

Colin Plant: The Record

A behavioural report drawn from Saanich council minutes, agenda attachments and meeting recordings, 2017 to 2026, with public biography. 24 September 2026.

Who he is

Colin Plant, 51 in 2024, is a Saanich councillor first elected in 2014 and re-elected in 2018 and 2022. He has been a secondary school teacher in Saanich School District 63 for 25 years, currently at Claremont Secondary, and holds three UVic degrees: theatre direction, secondary education and a master's in educational leadership. He grew up on a dairy farm in Central Saanich, attended Stelly's Secondary, and has lived in Saanich for more than three decades. He chaired the Capital Regional District board from November 2018, the longest tenure of any CRD chair, and was re-elected chair in November 2023. In April 2024 he won the federal NDP nomination in Saanich-Gulf Islands, recruited, by his campaign's account, by Jagmeet Singh. His campaign's first act was a news release describing the 69-year-old incumbent, Elizabeth May, as "challenged to keep up with riding duties" because of strokes. It was retracted within the hour and he apologised. He describes himself as a Chief Scout recipient and a 1994 Commonwealth Games mascot, and says he is running "because I enjoy serving the residents of Saanich."

Sources: Island Social Trends, 24 April 2024; Times Colonist, 30 April 2024 and 5 October 2022; Saanich News, 14 November 2018; saanich.ca council profile.

What the record shows

Over nine years Plant has been the most reliable vote on council for every expansion of Saanich's enforcement machinery, and the most frequent mover of the notices it registers on residents' titles. His stated reason, repeated on the record for six years, is liability. His conduct on the same record shows a councillor who asks the liability question of homeowners and never of the administration, who identifies defects in what he is voting for and votes for it anyway, and who, when he holds the chair, uses procedure to silence residents.

1. He supplied the argument for the expansion, and was told it would not pay

28 February 2019, budget committee, Plant to Director Reems: "What is our ratio compared to similar municipalities?" Reems: Victoria one officer per 12,000, Langford and Kelowna one per 8,500, Saanich one per 28,000, "between nine and ten instead of the three." Plant: "some incredibly large caseloads for our bylaw enforcement officers." Then: "Should council look at the addition of a bylaw enforcement officer as potentially funded through the additional fines and tickets that they would write?" Reems: 2018 ticket revenue "was around twenty thousand dollars. So that revenue is not going to make up hiring an additional staff person." Two years later Report 1970-20 sold three officers on \$120,000 a year in tickets and cited the comparator ratios Plant had asked for. He voted for it. The service has never reported a ticket count to council. It cost \$644,700 in 2020 and \$1.6 million in 2025.

Recording 2019-02-28, 2:05:22 to 2:08:40, Plant named by the chair. Report 1970-20, pp. 10 to 12. Financial Plans 2021 to 2026.

2. He moved the 2018 policy that dropped the safeguards, after asking about them

17 September 2018. Plant asked Reems whether the absence of public conduct standards for enforcement staff "has that been a problem, or is it just best practice?" Reems: "No, it hasn't been a problem... the way we're planning to address it is to put some information on the website." Plant: "I personally haven't had any

complaints brought to my attention." He then asked about giving enforcement "a bit more tooth" by "levying a fine without it being such a laborious process," and moved adoption of the policy. The website standards were never published. The policy contains no inspection rules and no appeal.

Recording 2018-09-17, 3:44:36 to 3:48:30. Minutes 17 September 2018. Reports of B. Reems, 16 May and 7 September 2018.

3. He set the threshold that was later ignored

9 July 2018, opposing an interim relaxation of suite enforcement: "I'd like to see us have good policy and if that is that we need more complaints before we investigate, so be it." The policy he moved two months later requires two written complaints from separate dwellings within 100 metres by non-occupants before a suite is investigated. The 938 Ambassador Avenue file was opened on one complaint from a former occupant. In July 2025 Plant seconded the motion refusing to lift the notice it produced.

Recording 2018-07-09, 2:53:13. Bylaw Enforcement Policy 2018, ss. 1.3 and 1.7. Recording 14-JUL-2025, 0:35 to 1:06.

4. He asked the right question about Bylaw 9694 and moved it on a wrong answer

3 May 2021. Plant: "Is it accurate Mr. Reems that all of these housekeeping bylaw amendments are simply as a result of the split of the two positions and that there are actually no consequential changes to the actual bylaws themselves?" Reems: "Yes that's correct... very minor and largely due to grammar." Bylaw 9694 extended the Zoning Bylaw's occupancy inspection and entry authority from one certified building official to the bylaw department and every enforcement officer in it. Plant moved all three readings, seconded the waiver of the public hearing four weeks later, and moved the adoption on 21 June 2021. He did not ask for the text.

Recording 2021-05-03_clip535, 1:19:14 to 1:19:40. Minutes 3 May, 31 May and 21 June 2021. Zoning Bylaw s. 11.2 before and after 9694.

