



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole

Date of Meeting: May 3, 2023

Report Number: SRCFS.23.011

Department: Corporate and Financial Services

Division: Office of the Clerk

Subject: Revisions to the Proclamation Policy, and the Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy and Procedures

Purpose:

To recommend amendments to the Proclamation Policy, Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy, and Procedures under the Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy to streamline the application and approval processes, update administrative details, and include annual commemoration of additional commonly commemorated solemn occasions.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That staff report SRCFS.23.011 regarding Community Flag Raising and Flag Protocol Policy and Proclamation Policy Revisions be received.
- b) That the revised Proclamation Policy (Attachment "B"), Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy (Attachment "D"), Customary Flag Configuration Procedure (Attachment "E"), and Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure (Attachment "H"), attached to Staff Report SRCFS.23.011, be approved.

Contact Person:

Ryan Ban, Deputy City Clerk, Extension 5547

Stephen M.A. Huycke, City Clerk, Extension 2529

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Sherry Adams, Commissioner of Corporate and Financial Services

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

The City receives requests for proclamations in accordance with the Proclamation Policy, and requests for community flag raisings in accordance with the Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy on a regular basis.

Proclamations are issued to recognize public awareness campaigns, charitable fundraising campaigns, and arts and cultural celebrations of significance to Richmond Hill. A proclamation may recognize a particular day, week, or month. Proclamations are governed by the current Proclamation Policy (Attachment “A”) approved by Council on July 9, 2012.

Requests for Community Flag Raisings are considered for the purposes of enhancing public awareness of activities such as national holidays, multicultural events, fundraising drives, and historical commemorations important to the residents of Richmond Hill. Additionally, flags are flown at half-mast to mark periods of official mourning or the commemoration of solemn occasions by the City. Community Flag Raisings and the flying of flags at half-mast are governed by the current Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy (Attachment “C”) approved by Council on December 10, 2012.

The Office of the Clerk has conducted a review of these policies and procedures and identified opportunities for greater consistency and efficiency, as well as the need to update administrative details.

Current Approval Processes

Currently, new Proclamations and community flag raising requests received by the Office of the Clerk require Council approval. When a request for a proclamation or community flag raising that has not previously been approved is received, it is added to the next Council agenda for Council’s consideration. As a result, the timeline for approval of such requests is subject to Council’s meeting schedule. Requests that have been previously approved by Council in the last five years do not require Council approval.

In addition to this, the Flying Flags at Half-mast procedure (Attachment “G”) requires Council approval to commemorate other solemn occasions not already captured in the procedure, such as significant natural disasters or other significant global events warranting periods of official mourning. These approvals, given the time sensitivity, are generally obtained by email. In the last few years, this process has been used to approve the lowering of flags in response to such events as the downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752, as well as the discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools.

Review of Practices in Other Municipalities

A review was conducted and data was collected on the processes of 25 municipalities within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. The primary focus of the review was to

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determine if the municipalities' proclamations and flag raisings are approved by staff, Council, or the Mayor. Note that some municipalities do not issue true proclamations, but have protocols that are roughly equivalent, such as clock tower lightings; these protocols were counted as proclamations.

The findings of the review are summarized in the table below. Notably, Council approval was the least common process identified for both flag raisings and proclamations. Mayoral approval was the most common process for proclamations and tied with staff approval for flag raisings. It should be noted that there were a number of municipalities where the approval authority could not be conclusively confirmed using the available information, but Mayoral approval for both functions can be confirmed as a common practice.

Summary of Best Practices Review Findings

Approval Authority	Flag Raisings	Proclamations
Mayor	6	12
Staff	6	7
Council	3	4

Mayoral Approval Process

In municipalities where the Mayor is the approval authority, requests are typically either submitted directly to the Mayor's Office or accepted by the Office of the Clerk or a Protocol Office. In several cases, policies specifically indicate that the Mayor copies all Members of Council on notifications that a request has been approved. When the Mayor is the approval authority for both flag raisings and proclamations, there is often a consolidated application process (i.e. requestors use the same form for both requests).

