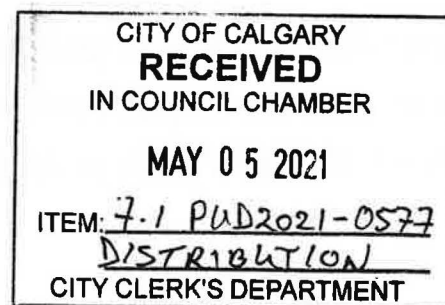


Good morning Your Worship, Madam Chair and Members of Council, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Verna Leask and I am a Community Association President who has participated in the Guidebook PUD and Council meetings over the past year.

This experience has been disheartening. Hours of preparation, by many volunteers have gone into getting ready for a public meeting only to discover that Council and Administration seemed to listen but did not hear.

My message has been clear and simple. Individuals and Community Associations want the right to participate, review, collaborate, discuss, debate and have some influence on how our neighbourhoods change over time. We want broad-based consultation that allows for the appropriate amount of time to be taken to make the best decisions for our neighbourhoods and the City. And we want to have this conversation NOW, and not after a flawed Guidebook is approved and a faulty Local Area Plan process is imposed upon us.



Community Associations are made up of volunteers and led by people with jobs and families.

We feel undercut by a process that

- denies us timely access to information,
- makes it difficult to identify changes made to the guidebook and
- sets unrealistic timelines for the necessary understanding and engagement.

We are frustrated and unable to effectively engage and educate our communities because of the pandemic.

We are faced with a process that seems to be setting up barriers to engagement rather than encouraging our input.

Over the past year you heard hundreds of Calgarians say that they have not had meaningful engagement on the Guidebook.

On March 24th Council instructed Administration to gather more information on 'What we Heard'. The only people invited to participate in the sessions were a limited number from the presenters at the March 22-24 Council Meeting.

Administration was polite and respectful, they took notes, but there was no opportunity to discuss this critical document before it was made public.

We were told at the sessions held mid-April that due to the compressed time frame there would be NO opportunity to review the findings or recommendations prior to the April 28th Public Submission date for today's meeting.

This is not meaningful engagement.

I listened to the 'What we Heard' report on April 29th and was surprised when the presentation ended abruptly after 30 minutes with NO opportunity to ask questions, have a discussion or speak to anyone.

This was not meaningful engagement.

The public document was only made available on April 30th. It's kind of like writing a term paper that is due on April 28th but all the reference material is in the restricted section and you don't have access until April 30th.

The process is broken when you don't have access to the information until after you need it.

From April 30th until today there has been insufficient time to fully understand all the recommendations and the implications they will have on our communities. There has been little to no opportunity to discuss, collaborate or debate the information with anyone.

You heard from more than 100 passionate Calgarians on March 22-24 that meaningful engagement on the Guidebook had not happened and that the Guidebook was not ready for City approval. In the past 44 days little has changed with your process of engagement. You have not meaningfully engaged, you have not allowed us to fulfill our role as ambassadors and representatives of our community, and you have not leveraged our knowledge and expertise. The citizens here today are speaking and their presentations are being recorded. Are you listening?

How and where this City grows is very important. We need the proper time to have meaningful interactive consultation so that we get the Guidebook RIGHT.

I respectfully request that the Guidebook be deferred until there is an opportunity for broad-based consultation, collaboration and debate with Calgarians post pandemic.

Thank you