5. Liability for homeowners, never for the administration

Date	His words, chair-named	Vote
3 Feb 2020	"I'm not comfortable exposing the municipality to any liability whether it's minute in possibility." First s. 57 notice of the series, 3901 Ansell Road. Moved it.	Carried
28 Sep 2020	"Can you please remind Council what the liability would be if the title was taken off of this property?" Owner's application to cancel, 1299 Camrose Crescent.	Refused
10 Jan 2022	"What would be the harm or liability to the district if we were to put this notice on title in abeyance for a certain period of time?" 4029 Glanford Avenue.	Carried
4 Jul 2022	"Nothing in the appeal made me feel that council had made the wrong decision... we have to rely on the systems that we have in place." Bains appeal, 5390 Old West Saanich Road, on a notice the owner never received. Moved to reaffirm. Told council "for \$500 this notice on title will be able to be taken away," three minutes after staff said removal requires a permit, engineered plans, completed work and a final inspection.	Reaffirmed
20 Nov 2023	"In the interests of protecting the interests of the District of Saanich from potential litigation this is really the only option." Prospect Lake Road, the same night 938 Ambassador Avenue was encumbered with its owner abroad and uninformed.	Carried
14 Jul 2025	Seconded the refusal of the 938 Ambassador cancellation request. Asked nothing.	9-0

In six years of asking what the District would be exposed to if it lifted a notice, he has not once asked what the District is exposed to by the department that imposes them. That exposure now includes more than \$571,000 billed by outside prosecution counsel on one file that produced six acquittals, a BC Supreme Court finding that the Manager of Inspection Services' methodology was "conclusory and without an evidentiary

foundation," an open provincial Registrar file on unqualified officers making Building Code decisions, and civil, human rights and tribunal proceedings. None of it appears in the financial plans he seconds every March.

6. He names the defect and votes for it

24 February 2025: "If an applicant was unhappy with the adjudication done by staff they have the right to appeal to council. That's understandable and probably a good..." Five months later, 9-0 against an appeal. 20 July 2026, Plant to Reems: "What appeal process, if any, will exist if there is a disagreement on how the director calculates..." Reems: the bylaw "doesn't provide for an appeal mechanism to mayor and council"; the appeal "is really to court." Plant: "It puts the responsibility solely on the director without an appeal to council... when we delegate a decision-making process to staff that we should have..." Then: "I'm going to lend my support on it."

Recordings 2025-02-24_clip998, 0:59:04; 2026-07-20_clip1334, 1:41:53 to 1:45:10.

7. In the chair, he silences residents

The minutes record Plant in the chair at sixteen meetings. Open forum on 6 May 2024 is the one to read. It is the fifteen minutes a month when, by the District's own script, "the intent is for council to listen to residents' comments," and the script also lists what residents may not raise: bylaw enforcement, legal matters, in-camera matters, board of variance, remedial orders, development applications, and anything touching a public hearing.

Sasha Isard had spoken for fourteen seconds, asking why Saanich would hold a referendum on amalgamation but not on whether local area plans should remain binding, when Plant stopped the clock on a point of order from Councillor Phelps Bondaroff. Plant ruled that anything on the public hearing's "metaphorical docket" could not be raised. Isard asked what he could talk about that was not in the OCP. Plant: "That is for you to determine." Isard: "Given the fact that the OCP pretty much covers everything, I have nothing to say because the public has been gagged. This is not a democracy."

Mehdi Najari came next, asking why the District paid \$25 million for three Lochside Drive properties assessed at \$11.1 million, and then how the public had been told of the OCP hearing. Plant: "please pause Mr. Najari's clock. I take no pleasure in doing this, but I cannot have you speak about something that is related to the public hearing. Even the process of how the public hearing was led to be called is subject to the material that I think is not to be commented upon." Najari: "The public were saying that they were not aware of it." Plant: "I'm going to ask you to pause again and we'll pause your clock."

Two residents, two subjects, both stopped inside a minute, at the one forum that exists for residents to speak. The rule he enforced is the District's; the ruling that a question about how residents were notified of a hearing is itself part of the hearing was his.

Recording 2024-05-06_clip872, 0:03:00 to 0:09:30. Minutes 6 May 2024, Plant in the chair.

Summary

Plant did not design Saanich's enforcement model. He asked for the numbers that justified it, moved the policy that stripped its safeguards, moved the bylaw that armed it, seconded the motion that kept the public out of the room, moved or seconded ten of the twenty-one notices it has produced, refused all three owners who asked for relief, and, in the chair, stopped residents' clocks. He has said on the record that the missing safeguards were probably good, that the missing appeal was a defect, and that residents should be heard. He

voted against each of those positions the same day or within months. His word for all of it is liability. The record's word is the one he has never applied to himself.

Sources are Saanich's own minutes, agenda attachments and meeting recordings; recordings are machine-transcribed and every attribution above rests on the chair naming the speaker immediately before. Biography from published press and the District's website. Closed-meeting records are not public.