

B.3

MOTION ON NOTICE

3. Release of Information from Freedom of Information Request

MOVER: Councillor Suzanne Anton

SECONDER: Councillor

WHEREAS:

1. Mayor Robertson ran on openness and transparency at City Hall;
2. Some public bodies have taken to releasing information generated in response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to all media simultaneously ("simultaneous disclosure");
3. The City Manager recently wrote to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner in support of simultaneous disclosure;
4. Mayor Robertson did not bring the issue to Council and Council has not expressed an opinion on the matter;
5. It is widely believed that simultaneous disclosure will have a dampening effect on FOI requests and reduce openness and transparency;
6. The Information and Privacy Commissioner issued a report on the issue, which is summarized in a release from her office as follows:

Following complaints about the practice, the Commissioner conducted an investigation. While the Commissioner found nothing in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* prohibiting simultaneous disclosure, she found that it had the effect of pre-emptively "sharing the fruits of a journalist's labour with the public at large", which "impairs the information-gathering function of the media and other groups." In affirming the "unique and important role" of media in accountable government, the Commissioner stated, "I maintain that it is in the public interest to protect the ability of mainstream media to identify issues and instigate public dialogue in the first place."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Vancouver hereby commits to not engaging in the practice of simultaneous disclosure of materials resulting from a Freedom of Information request.

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