



September 2, 2020

Ref: 256438

Claire Huxtable, Chair
UEL Community Advisory Council
Email: huxtable.claire@gmail.com

Dear Claire Huxtable:

Thank you for your letter regarding the University Endowment Lands (UEL) Community Advisory Council's request for a cost estimate for the legislative changes that would be required to add enforcement provisions to the existing bylaws. I apologize for the delay in responding.

I appreciate you noting the UEL Services, Structure and Governance Study currently underway. Through that consultant-led study, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is actively pursuing the long-standing community concern regarding governance. The study will lay the groundwork for the Province of British Columbia's future consideration of options for potential changes to the UEL's services, structure and governance.

As you know, the UEL's unique structure means that the UEL does not have the same tools as a local government to address day-to-day pressures. That is another reason it is important to explore the impacts of pursuing governance change. I understand that the consultant recently updated the Community Advisory Council on work underway and that initial public engagement will be starting soon. I would encourage all members of the UEL community to take up the opportunities for engagement and contribute to this important process.

Given the UEL's current unique and complex governance and structure, it would take considerable investigation to determine the scope and cost of legislative change for bylaw enforcement. Any legislative change would be complex, given the age of the legislation and the UEL's unique status as part of the Provincial Government yet providing local services. Even for more modern legislation, legislative change is an intensive and often extended process that involves many complex policy and legal questions and competing government priorities for limited legislative time and resources. Given the UEL services, structure and governance study underway, as well as Government's necessary and important focus on building recovery from the social, economic and environmental impacts of COVID-19, legislative change for UEL bylaw enforcement is not the first avenue for the ministry to pursue.

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An important focus for the UEL right now is on investigating and, where feasible, implementing options within the existing legislative framework to address community concerns, such as unsightly premises. This work of further developing its approach to problem properties is being pursued but will take some time to fully manifest. The UEL Administration is actively corresponding with property owners identified by resident complaints to advise them of their obligations. Where properties are undergoing construction, the UEL's building inspectors are fully engaged to keep the projects active, public areas safe and seek completion as rapidly as possible. Additional approaches, including potential legal or financial remedies, are also being explored but will first require some careful internal legal and policy investigation.

The goal of the ministry, through the administration of the UEL, is to provide levels of service to the residents that compare with other Lower Mainland communities as much as possible, while working within the UEL's unique framework and taking into account the size and capacity of the community. In general, I believe that the UEL meets that goal while also recognizing that improvements can be made. The UEL Administration will continue to pursue such improvements for the community.

Thank you for bringing the Community Advisory Council's concerns to my attention. The ministry will continue to monitor the situation, and in the meantime, please continue to bring any concerns to the attention of the UEL Manager.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SR', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Selina Robinson
Minister