



## CITY TAKES SMALL STEPS TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING

On Dec. 1, City Clerk John Kennedy released two reports with proposed changes to the [City governance model](#) and to create the provincially-required [Planning Advisory Committee](#). There was no specific public engagement or notice about this report prior to its release...

[Reimagine Peterborough](#) immediately leapt into action, represented by Ian Attridge, to indicate support for making changes and to **recommend more meaningful changes to the governance model** than those in Kennedy's report. [Reimagine's 11 Recommendations](#) were delivered in a formal submission Monday Dec. 4, hours before Committee of the Whole, where councillors gave preliminary approval of Kennedy's proposed changes. Per the rules, citizens were not permitted to speak and provide input on councillors' decision at Committee of the Whole.

Following this, Ian spoke with City CAO Allan Seabrooke and Clerk John Kennedy, as well as with 5 councillors and the mayor, and delivered a public presentation at Council on Monday Dec. 11. Prior to the meeting, many councillors had indicated some support for [Reimagine's 11 Recommendations](#), which include:

- Make City Staff Reports available 1 Week Earlier (instead of only 3 or 4 days before councillors first vote on the item)
- Change Council rules so that citizens are allowed to speak to General Committee, formerly Committee of the Whole, where councillors first vote and give preliminary approval to items
- Fix up some of the detailed procedures so that they work better
- Widen the mandate of the newly proposed (and provincially-required) Planning Advisory Committee

After 11 p.m. Monday Dec. 11, Council approved Kennedy's proposed changes, as originally presented in the staff reports. **The main Governance changes that Council approved are:**

- Staff reports are to be released publicly on Thursdays, instead of Fridays, before the item is first considered the following Monday at General Committee (General Committee is the new name for the combined Planning and Whole Committees).
- Both planning and all other items will now be held on the same night. This will give two weeks instead of one between when a preliminary vote is held and when the final vote, with public presentations allowed, happens at Council.
- Unregistered delegations are permitted to speak, but will now have only 4 minutes instead of 7 minutes to speak, and the total time provided for all unregistered delegations is 20 minutes, thus 5 speakers (if desired at a meeting, Council could vote to extend the total time to 32 minutes, thus 8 speakers).
- The Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) will have four citizens on it, along with Councillor Lesley Parnell. The public will not be permitted to make presentations to the PAC, but they can attend and watch. Only City-initiated planning projects and staff- or Council-identified items will be on PAC's agenda for consideration, not large private developments nor those that might be identified by the citizen members of the Committee or suggested by others.



## REIMAGINE PETERBOROUGH INFLUENCE SEEN IN DEBATE AND MEDIA COVERAGE

While it is disappointing that Council did not take this opportunity to make more meaningful changes and demonstrate responsiveness to the public's frustration about process, Reimagine is encouraged to see significant progress and changes in the conversation among the media and the broader community!

In response to Reimagine's recommendations at Council on Dec. 11:

- Councillor Dean Pappas requested a staff report on posting General Committee meeting agendas sooner for the public, and for planning and application notices to be consolidated in one accessible place on the City's website.
- Councillor Henry Clarke asked City CAO Allan Seabrooke whether there would be some flexibility in interpreting the mandate of the provincially-required Planning Advisory Committee -- only a tentative response was given, and Councillor Lesley Parnell (chair of the Planning Advisory Committee) said the public would be welcome to attend meetings **but the public would not be permitted to speak**.

Like Reimagine, *The Peterborough Examiner*, *Peterborough This Week*, and influential citizens like Sylvia Sutherland and David Goyette **called on Council to do more**:

- ["Public was not engaged on public engagement issue: Peterborough city council speakers"](#) - *Peterborough This Week*, Dec. 5
- ["When it comes to giving you a greater say in planning, the City of Peterborough satisfies the letter of the law — but not much else"](#) - *Peterborough This Week*, Dec. 6, by Sylvia Sutherland
- ["Our Opinion: Peterborough city council has to do more than tinker with how it connects with citizens"](#) - *Peterborough This Week*, Editorial, Dec. 13
- ["Peterborough city council changes offer more time to have your say"](#) - *Peterborough Examiner*, Editorial, Dec. 14
- ["Welcome improvements made to City of Peterborough communications"](#) - *Peterborough Examiner*, Dec. 14, by David Goyette