to Council's and the public's interest. With additional time to consider the impacts of the change, I am cautiously optimistic that Council has further considered the impact the proposed bylaw amendment will have on their abilities to govern, adequately engage their constituents, and make informed decisions.

Lastly, I'd like to highlight that the process by which this direction was provided is concerning. The motion, which was half of a two-part motion, appears to have been made in haste at the conclusion of the final City Council meeting before summer recess. As a "motion pending" on the [July 4, 2024, City Council](#) agenda, limited public communication, analysis, or engagement was conducted as part of the decision-making process, despite its significant impact on public accessibility, accountability, and transparency. Furthermore, given the resulting amending bylaw will go directly to City Council for approval on August 20, 2024, Edmontonians will not have an opportunity to speak in favour or against the proposed bylaw change, per City Council's public speaker protocols.

As such, on August 20, 2024, I urge City Council to put forward a motion to reconsider this decision from the July 4, 2024, City Council meeting, and to explicitly direct City Administration to maintain the current 10-day agenda distribution requirement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Griffiths". The signature is stylized with a large initial "D" and a prominent flourish at the end.

Hon. Doug Griffiths, MBA
President and Chief Executive Officer
Edmonton Chamber of Commerce

Appendix 1: Council & Committee Meeting Package Publication Dates – Alberta’s 10 Largest Municipalities

Municipality	Governing Document	Relevant Clauses	Publication Deadline
Calgary	Council Procedure Bylaw 35M2017	42(1), 46(a), 46(b)	One week before the meeting.
Edmonton	Bylaw 18155 Council Procedures Bylaw	21(1)	Ten (10) clear days prior to the meeting date.
Red Deer	Procedure Bylaw 3358/2006	43(1)	Prior to the Council meeting.
Lethbridge	Procedure Bylaw 6250	108(a), 108(b)	Seven (7) days prior to the meeting date.
Saint Albert	Procedure Bylaw 3358/2006	62(1), 62(2), Schedule 1 (6)	Five (5) days prior to the Meeting.
Medicine Hat	Bylaw No. 4725	6.3, 6.4, 6.8(a)	Six (6) days prior to the meeting. <i>[Twenty-four (24) hours after the agenda is sent to members; of which members can add an item/approve an agenda no later than one (1) week prior to the meeting date.]</i>
Grande Prairie	Procedure Bylaw C-1299	6.5, 6.8(a), 6.8(b)	Six (6) days prior to the meeting. <i>[Twenty-four (24) hours after the agenda is sent to members; of which members can add an item/approve an agenda no later than one (1) week prior to the meeting date.]</i>
Airdrie	Council Procedure Bylaw B-10/2024	58	Before the meeting.
Spruce Grove	Council Procedure Bylaw C-1204-22	8.2	Thursday before the meeting.
Leduc	Council Procedures Bylaw 493-2001	3(c)	Thursday before the meeting.

Appendix 2: City Council Meeting Package Statistics – Number of Pages

Meeting	Number of Pages	Meeting Package Link
July 3, 2024, City Council	599	Agenda Package
June 11, 2024, City Council	1231	Agenda Package
May 14, 2024, City Council	479	Agenda Package
April 23, 2024, City Council	655	Agenda Package
March 12, 2024, City Council	559	Agenda Package
February 21, 2024, City Council	567	Agenda Package
December 12, 2023, City Council	833	Agenda Package
November 7, 2023, City Council	1013	Agenda Package
October 4, 2023, City Council	291	Agenda Package
October 22, 2023, City Council	922	Agenda Package
September 12, 2023, City Council	801	Agenda Package
August 22, 2023, City Council	669	Agenda Package
July 4, 2023, City Council	471	Agenda Package
Average Number of Pages:	699.23 pages	