

For Immediate Release

NR 12-03

September 20, 2012

Fostering Openness, Transparency and Accountability in Local Government Meetings

VICTORIA –Provincial Ombudsperson Kim Carter released today her latest report “Open Meetings: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments” aimed at municipalities, regional districts, the Islands Trust and other local governments. The guide is intended to serve as a resource for councils and local government boards as they conduct open meetings and in the less frequent instances where meetings must be closed to the public.

“One of the cornerstones of open and transparent government in British Columbia is the requirement for local governments to conduct meetings that are open and accessible to the public,” says Carter. “This guide is intended to help them comply with the statutory requirements, to improve consistency in practice and to showcase the best practices to follow in fulfilling open meeting requirements.”

The Office of the Ombudsperson has been investigating complaints about local governments since 1993. The guide is the result of investigating and evaluating complaints concerning the implementation of open meeting provisions in the *Community Charter* and from information received from local governments. The Office has identified some common challenges and set out effective ways of addressing them.

“Open Meetings: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments” can be downloaded from www.bcombudsperson.ca or by contacting the Office at 1-800-567-3247.

-30-

Media Contact:

Alexis Lang Lunn, Outreach, Education and Information Officer

Direct: (250)356-7740

(250) 387-5855

alunn@bcombudsperson.ca