Recommended Processes

Based on the review conducted by the Office of the Clerk of other municipal practices and Richmond Hill's current processes, staff recommend that:

- The City Clerk review all requests for proclamations and community flag raisings against the Council approved policy criteria;
- On the recommendation of the City Clerk, the Mayor be the approval authority for all community flag raising requests, proclamation requests, and the lowering of flags to half-mast to commemorate other solemn occasions; and
- Members of Council be copied on all notifications sent of approved requests

Staff believe that this is the most efficient process to approve proclamation requests, and also accounts for the fact that it is not possible to obtain Council approval during the

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summer, winter or election period recesses. Additionally, including a provision that specifically requires that Members of Council be notified of approved requests ensures that Members still have the opportunity to engage with the relevant events and/or organizations as they see fit.

The revised Proclamation Policy (Attachment “B”) and the revised Community and Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy (attachment “D” to this staff report) will establish the Mayor as the approval authority for both processes, ensures that the Mayor informs all Members of Council of approved requests, and allows the Clerk to administer the application process for optimal efficiency and convenience.

Customary Flag Configuration

Upon review of the current Customary Flag Configuration Procedure (Attachment “E”), the Office of the Clerk identified information that no longer reflects the current state of our facilities or otherwise needed to be updated or clarified. The revised Customary Flag Configuration Procedure (attachment “F” to this staff report) has been updated for accuracy and clarity.

Annual Commemoration of Solemn Occasions

During the review process, the Office of the Clerk also identified solemn occasions that many municipalities commonly commemorate on an annual basis by flying flags at half-mast, but which Richmond Hill currently does not.

The Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure currently stipulates that flags at all municipal facilities will be flown at half-mast annually to commemorate the Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace (April 28) and Remembrance Day (November 11). Staff recommend the addition of the following two solemn occasions that are commonly commemorated nationally:

- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30), and
- National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (December 6).

The revised Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure (Attachment “H”) adds these to the list of annually commemorated solemn occasions and makes minor updates to administrative details.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

There are no financial or staffing implications applicable to this report.

Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

The proposed changes will enhance Council’s priority of Strong Sense of Belonging by making the affected processes more timely and more closely connected to the Mayor. Additionally, the changes represent Fiscal Responsibility considerations by producing

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streamlined processes and being mindful of efficient use of staff and Council time and resources.

Climate Change Considerations:

Climate change considerations are not applicable to this staff report.

Conclusion:

Staff recommend that the draft revisions of the Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy, Proclamation Policy, Customary Flag Configuration Procedure, and Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure attached to this Staff Report be approved in order to streamline the application and approval processes and update policies to bring them in-line with current conditions and practices.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Attachment A: Proclamation Policy (current)
- Attachment B: draft revised Proclamation Policy
- Attachment C: Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy (current)
- Attachment D: draft revised Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy
- Attachment E: Customary Flag Configuration Procedure (current)
- Attachment F: draft revised Customary Flag Configuration Procedure
- Attachment G: Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure (current)
- Attachment H: draft revised Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Staff Report Flag Raisings and Proclamations.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attachment A Proclamation Policy (current).pdf- Attachment B Draft Revision of Proclamation Policy.pdf- Attachment C Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy (current).pdf- Attachment D Draft Revision of Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy.pdf- Attachment E Customary Flag Configuration Procedure (current).pdf- Attachment F Draft Revision of Customary Flag Configuration Procedure.pdf- Attachment G Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure (current).pdf- Attachment H Draft Revision of Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 14, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Stephen Huycke - Apr 13, 2023 - 3:45 PM

Sherry Adams - Apr 13, 2023 - 4:03 PM

Darlene Joslin - Apr 14, 2023 - 11:27 AM